



# CITY OF VANCOUVER CORPORATE POLICY

SUBJECT: Substance Abuse	
CATEGORY: Employment	POLICY NUMBER: AE-021-01

## PURPOSE

This sets out the City of Vancouver's position on substance abuse by city staff.

## SCOPE

All City staff.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

### 1 General

The City of Vancouver recognizes alcohol and substance addiction as a treatable disease. It is committed to the health and safety of its employees through a policy that will not tolerate substance abuse where such abuse affects individual employee job performance.

Society no longer tolerates the misuse of alcohol, drugs or medications. The City of Vancouver recognizes that it and its employees have the responsibility to ensure the workplace remains free from adverse health effects.

The use of illicit drugs, the inappropriate use of alcohol, and the misuse of medications and other substances can have serious adverse effects on an employee's health, safety and job performance. Misuse of these substances often negatively impacts other employees, customers, and the community. Each employee has a personal responsibility to themselves, other employees and the City to help eliminate drug and alcohol misuse in the workplace. Alcohol or drug dependency is a treatable condition and early intervention greatly improves the probability of lasting recovery.

This policy is put into motion when an employee's abuse of any mood altering substance has a negative impact on the job. When an employee's work is found to be adversely affected or if in the opinion of the supervisor the employee's safety or the safety of others is at risk by the influence of a mood altering substance, whether legal or illegal, that employee will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

### 2 Employee responsibilities

As a City employee, you are expected to:

- promote a working environment that does not tolerate the inappropriate use of alcohol, illegal drugs or misuse of medications;

- seek assistance, if required, by way of a confidential assessment, counselling and referral through the Employee Assistance Program; and
- ensure you do not consume during, or report to work under, the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or misuse of medications.

For those employees in a safety sensitive position (defined as a position in which an employee enters into situations or has control of processes or equipment that pose a significant hazard to themselves, their co-workers and/or the general public):

- no amount of alcohol or illegal drugs in the bloodstream will be tolerated; and
- mind or mood altering medications must be controlled to ensure they do not adversely affect the work being done

### 3 Employer responsibilities

The City recognizes that it has a leadership role to play in any case of inappropriate substance use or substance abuse among its employees. Key to that leadership role is the promotion of substance abuse programs for treatment and ongoing management of job performance.

The City of Vancouver will:

- provide a program emphasizing awareness, education and training, and voluntary self-referral for assistance;
- support the rehabilitation and return to work of employees who have had problems with alcohol, illegal drug or medication dependency within the principles of "duty to accommodate";
- emphasize the process of managing performance on the job; and
- provide sickness and disability benefits to the extent of eligibility when:
  - an employee is cooperating fully in a treatment program and requires time away from work for program appointments; and
  - an employee is unable to work, but is following a prescribed treatment program under medical supervision and is cooperating fully.

All City employees will be made aware of this policy through brochures, staff meetings, documented crew talks & pay statement attachments. Gross violations of this policy will be subject to immediate termination. When an employee allows his or her consumption of substances to negatively impact on the job, the following steps are appropriate:

- STEP 1** The first incident will result in the employee being sent home for the balance of the day without pay. The supervisor will issue a warning letter which will reference the Employee Assistance Program; a copy of the letter will be placed on the employee's file.
- STEP 2** The second incident will bring about a ten day suspension with another letter outlining the various alternatives for obtaining help, including the Employee Assistance Program.
- STEP 3** The third occasion will bring about a 90 day suspension with a rigid return to work agreement. All substance abuse treatment needs will be determined by an external physician chosen by the employee from a list of

approved addiction treatment professionals. The particular recovery needs of the employee will also be reviewed by that physician.

Prior to the employee's return to work, they must provide letters to the City attesting to their cooperative involvement in each aspect of their recovery. If there are any negative responses at the end of the 90 day suspension the employee will be immediately terminated from employment.

The return to work agreement is a document signed by the employee, Supervisor, Union and treating professional. Any deviations from or failure to sign the return to work agreement will result in immediate termination.

**APPROVAL HISTORY**

<b>ISSUED BY:</b> Director of Human Resources	<b>APPROVED BY:</b> Council	<b>DATE:</b> 1998/03/05
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