



Alcohol and Drugs Toolbox Talk

TBT #12
Reviewed: 01.09.2022
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Alcohol

The misuse of drugs and alcohol can have a devastating impact on individuals and employers and can result in social problems, poor health, absenteeism and therefore loss of productivity as well as contribute to workplace accidents.

What is alcohol addiction?

Alcoholism can be categorized as both a physical and mental illness. It is an illness suffered by hundreds of thousands of people in the UK alone.

Alcohol dependency test and calculator: <https://infinityaddiction.co.uk/alcohol-addiction/dependency-test/>

Alcohol

We work in the construction industry, which is high risk. High risk and alcohol do not mix!

If you are found to be under the influence of alcohol, you will not be allowed on site and may possibly end up losing your job.

Don't get drunk the night before work and expect to work safely on site the next day. Alcohol takes time to work out of your system (1 pint of beer takes approximately two hours),

Alcohol is a depressant drug, which depresses part of the brain function which makes staying alert and focused more difficult. It impairs a person's judgment, thinking ability and coordination.

Approximately two pints of strong lager or ale will put the average male over the recommended daily limit. One and a half pints puts the average woman over the recommended daily limit.

Many workplace fatal accidents have been alcohol related.

Alcohol misusers are nearly four times more likely to be involved in workplace accidents, three times more likely to be absent from work for seven consecutive days or more and at least 25% less effective overall.

Key Notes:

- Never come to work under the influence of alcohol
- Never bring alcohol to work or consume this at work
- Inform your line manager if you believe one of your team are under the influence of alcohol

Questions:

- The UK Government state a maximum of how many units per week? (Answer: 14)
- What do you think the signs and symptoms of alcohol addiction are? (Answer: Anxiety, Sweats, Shakes, Tremors, Visual or Auditory Hallucinations to name a few).



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Drugs

What is drug addiction

This term refers to an individual's dependence on drugs, be it recreational or even prescription. Many people associate drug addiction to the likes of cocaine, heroin etc however a person who finds themselves unable to stop taking regular prescription drugs has a substance dependence and thus falls under the category of drug addiction.

Non-prescribed Drugs

- We work in the construction industry, which is high risk. High risk and drugs do not mix!
- You are far more likely to have an accident on-site when under the influence of drugs.
- If you know somebody is taking drugs, tell your supervisor or line manager.
- Signs to look for: watery eyes, pin-point or dilated pupils, running nose, constant sniffing, tight lips, sores, ulcers, trembling, fatigue, and irritability. If you see it, report it.
- All drugs can affect your ability to work safely.
- Some effects of drugs: slow reaction times, clumsiness, poor decision making, and distorted vision.
- If you get offered drugs, say 'No, I'd rather work safely', and report it immediately to your supervisor or line manager.

Prescribed Drugs

The most common side effect of over-the-counter cold and flu medicine is drowsiness, which reduces a person's level of alertness and increases reaction time.

Taking medication, and then coming to work and using machinery or sharp tools, can be dangerous.

- Never come to work under the influence of prohibited drugs.
- Never bring prohibited drugs to work, or consume them at work.
- Inform your manager if you have to take any medication which may affect your work.
- Inform your supervisor if you believe a colleague is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Drug dependency test and calculator - <https://infinityaddiction.co.uk/drug-addiction/drug-dependency-test/>

Question

What are the signs of drug addiction?

(Behavioural signs include: Aggressive mood swings, cravings and withdrawal symptoms, distance from family and friends, fluctuation in energy levels_

(Physical signs include: Drowsiness and nausea, slurred speech and memory trouble, confusion, anxiety, depression, chills, sweating, tremors, hallucinations, paranoia, high blood pressure, watery eyes, dilated pupils)

**SAFETY AS
STANDARD**



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The impacts of drugs and alcohol

Drugs and alcohol affect us all in different ways.

- Just some potential side effects from drink and drugs include:
 - Reduced awareness, including hearing and vision
 - Lower concentration levels and difficulty focusing
 - Poor judgment and decision making
 - Poor coordination or balance

Any of these potential side effects could be extremely dangerous – if not fatal – when working on a construction site.

HANGOVERS

83%

83% of employees who have been hungover at work admit that it makes a difference in the way that they work

33%

33% of employees admit to having been to work with a hangover

22%

Nearly 1 in 4 (22%) employees admit to making mistakes at work as a result of being hungover

