Many environments of the workplace require an employee to be alert. There is no safe level of impairment in the workplace. Substance abuse is commonly thought as an addiction or dependence. However, use can be anywhere on the spectrum from recreational to frequent.

**What is impairment?**

Workplace impairment means being unfit to safely perform work. People who are impaired on the job can injure themselves or others. Impairment can be the result of many situations; this includes fatigue or stress. Common causes of impairment in the workplace are the use of substance such as:

* Alcohol
* Recreational Cannabis
* Illegal Drugs
* Prescription Drugs to treat medical conditions
* Over-the-counter medications

Impairment from substance use can cause changes in the body and mind. These changes can affect a worker’s ability to work safely. This may put themselves or their co-worker at risk of injury. Signs of impairment at the workplace may include:

* Compromised judgement, thinking and decision making
* Decreased motor coordination, reaction time and sensory perception
* Psychological or stress-related effects, such as mood swings or personality changes
* Workplace violence and harassment
* Increase in absenteeism or sick leave

**Responsibilities for managing impairment in the workplace**

**Workers**

* Must inform the employer if their ability to safely perform assigned work is impaired for any reason
* If the physical or mental impairment may create a risk to the worker or anyone else, the worker must not do any work

**Employers**

An employer has the responsibilities when it comes to managing impairment in the workplace. An employer can not diagnose a person as having a substance use disorder but should be educated on how to recognize and manage substance use issues. An employer must:

* Prevent an impaired worker from performing activities where impairment may endanger the impaired worker or anyone else
* Refuse to allow a worker to remain at any workplace while the worker’s ability to work safely is impaired by alcohol, drugs or other causes.

**Substance Use Spectrum**

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| **Recreational Use** | **Frequent Use** | **Problematic Use** |
| An employee whose work includes meeting with clients at conferences and social events may prefer not to drink alcohol when discussing business, but will sometimes enjoy a glass of wine with dinner. | An employee with a history of anxiety is going through a hard time at work and, to cope with the stress and lack of sleep, begins to use cannabis regularly. Usually a high performer, the employee begins to arrive late for work and misses a major deadline. | An employee begins to use more pain medication than prescribed, which leads to conflicts with co-workers, incomplete assignments, and nearly causing a serious accident. Cutting back on the medication also proves difficult. |

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| **MEETING DESCRIPTION** | | | |
| **Meeting Date:** |  | **Time:** |  |
| **Location:** |  | **Supervisor:** |  |
| **Number in Crew:** |  | **Number Attended:** |  |
| **Attended By:** |  |  | **Absent** |
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| **REVIEW ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING** | **INCIDENTS/INJURIES REVIEWED** |
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| **TOPICS DISCUSSED** |
| 1. **Substance Abuse and Workplace Impairment** |
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| **WORKERS CONCERNS** |
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| **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN** |
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| **MEETING CONDUCTED BY** | | | |
| **Supervisor:** |  | **Manager:** |  |
| **Date:** |  | **Date:** |  |