

## Alcohol policy template

**<insert organisation name>**

**<Remove this section once your policy is complete>**

Employers have a duty of care under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (1984) to protect workers from any known harms. This includes the short and long term risks associated with alcohol. Creating a workplace that prevents the use of alcohol within the workplace and ensures responsible use outside of the workplace can positively impact on the health and safety of workers.

The following template is a starting point from which you can create a workplace alcohol policy. It can be changed to suit your specific needs. Included in each section are prompts to **<insert>** information. Simply replace the bracketed words with the information requested. Some sections give prompts to **remove/add/delete as applicable**.

Many workplaces may already have a policy that addresses the occupational health and safety risks associated with alcohol e.g. a fitness for work policy or drug and alcohol policy. In this case, this policy template may provide ideas for building on your existing policy, through addressing the culture of alcohol use in and outside of the workplace.

Before, during and after you develop your policy, it is a good idea to discuss the issue with workers and to circulate drafts of the policy to workers in different sections of the organisation for feedback. You could do this through your intranet site, email distribution list, by memo or at a staff meeting. Remember to include workers who do not have regular access to internet and email (for example, remote field or maintenance employees).

Once the policy is finalised and signed off by senior management, everyone should have access to a copy. The policy should also be included in any induction material that is given to new workers.

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## The impact of alcohol in the workplace

Alcohol can have a detrimental impact on safety and health in the workplace. Alcohol can reduce a person's ability to work safely by affecting the nervous system, coordination, motor control, concentration, alertness and impeding the ability to exercise judgment.

Under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (1984) <insert organisation name> has a duty of care to protect workers from known hazards and risks. This includes any impairment that may arise from the effects of alcohol.

Workers who are impaired by alcohol increase the risk of injury and illness to themselves and to others. *The Act* also states that workers must take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work to avoid harming the health and safety of other people through any act or omission.

Drinking alcohol can:

- » Affect people's ability to work efficiently and perform tasks safely
- » Cause liver or brain damage, heart disease, high blood pressure and increase the risk from many types of cancer
- » Increase the risk of injury through road trauma, violence, falls and accidental death
- » Lead to weight gain and obesity
- » Harm the developing foetus in women who are pregnant, or a breastfeeding baby

The Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol recommend that men and women who drink, drink no more than two standard drinks on any day to reduce the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol related disease or injury. With one in eight adults drinking at levels that are dangerous to their health, it is important to create an alcohol free workplace.

## Mission statement

<insert organisation name>:

- » Will provide /promote an alcohol free workplace
- » Will provide alcohol free workplace functions and social events to support healthy lifestyle choices
- » Is committed to providing a workplace culture that recognises that drinking alcohol can have a negative influence on the health, work and social relationships of staff
- » Recognises the importance of minimising alcohol consumption in the prevention of lifestyle related diseases and the maintenance of health and wellbeing

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## Objectives and strategies

<insert organisation name> will: remove/add/delete as applicable

Provide and promote an alcohol free workplace by:

- » Enforcing a zero alcohol tolerance for staff when operating work vehicles or participating in safety sensitive tasks
- » Discouraging the consumption of alcohol during work time, including lunch breaks and events, business meetings and where representing the company
- » Ensuring that <insert organisation name> workers do not:
  - o Attend work in an impaired condition resulting from the use of alcohol
  - o Possess or consume alcohol while on duty for, or at the worksite of <insert organisation name>

Provide a safe and supportive work environment to reduce risks associated with drinking alcohol by:

- » Not serving alcohol on <insert organisation name> premises or at activities under the control of <insert organisation name>, unless written approval has been sought from the CEO
- » Instructing managers to lead by example by avoiding alcohol consumption
- » Providing workers with free, independent and confidential counselling through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or referring them to the Alcohol and Drug Information Service, where necessary
- » Allowing flexible working arrangements for the treatment and recovery of people who have long-term problems with alcohol
- » Avoiding providing alcohol as a gift or using alcohol as an incentive

Educate workers about the risks of drinking alcohol by:

- » Providing relevant information materials e.g. posters, brochures and online material – see Alcohol, Think Again
- » Conducting information sessions on the benefits of being alcohol free at work, and drinking responsibly at all times

When alcohol is present at workplace events and functions, promote responsible drinking by:

- » Organising functions where drinking is not the primary focus
- » Organising functions at times when alcohol is not expected ( e.g. breakfast, morning tea)
- » Offering food when alcohol is available, as well as low alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks
- » Ensuring catering for alcohol does not exceed the recommended guidelines of no more than two standard drinks per day
- » Organising and promoting safe transport options (e.g. taxis vouchers and public transport) at events where alcohol is likely to be consumed

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## Scope and responsibilities

This policy applies to all workers at and visitors to <insert organisation name>.

Workers are required to:

- » Understand and comply with this policy at all times while in the workplace or representing <insert organisation name>
- » Comply with this policy at all times, while working and attending workplace social functions and events
- » Inform management if they believe the policy has not been upheld

Management are responsible for:

- » Making sure all workers are made aware of this policy
- » Supporting and contributing to the implementation of this policy, including its mission statement and objectives
- » Managing the implementation and review of this policy

## Communication

<insert organisation name> will ensure that:

- » All workers receive a copy of this policy during the induction process
- » This policy is easily accessible to all members of the organisation
- » Workers are informed when a particular activity aligns with this policy
- » Workers have the power to actively contribute to and provide feedback on this policy
- » Workers are notified of all changes to this policy
- » Successes are celebrated within the workplace

## Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and then once a year. <insert committee/role> is responsible for reviewing this policy. This process will involve:

- » Assessing progress and seeing if objectives have been met
- » Providing workers with the opportunity to give feedback
- » Considering all feedback and suggestions and making changes as required
- » Communicating reviewed policy to workers

Adapted from *Template: Health and Wellbeing Policy – Workcover Tasmania, 2012*

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