



WOOLPRODUCERS  
AUSTRALIA



## Shearing Industry Drug and Alcohol Policy

### POLICY AIMS

The intention of this policy is to ensure that fitness for work is not affected by misuse of alcohol and drugs through education and awareness.

This policy aims to provide a safe working environment for all persons engaged in or around shearing operations, as well as persons providing service or support roles and visitors to a shearing workplace. It sets out agreed industry procedures for eliminating or minimising work, health and safety risks, as far as reasonably practicable, arising from the use of alcohol or drugs. It applies equally to all persons entering a shearing workplace.

### WHAT THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

**Alcohol** is a depressant drug that slows brain activity responses and impairs co-ordination.

**Other Drugs** such as **Cannabis**, **Opiates** (heroin, opium or morphine), **Stimulants** (amphetamines, cocaine, LSD or Ecstasy) and **Volatile Substances** (paint thinners and petrol) can create a high risk of injury in the workplace.

**Prescription medication** can affect the ability to work safely where it may have serious side effects such as drowsiness, poor concentration ability, slowed reaction times and decreased physical co-ordination.

**Shearing Workplace**, a place where activities involve the penning of sheep for shearing, the shearing of sheep, the grading and collection of wool, the baling and loading of wool for despatch and/or the provision of accommodation, food and rest areas for all employers, employees and visitors.

A person is **Unfit for Work** if they are unable to perform the inherent requirement of the job or pose a risk to themselves, others, livestock or the workplace, because they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including medication) or for other reasons.

### LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

**Everyone** working in the Wool Industry has **legal obligations** under Work, Health and Safety laws to do what they can to ensure a safe workplace. When at work, employers and employees **must comply** with their duties under both relevant work, health & safety laws and this policy at all times.

The same responsibilities and obligations apply to visitors to the workplace. Visitors are responsible for keeping themselves and others safe, and must not be affected by drugs or alcohol while at the workplace.

All Parties have an obligation to be fit for work and able to perform the inherent requirements of their job. Indeed, the right to payment of wages (or the contract fee) is usually conditional on actual preparedness and performance of work. An employee who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol during work has failed to meet that obligation.

### POLICY STATEMENT

People working in the shearing workplace must be fit for work without the presence of alcohol or drugs (except prescribed medication taken on, and in accordance with, medical advice as notified to the employer).

People working in the shearing workplace have a duty of care and are expected to report a suspicion of unfitness for work due to alcohol or drug use to the employer/supervisor.

### MANAGING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE

#### 1 Safety is the Priority

A person who is unfit for work due to consumption of alcohol or other drugs **MUST NOT** present themselves for work.

A person who is, or is likely to become, unfit for work due to medication, MUST notify the employer/supervisor of the effects of the medication and steps to be taken to ensure their safety and that of others before attending work while on medication.

A person who suspects that another person is impaired by drugs or alcohol at work MUST notify the employer/supervisor.

## **2 Process for dealing with a person who is unfit for work**

### Identify and communicate the issue

If a person at work appears to be unfit for work, the employer/supervisor, in consultation with the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) where applicable, should talk to the person who appears unfit for work. The person must be notified as to the process for dealing with their lack of fitness for work and related matters and be given an opportunity to respond to concerns of fitness for work.

If the employer/supervisor deems the person unfit for work the person will safely remove themselves from the workplace until they are fit and able to return to work. If this does not resolve the concern, the person will be stood down from work pending either a medical clearance, drug test or return of fitness for work.

### Transport

Where the person does not have their own means of transport home, or cannot safely make their own way home, practicable transport will be arranged by the employer, to be reimbursed by the employee unless otherwise agreed. Return to work will be subject to medical clearance or passing a drug test or screen.

### Pay

The employee may be entitled to pay while they are stood down as a result of their lack of fitness for work depending on a number of factors connected to the employment.

### Further Action

Where a person is confirmed as not fit for work (either on medical advice or via drug test), disciplinary action will be taken and this may include termination of employment. In the event that an alleged breach of the law is identified, the matter may be referred to the police.

Any actions taken including standing down from work will be based on evidence and taken in the best interests of the impaired person and the entire workforce.

## **3 Drug and Alcohol Screening**

Screening for alcohol or drugs is an option for employers/supervisors. If an employer/supervisor adopts a particular approach to drug screening, all persons at the workplace must be notified of this requirement at the time that approach is adopted or prior to commencing employment (whichever is the later). Screening may be random, in response to a reasonable suspicion that a worker has consumed drugs or alcohol, or following a workplace safety incident or near miss. Random drug and alcohol screening will be conducted fairly by a nominated person, and notified to employees at the time of adopting that approach or prior to commencing employment.

The procedure for screening for drugs will be via saliva or urine test. Blood alcohol levels will be screened via a breath test.

The testing procedures, cut off levels and screening procedures will be according to Australian Standards (AS4308 and AS 4760 as applicable).

Failure to submit to a drug or alcohol screening without reasonable explanation in accordance with this policy, will be considered a positive test result.

## **4 Notifying the Workplace**

All persons entering a shearing workplace will be notified by the employer/supervisor that the workplace is covered by this policy. A copy of the policy will be displayed and/or easily accessible at the workplace. All persons entering the workplace will be given an opportunity to read the policy and will be expected to comply with the policy.

All persons visiting the site will be briefed about this policy and the consequences of a breach of policy.

**5 Confidentiality**

Resolution of concerns about an individual's lack of fitness for work from use of alcohol or other drugs (including prescribed medication) shall as far as practicable remain confidential between the individual concerned and their employer. Information about an individual's lack of fitness for work may be conveyed to other relevant parties, including the Fair Work Commission, only where necessary to assist with effectively addressing concerns.

**6 Counselling and Rehabilitation**

A person who has been identified as being unfit for work due to alcohol or other drugs may be offered assistance from individuals or agencies that specialise in counselling and/or rehabilitation.