



24.36 Substance Misuse & Work: A Guide for Employees

Introduction

Substance misuse, also known as drug abuse, is a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others.

The most misused substances include:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Cocaine

Other commonly misused substances include:

- Nitrous Oxide or solvents
- Ecstasy
- Hallucinogens such as LSD & “Shrooms”
- Some prescription medications



How could substance misuse affect my work?

The main concerns connected with misuse at work relate to the safety of the individual and those around them. Misuse may result in:

- Impaired Judgement
- Poor Concentration
- Increased likelihood of accidents

It could also lead to:

- Increased absence rates
- Social exclusion
- Dishonesty & Theft
- Poor performance
- Financial Hardship

If I think that I have a problem, what can I do?

- If you are able, talk to your family or partner about your problem.
- If your manager or supervisor is approachable, discuss your concerns with them.
- If your employer has robust policies in place, speak to HR about joining a support programme.
- Consider speaking to your Occupational Health Practitioner or GP about your concerns.
- Contact a charity or self-help group for support.



If I am at work and feel that I am under the influence of a substance, what MUST I do?

- Avoid undertaking “safety critical” tasks such as Working at Heights or in Confined Spaces.
- Do not drive Forklift Trucks or any other type of vehicle or operate overhead cranes and lifting equipment.
- Do not operate machinery, particularly if there is a risk of entrapment or injury to yourself or others.
- Do not undertake “Hot Work” or tasks that could cause burns or scalds to yourself or others.
- Consider taking yourself home on safety grounds (do not drive if under the influence of alcohol or any drug that might impair your ability to drive).

Who can I ask for Help?

- Your Family Doctor (GP)
- Your Occupational Health Practitioner
- Your Union Representative



You may find the following charities and agencies helpful:

FRANK <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Adfam <https://adfam.org.uk/other-support-services/>

Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/recreational-drugs-alcohol-and-addiction/drug-and-alcohol-addiction-useful-contacts/>

Aquarius <https://aquarius.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Find drug and alcohol support near you

<https://www.talktofrank.com/get-help/find-support-near-you>

A copy of this & other documentation can be found from <https://mohs.co.uk/resources> or using the QR code at the top of this page.