

Drug-Free Workplace Policy

Policy · US · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A drug-free workplace policy — often called a drug and alcohol policy — sets out your organization's rules on alcohol, drugs, and impairing medication at work: what is prohibited, what should be disclosed, how someone struggling can get help, and what happens when the rules are broken. It separates two things that are often confused: supporting a health problem and dealing with a conduct problem.

Most managers meet this issue rarely and handle it under pressure: the smell of alcohol on a shift worker, a prescription causing drowsiness around machinery. A policy written in calm conditions is what stops those moments becoming unsafe, unfair, or both.

One caution before anything else: drug testing and marijuana are governed by state and local law, and those laws vary sharply — some states restrict who can be tested and when, and some protect off-duty marijuana use. This template flags every point where you need state-specific advice rather than pretending one set of rules works everywhere.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets the rules on alcohol, drugs, and impairing medication for everyone working for or on behalf of [Your company], including contractors and agency staff — on our premises, at client sites, when driving on business, and at work-organized events.

It exists to keep people safe, to treat dependency as a health issue wherever possible, and to make the conduct rules clear enough to enforce fairly. It is a policy, not a contract: it does not create a contract of employment, express or implied, and it does not alter the at-will nature of employment at [Your company].

Policy statement

Nobody may work for [Your company] while impaired by alcohol or drugs. Nobody may drink alcohol during working hours outside authorized events, or possess or distribute illegal drugs on our premises or in company vehicles. We will support anyone who tells us they have a dependency problem and seeks help; we will use the [progressive discipline policy] when the rules are broken.

Definitions

- Impaired: not fit to perform your role safely and competently, whatever the substance or amount involved.
- Working hours: any time you are working, on call, or driving on business, including paid breaks — not only time on site.
- Safety-sensitive work: [list roles — e.g. driving, operating machinery, working at height, caring for vulnerable people] where impairment could injure someone.
- Authorized events: occasions where [senior role] has approved moderate alcohol, such as [examples].

- Drugs: illegal drugs, controlled substances without a valid prescription, and any substance — marijuana included — used in a way that impairs you at work.

The rules

- Do not work, drive on business, or attend client sites while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Do not drink alcohol during working hours except at authorized events — and never before safety-sensitive work, including returning to it later the same day.
- Do not possess, use, or distribute illegal drugs on [Your company] premises or in company vehicles at any time.
- Marijuana: even where state law permits its use, being impaired at work is prohibited. [State your position on off-duty use only after checking your state's law — some states protect lawful off-duty use and medical patients.]
- If a manager judges someone unfit to work, they will be sent home safely — by [taxi/rideshare/arranged transport], never driving themselves — and the matter reviewed on the next working day.

Medication, disclosure and support

If prescribed or over-the-counter medication may cause drowsiness or affect your work, tell [manager/named role] before starting work — you do not need to name the medication or the condition. We will adjust duties where needed, and disclosure is never punished. Where medication relates to a disability, we handle the conversation under our reasonable accommodation process.

Anyone who tells us they have a problem with alcohol or drugs before it surfaces through an incident will be supported: a confidential conversation with [named role], adjusted duties where appropriate, time off for treatment under [our leave arrangements / the employee assistance program], and discretion throughout. Coming forward is not a free pass for conduct that has already endangered someone, but it always counts in a person's favor and shifts the emphasis from discipline to recovery.

Testing — take advice before adopting this section

Whether [Your company] may test — and when, whom, and how — depends on the law of each state and locality where we operate. Some states permit testing only in defined circumstances, some regulate the procedure and the laboratory, and some restrict testing for marijuana specifically. Nothing in this policy asserts a right to test; delete this section entirely if you do not test.

Where testing operates, it is limited to [circumstances your counsel has confirmed are lawful in your state — e.g. reasonable suspicion documented by two trained managers, post-incident where impairment may have contributed], carried out by [accredited provider] under a documented procedure, with results handled confidentially and shared only with [roles]. [Name/role] confirms the current legal position with counsel before any test is arranged.

DOT-regulated roles

Employees in safety-sensitive roles regulated by the US Department of Transportation — [list, e.g. commercial drivers] — are covered by a separate federal testing and compliance regime with its own rules on testing, violations, and return to duty. It takes precedence over this policy wherever the two differ. [Name/role] administers our DOT program; delete this section if no roles are covered.

Drug-Free Workplace Act — federal contractors and grantees

If [Your company] holds a federal contract of \$100,000 or more, or any federal grant, the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 applies and this section is mandatory; delete it if we hold neither. Under the Act, [Your company]: publishes this policy statement prohibiting the manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of controlled substances in the workplace and gives every covered employee a copy; runs a drug-free awareness program covering the dangers of drug abuse, this policy, the support routes above, and the penalties for violations; requires employees to notify [name/role] within five days of any criminal drug conviction for conduct in the workplace; notifies the contracting or granting agency within ten days of learning of such a conviction; and imposes a sanction or requires satisfactory participation in a rehabilitation program within thirty days. [Name/role] owns this compliance and confirms current requirements with the contracting agency — see the SAMHSA guidance linked on this page.

Violations, records and review

Violations are handled under the [progressive discipline policy]. Working while impaired in a safety-sensitive role, or distributing illegal drugs at work, will normally be treated as a serious violation that can lead to termination. Where dependency emerges during the process, we will pause and consider support and any accommodation obligations before deciding the outcome.

Records of incidents, referrals, and any test results are held confidentially in [system/location], separate from routine personnel files, with access limited to [roles]. This policy is reviewed [frequency], after any incident involving impairment, and whenever the law changes in a state where we operate. Owner: [name/role]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. List your genuinely safety-sensitive roles first — the stricter rules in the policy hang off that list.
2. Before writing anything about testing or marijuana, get state-specific legal advice for every state where you have employees — these are the two sections you cannot safely copy from any template.
3. Decide your position on alcohol at work events and state it; the holiday party is where vague policies fail.
4. Set up the confidential support route before publishing — a named person and, if you have one, the employee assistance program.
5. Brief managers on the send-home procedure, including how the person gets home — an impaired employee driving home is your risk too.
6. If you employ DOT-regulated workers, run that program separately and cross-reference it here rather than merging the rules.

Official guidance

- › [DOL — Drug-free workplace](#)
- › [SAMHSA — Drug-Free Workplace Act: contractors and grantees](#)
- › [EEOC — Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
- › [OSHA — Workers' rights](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/drug-alcohol-policy-us> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.