

Intoxicants Policy

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1. Purpose

The objective of this policy is to ensure health and safety of all employees and maintain a supportive work environment by avoiding the adverse effects of alcohol and drugs (collectively known as intoxicants). Misuse of alcohol or drugs will impair the ability to perform duties effectively and safely and may endanger colleagues, the public and the Law Society's property. The Law Society seeks to prevent the misuse of drugs and alcohol by all employees. The Law Society is committed to assisting and supporting employees and provides confidential assessment and referral services without cost to all employees.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees. Therefore, references in this document to an 'employee' shall be interpreted accordingly.

3. Policy

3.1. Employee assistance programme (EAP)

The Law Society recognises that seeking help for alcohol or drug misuse may be a challenging step. The Law Society EAP is available to provide employees and their families with confidential, professional assessment and referral for assistance in addressing addiction to, dependence on, or problems with alcohol, drugs, or other personal problems adversely affecting their personal, professional wellbeing and job performance.

3.2. Your Responsibility

Every employee on the Law Society premises has an individual responsibility to ensure that they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at work. It is also a legal duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 not to be under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that employees endanger themselves or others. We want to ensure that you and your colleagues are safe and comfortable at work.

3.3. Intoxication at Work

It is considered a serious breach of this policy for an employee to attend work under the influence of an intoxicant. Breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Blackhall Place is a unique environment in that it provides members' services including a bar operation. Employees using bar facilities must observe normal codes of conduct, in particular not drinking to excess, and should never consume alcohol during working time, save at official Law Society events at which alcohol is offered or otherwise unless authorised by a director. The Law Society regards any breach of this rule as an issue of gross misconduct. Please note that this rule does not apply to over the counter or prescribed medication.

3.4. Prescribed Medications

The Law Society recognises that employees taking drugs prescribed by an attending physician may also present a risk to themselves or others, depending not only on their state of health, the nature of the medication prescribed and their effect, but also on the type of work activity in which they are engaged.

Employees taking prescribed drugs should, with primary regard being given to their physician's advice, establish if these drugs may adversely affect their work and safety. If this is the case, they should inform and are encouraged to discuss directly with their direct line manager. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consult the Law Society's occupational health doctor for determination of the effects on work activity and any limitations that may be needed. Please note that any medical information shared will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.5. Support for employees with addiction

Alcoholism and drug addiction are recognised as disabilities for the purposes of the Employment Equality Acts. Alcoholism and drug addiction can be responsive to proper treatment and, as such, employees suffering from a disability will not be discriminated against because of their illness. Employees who have an alcohol or drug addiction will be actively encouraged to avail of professional assistance and given the opportunity to take necessary actions to facilitate their recovery.

However, should an employee fail to respond to, or continue with, treatment, they may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, where appropriate.

Please note that any information shared concerning addiction issues will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

3.6. Misuse of this policy

The Law Society will not tolerate misuse of the requirements and obligations contained in this policy or misuse of the available employee support mechanisms. All individual cases will be assessed with regard to their particular circumstances. Referral to support mechanisms will not arise in every case and the Law Society will not permit employees to use such mechanisms to circumvent disciplinary processes where necessary.

3.7. Reporting illegal activity

The sale, use, purchase, transfer or possession of an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia is illegal under Irish law. The Law Society, having taken immediate steps in line with disciplinary procedures, will report information concerning possession, distribution, or use of any illegal drugs to An Garda Síochána.

4. Review

This Policy will be reviewed when appropriate in respect of updated legislation or good practice. For information on potential reviews please contact the [Human Resources Department](#)