

CITY OF ALPENA

STANDARD OPERATING POLICY

SUBJECT: Drug and Alcohol Problems in
the Workplace

SOP No.: 19

Date Issued: 1-3-96

Effective Date: 1-3-96

Copies to: All Department Heads

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

I. Purpose The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for drug and alcohol problems in the workplace.

A. SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Employees who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work are often less productive at their jobs and may be hazardous to other employees. Drug or alcohol abuse can result in absenteeism, tardiness, carelessness, accident/injury, insubordination, or other poor work performance. As a supervisor, your concern is good job performance and providing a safe work environment. Dealing with drug or alcohol abuse is another way of improving an employee's ability to do work effectively and safely.

These guidelines are designed to help supervisors deal with employees who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work.

B. BEHAVIOR AND JOB PERFORMANCE "WARNING SIGNS"

Signs of Deteriorating Job Performance

Physical Signs or Condition:

Weariness, exhaustion
Untidiness
Yawning excessively
Blank stare

Sleepiness (nodding)
Unsteady walk
Sunglasses worn at
inappropriate time

Slurred speech
Unusual effort to cover arms

Changes in appearance
after lunch or break

Mood:

Appears to be depressed all
the time or extremely
anxious all the time
Irritable
Suspicious

Complains about others
Emotional unsteadiness
(e.g. outburst of
crying)
Mood changes after lunch
or break

Actions:

Withdrawn or improperly
talkative
Spends excessive amount of
time on the telephone
Argumentative

Has exaggerated sense of
self importance
Displays violent behavior
Avoids talking with
supervisor regarding
work issues

Absenteeism:

Acceleration of absenteeism
and tardiness, especially
Mondays, Fridays, before
and after holidays
Frequent unreported absences
later explained as
"emergencies"
Unusually high incidence of
colds, flu, upset stomach,
headaches
Request to leave work early
for various reasons

Frequent use of
unscheduled vacation
time
Leaving work area more
than necessary (e.g.,
frequent trips to water
fountain and bathroom)
Unexplained disappearance
from the job with
difficulty in locating
employee

Accidents:

Taking of needless risks
Disregard for safety of
others

Higher than average
accident on and off the
job

Work Patterns:

Inconsistency in quality of

Difficulty in recalling

work
 High and low period of productivity
 Poor judgment/more mistakes than usual and general carelessness
 Lapses in concentration

instructions
 Difficulty in remembering own mistakes
 Using more time to complete work/missing deadlines
 Increased difficulty in handling complex situations

Relationship to Others on the Job:

Overreaction to real or imagined criticism
 Avoiding and withdrawing from peers
 Complaints from co-workers
 Borrowing money from fellow employees

Complains of problems at home such as separation, divorce, and child discipline problems
 Persistent job transfer requests

C. DOCUMENTATION

1. Document all signs of unusual behavior and deteriorating job performance.
2. Be specific in recording when and where you observe signs of unusual behavior and deteriorating job performance.
3. Get another management witness.
4. If possible, include any corroborating evidence to substantiate drug or alcohol abuse.
5. Preserve all confiscated material.
6. Document the date and time any signs of unusual behavior and deteriorating job performance are discussed with an employee and make a record of the content of the discussion.
7. Inform the employee that he/she will be required to undergo evaluation by the Employee Assistance Program.

D. CONFRONTING AN EMPLOYEE

The Impaired Employee:

1. Get another management witness.
2. Try to get physical evidence.
3. Secure the scene so evidence is not removed.
4. Order the employee to give you the drugs/alcohol.
5. If the employee refuses, treat as insubordination.
6. Don't leave the employee alone.
7. If the employee is a union employee, get a steward.
8. Question the employee about his/her behavior in a private area.
9. Offer the employee drug/alcohol test.
10. Suspend the employee.
11. Assist the employee in getting home.
12. Document the incident (who, what, when, where, why, and how).
13. Preserve all confiscated material.

Deteriorating Job Performance:

1. Get another management witness.
2. If the employee is a union employee, get a steward.
3. Question the employee about his/her behavior in a private area.
4. Warn the employee that his/her behavior is putting his/her job in jeopardy.
5. If after questioning the employee you have reason to believe the employee is impaired, do the following:
 - a. If your company has a drug/alcohol policy that allows testing, request the employee submit to drug/alcohol test.
 - b. Suspend the employee.
 - c. Assist the employee to getting home or to testing.

6. If after questioning the employee you believe that the employee may have a substance abuse problem, do the following:
 - a. Do not accuse the employee of having a drug or alcohol problem.
 - b. Explain to the employee that if he/she has a substance abuse problem, where to go for assistance.
7. Document the incident (who, what, when, where, why, and how).

Peter Parker, City Manager