

Managing Workplace Impairment

IDENTIFY

Workplace impairment as an occupational health and safety issue is of increasing concern to employers, workers, and other stakeholders. Physical or mental impairment in the workplace can create a significant risk of injury and death to the impaired worker, co-workers, and members of the public.

IMPAIRMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Impairment can have many causes, but the most common causes of impairment in the workplace are the following:

- Use of Alcohol
- Use of Recreational cannabis (legal as of October 17, 2018)
- Use of Illegal drugs
- Use of Prescription drugs (including medically prescribed cannabis) to treat medical conditions
- Use of Over-the-counter medications
- Mental State/Fatigue

Impairment can cause physical and behavioral changes that affect people's ability to work safely, putting them or their co-workers at risk of injury, and can include the following:

- Impaired judgment, thinking, and decision making
- Decreased motor coordination, reaction time, and sensory perception
- Psychological or stress-related effects, such as mood swings or personality changes

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

As a supervisor, you have a duty to ensure the health and safety of workers. Supervisors must do the following:

- Prevent an impaired worker from performing activities where impairment may endanger the impaired worker or anyone else
- Refuse to allow a worker to remain at any workplace while the worker's ability to work safely is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Workers have some responsibilities for managing impairment, including the following

- Making sure that their ability to work safely is not impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes
- Showing up fit to work for the duration of your shift
- Not working if their impairment may endanger themselves or anyone else
- Notifying their supervisor if their ability to work safely is impaired for any reason
- Notifying their supervisor if they see someone who appears to be impaired

STEPS TOWARD MANAGING IMPAIRMENT

Employers should develop policies and procedures that address impairment in the workplace.

Taking the following steps can help you fulfill your duty to manage impairment in the workplace:

- Assess the tasks carried out in your workplace, and identify hazards that may arise from performing those tasks while impaired.
- Put appropriate controls in place to eliminate or minimize the risk of those hazards arising in your workplace. An impairment policy is a common administrative control used to minimize the risk of hazards caused by impairment in the workplace.
- Communicate your impairment policy (whether new or updated) to everyone in your workplace.
- Train your workers and supervisors in their responsibilities and rights under the policy.
- Enforce your impairment policy in a fair, consistent manner throughout the workplace.

THE QUIZ: Managing Workplace Impairment

Answers are at the bottom of the page. Present these questions to attendees and have them answer as a group. Have a discussion to ensure everyone understands the risks and how to control them.

1. Using alcohol is not a common cause of impairment.

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

2. You don't need a workplace impairment policy.

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

3. What are the most common causes of impairment in the workplace?

- A) Use of alcohol
- B) Use of recreational cannabis
- C) Use of illegal drugs
- D) Use of prescription drugs
- E) All of the above

4. Supervisors have a responsibility when it comes to managing impairment in the workplace including the following:

- A) Preventing an impaired worker from performing activities where impairment may endanger the impaired worker or anyone else
- B) Random drug testing
- C) Refuse to allow a worker to remain at any workplace while the workers ability to work safely is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes
- D) A & C

5. Taking the following step(s) can help fulfill your duty to manage impairment in your workplace.

- A) Assess the tasks carried out in your workplace, and identify hazards that may arise from performing those tasks while impaired
- B) Put up a poster outlining the risks of working while impaired
- C) Put appropriate controls in place to eliminate or minimize the risk of hazards caused by impairment in the workplace.
- D) A & C

CANNABIS LAWS IN MANITOBA (As of October 17, 2018)

Bill 11:

- Legal age 19
- Bans household cultivation
- Creates hybrid public- and private sector recreational cannabis retail and distribution system; and iv. Gives municipalities right to hold plebiscite on banning local consumption;

Bill 25:

- Extends Non-Smokers Health Protection Act cigarette smoking ban in enclosed public places, including workplaces, to cannabis smoking and vaping
- Bans consumption in motor vehicles on a highway
- Implements 24-hour roadside suspension if officer has reasonable grounds to believe person can't safely operate vehicle due to being under influence of a drug; and

Bill 26:

- Strict new penalties for cannabis-impaired driving

The full list can be found: <https://ohsinsider.com/topics/drugs-alcohol/know-the-laws-of-your-province-recreational-cannabis-legalization-laws-in-each-jurisdiction>

ANSWERS

1. FALSE 2. FALSE 3. E 4. D 5. D

Disclaimer

This information was produced by WorkSafeBC & Ohsinsider.com to help workplace parties understand some of their obligations under the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. It is not legal advice, and it does not replace the Act or the Regulation.



FOR THE RECORD

Date of Meeting: _____

Location: _____ Start time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Topic: _____ Meeting Leader: _____

In attendance (please print):

Contact your Construction Safety Association for even more *Practical Solutions for a Safer Workplace*

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