

THE NORTHCOTT SOCIETY

POLICY ON THE USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

VOLUME:	2 Management & Organisational Issues
SECTION:	B Occupational Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation
SUB-SECTION:	A OH&S - General
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	December 2008
BOARD APPROVAL:	Not Required

Policy

It is Northcott's policy to provide a work environment in which the safety and wellbeing of others, and the optimum performance of employees and contractors, is not adversely affected by the use of alcohol or drugs.

Principles

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 2000 Northcott has an obligation to provide a safe working environment for all employees. Employees must not be adversely affected by alcohol or drug use during working hours and must at all times carry out their duties and responsibilities in a safe manner.

Northcott is committed to the Responsible Serving of Alcohol principles and will provide employees with a range of options at Northcott endorsed functions including low alcohol beer, non alcoholic drinks and food.

Northcott considers that the use of alcohol or other drugs is primarily a health issue for individual employees. However, where an employee's performance or conduct affects the health and safety of the staff member and/or others in the workplace, Northcott is committed to appropriately managing the issue.

Northcott employees have an obligation under Clause 28 of the OHS Regulation 2001 to disclose matters to their employer that may affect the capacity of the employer to comply with the requirements of the regulation. This includes being affected by drugs (prescribed or illegal) and alcohol.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors at Northcott.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, alcohol and/or other drugs include:

1. Any substance consumed, which has alcohol content.
2. The use of any illegal drugs/substances which, when consumed / inhaled / injected, have the effect of altering the mind/normal behaviour and/or impairing judgement.
3. The use of prescription drugs which create a potential for the impairment of an employee's work performance or behaviour.

Sale

The sale of any illegal or prescription drugs at the workplace by an employee will result in termination of their employment. Any evidence of possible criminal activity in respect of the use of illegal drugs will be dealt with in accordance with Northcott's statutory and legal obligations.

Consumption or Possession

The unauthorised consumption or possession of any alcohol, or the consumption or possession of any illicit drugs while in the workplace or during the working period could result in termination of employment. Refer to Policy on Discipline & Dismissal.

Where an employee is on prescribed medication which they have been advised may impair their work judgement or performance, they must inform their supervisor and the employee may be required to take sick leave or moved temporarily to other suitable duties.

A member of the Core Executive Group (CEG) must give authorisation for any events on site or during working hours, which include consumption of alcohol. The CEG member must ensure that safe drinking practices are monitored and that the distribution of alcohol is limited.

Employees who consume alcohol off-site during work breaks may be disciplined, if it is considered on their return to work that they are unfit to undertake their duties.

Counselling and Treatment

Employees who feel they are developing, or already have a problem with alcohol or other drugs, are encouraged to discuss this with their Manager. These discussions will remain confidential.

With the employee's permission, Northcott may provide initial professional counselling and support to assist with gaining treatment for substance abuse. All employees are to be informed of Northcott's Employee Assistance Program (which includes access to a counsellor) during their induction period.

An employee's job security or promotional opportunities will not be jeopardised because of an employee's voluntary decision to seek treatment.

An employee who refuses to accept assistance where substance abuse is proven, could face disciplinary action.

What to do if you believe an individual is affected by drugs and/or alcohol at work

1. If you observe that an employee could be affected by drugs and/or alcohol at work, advise the Supervisor/Manager if you believe that the individual or other persons could be at risk.
2. The Supervisor can advise the employee that they are considered unfit to undertake their duties due to the observable behaviour such as slurred words, alcohol smell etc.
3. The Supervisor can advise the employee that they have the option of being driven home or medically assessed.
4. The Supervisor can offer appropriate counselling to the employee.
5. Disciplinary action can be initiated as appropriate once the employee is no longer under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Under no circumstances will an employee be permitted to work if considered to be adversely under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Related Documents

- Policy on Occupational Health & Safety
- Policy on Discipline and Dismissal
- Policy on Smoke Free Workplace
- Policy on Anti-Harassment & Good Working Relationships

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with the OH&S Committee and will remain in place until amendments are made.

Authorised by:
Glenn Gardner
Chief Executive Officer