



# Fitness for Work Policy

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy states Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council's ("Council") recognition of the potential dangers of impairment in the workplace from fatigue, alcohol and drug consumption, and Council's intended response measures.

## **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience students, trainees and apprentices.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

To formulate Council's recognition of the importance of fitness for work, and to prescribe the responsibilities and procedures to be set out in further Council documents, including the Fitness for Work Procedure, and Social Function Guidelines.

## **BACKGROUND AND/OR PRINCIPLES**

Council is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive workplace for all employees and visitors to Council workplaces. Council is aware that factors such as fatigue, alcohol and drug consumption may affect health and safety in the workplace, including emotional well-being, and in response has embraced the concept of "fitness for work".

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*

*Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008* and associated amendments and standards

*Queensland Local Government Act 2009*

*Queensland Drugs Misuse Act 1986*

*Queensland Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987*

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Drug and alcohol abuse contributes to billions of dollars of lost productivity and thousands of work place injuries every year. The Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council (CASC) takes drug and alcohol abuse as a serious matter and will not tolerate it.

The CASC absolutely prohibits the use of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs at the work place or while on council premises.

It also discourages non-work place drug and alcohol abuse.

The use, sale or possession of alcohol or non-prescription drugs while on the job or on company property may result in immediate suspension or discharge.

CASC reserves the right to demand a drug or alcohol test of any employee based upon reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion includes, but is not limited to, physical evidence of use, involvement in an accident, or a substantial drop off in work performance. Failure to take a requested test may lead to discipline, including possible termination.

The council also cautions against use of prescribed or over-the-counter medication which can affect your work place performance. You may be suspended or discharged if the CASC concludes that you cannot perform your job properly or safely because of using over-the-counter or prescribed medication. Please inform your supervisor prior to working under the influence of a prescribed or over-the-counter medication which may affect your performance.

The CASC will make every effort to assist its employees who wish to seek treatment or rehabilitation for drug or alcohol dependency. The council will consider continued employment of such an employee as long as the employee adequately addresses continued concerns regarding safety, health, production, communication or other work related matters. You may also be required to agree to random testing and a "one-strike" rule.

**If you have a drug or alcohol problem, please ask for our help!**

### **Council recognises that:**

- The hazards and risks associated with fatigue or the use of alcohol, medication and dangerous drugs at the workplace should be assessed in the same way as any other workplace health and safety hazard and risk;
- The consumption of alcohol, improper use of medication or use of dangerous drugs can result in poor physical coordination, impaired judgment and decreased alertness leading to an increased workplace health and safety risk to the person affected and those around them;
- Fatigue and stress not only increase the likelihood of workplace incidents occurring but can also affect a person's long-term health;
- Certain types of pharmacy medicine and some herbal products can cause impaired judgment and decreased alertness, leading to an increased workplace health and safety risk to the person affected and those around them.

**To control the risks associated with fatigue and the use of alcohol and drugs (including medication) in the workplace, Council will:**

- Ensure that a systematic approach is used to manage the issues of fatigue, dangerous drug use, medication abuse and alcohol consumption and their effect in the workplace by planning, educating, counselling and carrying out disciplinary action where appropriate;
- Test for drug and alcohol use where an employee shows signs of being affected by a drug or alcohol, or following a workplace incident;
- Ensure employees and contractors do not endanger the safety of themselves or others through impairment or the misuse of alcohol or drugs;
- Ensure prospective new employees undergo an appropriate pre-employment medical assessment as required;
- Implement education and awareness measures to ensure that all Council employees understand their responsibilities in relation to this Policy and associated documents;
- Provide information to employees and contractors on fatigue management and responsible alcohol and drug use;
- Foster an attitude amongst employees and contractors that it is not acceptable to attend or remain at work whilst impaired by alcohol or drugs;
- An employee who refuses to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing or who tests positive may be suspended from duty pending further investigation and may be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate discharge.
- Ensure workplace fatigue is managed within budgetary constraints and provide support for employees suffering from stress or fatigue;
- Provide an atmosphere that encourages employees and contractors to seek assistance for any physical or psychological problem that may impact on the safety or work performance of themselves or others;
- Provide a free, confidential and professional counselling service through the Employee Assistance Program in accordance with Council's Employee Assistance Policy;
- Ensure that employees will not be disadvantaged in terms of promotion or career opportunities because they have sought or are undergoing drug or alcohol counselling; and
- Ensure that details regarding an employee's fatigue, drug or alcohol problems, associated treatment or rehabilitation, will be kept confidential subject to the provisions of the law.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Dangerous Drugs** - those drugs that are prohibited by the *Queensland Drugs Misuse Act 1986* and the *Queensland Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987*. Examples include amphetamines (ecstasy, speed), cannabis, cocaine and heroin.

**Drug** – either medication or a dangerous drug.

**Fatigue** – the temporary inability, decrease in ability or strong disinclination to respond to a situation, because of previous mental, emotional or physical over-activity, or inadequate restorative sleep.

**Fitness for Work** – for the purposes of this Policy, “fitness for work” will refer to an employee’s ability to perform their work duties to the best of their natural faculties, unencumbered by impairment resulting from fatigue, or alcohol or drug consumption.

**Impaired Person** – a person who has their level of safety diminished due to a loss of their physical coordination, judgment and alertness which may be due to the effects of fatigue, alcohol or drugs.

**Medication** – legal prescription and non-prescription drugs including legal herbal products.

#### **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Fitness for Work Procedure
- Social Function Guidelines
- Employee Code of Conduct Policy
- Employee Assistance Program Policy
- Discipline Procedure.

Council’s related Policies and Procedures are available from Council’s intranet site, or upon request from Council.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 950

**DATE ADOPTED: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**NEXT REVIEW: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015**