

Standard

Drug and Alcohol



Program Impacted	Employee Experience & Safety The City of Edmonton's staff are safe and supported to achieve their aspirations and deliver excellent services.
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The City of Edmonton is committed to the health, safety, and wellness of its employees, contractors, and the public. The use of drugs of concern, including the inappropriate use of medications, can have serious adverse impacts in the workplace which the City will not tolerate.

Purpose

The drug and alcohol standard establishes the expectations for appropriate conduct, the consequences for non-compliance, provides consistent guidelines, and offers supports for employees who may be dealing with current or possible substance dependencies. Further information relating to the implementation and operation of the City's drug and alcohol standard, including drug and alcohol cutoff levels, can be found in the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual.

Application

The drug and alcohol standard applies to any person who reports to the City Manager or City Auditor and provides services to the City of Edmonton as an employee, under an agreement for the provision of personal services, or in the capacity of agent, student, or volunteer. Contractors providing services to the City will be expected to follow consistent standards, or may be required to adhere directly to the City's drug and alcohol standard by agreement.

This Drug and Alcohol Standard document replaces the former A1128 Drug and Alcohol Administrative Policy and A1128 Drug and Alcohol Administrative Procedure. The Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual are also updated.

Guiding Principles

- **Prevention:** Prevention and early identification of potential problems relating to drugs of concern or substance dependencies ensures matters can be addressed before they become workplace incidents. Employees with concerns relating to substance dependencies should access the City's support and resources without delay.
- **Assessment:** It is recognized that substance dependencies are treatable illnesses and that early intervention greatly improves the probability of lasting rehabilitation and recovery. The City of Edmonton supports voluntary disclosure and will provide assistance in seeking advice, assessment, and treatment.
- **Rehabilitation:** The City of Edmonton is prepared to assist an employee with a current or potential substance dependency in seeking expert assistance.
- **Treatment:** Eligible employees who are candidates for primary treatment will be expected to enter into a written agreement to support their recovery.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality will be maintained except where limited disclosure is necessary for related health and safety concerns pursuant to City policy or legislation.
- **Accountability:** Employees have an obligation to work safely. Employees are expected to make responsible decisions regarding drugs of concern such that any off-duty or medicinal use is compatible with the safe and productive performance of their job duties. Accessing assistance or disclosing a current or emerging substance dependency does not eliminate the requirement for compliance with the drug and alcohol standard.

Requirements

- **Prohibitions**

Employees are not permitted to report for work unfit for work/duty. This includes having a drug or alcohol level equal to or in excess of any cutoff level(s) set out in the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual.

Except as otherwise stated in the drug and alcohol standard, employees are not permitted to use, distribute, offer or sell drugs of concern or related paraphernalia while at work, on City business or on City premises. Possession of illicit drugs or related paraphernalia is not permitted in any circumstances.

If circumstances arise where an off-duty employee is requested to perform unscheduled services, and the employee may be unfit for work/duty, it is the responsibility of that employee to decline the request.

- **Standby and Travel Status**

Employees receiving standby pay for on-call situations are required to be fit for work/duty and in compliance with the drug and alcohol standard.

Employees on travel status for City business may use alcohol and cannabis responsibly upon the conclusion of work provided the employee is not on call, local laws are followed, and the *Code of Conduct* is adhered to.

- **Medications**

Employees must obtain and use medications responsibly, which includes ascertaining whether a medication could cause the employee to be unfit for work/duty. This must be done before attending or performing work while using medication.

If the use of a medication could cause the employee to be unfit for work/duty, it must be disclosed to a supervisor or a Disability Management Consultant. The employee will be required to participate in any process required in determining whether the employee will be cleared for duties (with or without modification) while using the medication.

Failure to meet these requirements may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. For details on ascertaining the effects of medication, disclosing the use of medications, and retaining documentation, see the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual.

- **Disclosure & Self-Help Process**

Every employee must report to their supervisor or a Disability Management Consultant any concerns about being unfit for work/duty, however caused.

Employees will not be disciplined for disclosing, in advance of reporting for duty, the use of a drug of concern, possible substance dependency, or the use of a medication which could cause them to be unfit for work/duty. Employees may, depending on the circumstances, be referred to a Disability Management Consultant and the duty to accommodate may or may not be triggered. Employees with a possible substance dependency are encouraged to seek assistance as soon as possible.

Employees who report unfit for work/duty without disclosing the use of a drug of concern, possible substance dependency, or the use of a medication which could cause them to be unfit for work/duty, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- **Rehabilitation and Supports**

The responsibility for the costs associated with rehabilitation and treatment are generally shared between the City and the employee as both parties have an interest in the employee successfully addressing any substance dependency issue and returning to productive employment. Employees seeking additional information or support in relation to the use of drugs of concern or substance dependencies are encouraged to access the resources listed in the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual.

- **Reporting**

Employees share responsibility for reporting any violations of the drug and alcohol standard. Employees must promptly report any potential safety problems or performance concerns related to the drug and alcohol standard to a supervisor or other person with sufficient authority to address the concern.

Employees who operate a motor vehicle in their employment with the City may have additional reporting obligations found in the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual, or the City's Driver's Manual.

- **Investigations**

In all situations, an investigation will be conducted to verify if a violation has occurred before disciplinary action is taken. The City has the authority and discretion to hold out of service any employee who is believed to be unfit for work/duty pending the results of an investigation. The appropriate discipline in a particular case depends on the nature of the violation and the circumstances surrounding the situation.

- **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

The City will conduct drug and alcohol testing for safety sensitive positions when there is reasonable cause to believe an employee may be unfit for work/duty (reasonable cause) or where drugs of concern may have contributed to the cause of an incident (post-incident). The City may also conduct drug and alcohol testing as part of an employee's rehabilitation or return to work planning. An employee who will be sent for reasonable cause or post-incident testing must not operate any vehicles and will be provided a safe escort.

A refusal to appear for, or participate in, a required drug and alcohol test is misconduct subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Employees failing to appear or participate may be deemed to have a positive test result.

The City may implement procedures to address pre-employment drug screening for safety sensitive positions.

- **Discipline**

Any violation of the drug and alcohol standard may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The City has ZERO TOLERANCE for the use of alcohol, cannabis, or illicit drugs by employees while at work in a safety sensitive position.

An employee found to be using alcohol, cannabis, or illicit drugs while at work will be terminated in the absence of extenuating circumstances.

Employees are not in violation of the City's drug and alcohol standard if they use medication in accordance with the requirements of the drug and alcohol standard.

Definitions

Unless otherwise specified, words used in the drug and alcohol standard have the same meaning as defined in the [City Administration Bylaw, Bylaw 16620](#).

- **“alcohol”** means the intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol, or other low molecular weight alcohol, including methyl and isopropyl alcohol.
- **“cannabis”** means any substance or mixture of substances that contains any part of a cannabis plant, including the phytocannabinoids produced by or found in a cannabis plant, such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and any substance or mixture of substances that is identical to any such phytocannabinoid regardless of how the substance was obtained (e.g. cannabis, synthetic cannabinoids).
- **“City business”** means all activities undertaken directly on behalf of the City by employees, or other persons affiliated with the City of Edmonton, whether conducted on or off City premises. It includes those situations where an individual is representing, or could be reasonably perceived to be representing, the City of Edmonton.
- **“City premises”** includes all land, property, structures, installations, vehicles and equipment owned, leased, operated or otherwise directly controlled by the City.
- **“drug and alcohol standard”** includes this Drug and Alcohol Standard, the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual, and any associated manuals, guidelines, forms, processes or other documents that support or provide further detail to these processes.
- **“drugs of concern”** means illicit drugs, alcohol, cannabis, medications, solvents, inhalants, or any other substance that may change or adversely affect the way a person thinks, feels, acts, or otherwise has the potential to impair an individual's ability to perform their job safely and productively.

- **“employee”** means any person who reports to the City Manager or City Auditor and provides services to the City of Edmonton as an employee, under an agreement for the provision of personal services, or in the capacity of agent, student, or volunteer.
- **“illicit drug”** means any drug or substance that is not legally obtainable and its use, sale, possession, purchase, or transfer is restricted or prohibited by law (e.g. street drugs such as cocaine).
- **“medication”** means a drug obtained legally over the counter, through a physician’s prescription, or through authorization of a health care practitioner.
- **“safety sensitive position”** means any position that requires the employee to engage in a process, function or duty that has the potential for significant harm to the employee, their co-workers, other contractors and/or the general public, including the operation of a vehicle and/or equipment.
- **“supervisor”** means an employee accountable for a particular facility, department or area, including managers and others in supervisory positions directly responsible for the performance of employees.
- **“treatment”** means a process approved by a City Disability Management Consultant, where an individual is participating in recovery related activities, which may include periods of absence away from work.
- **“unfit for work/duty”** means being unable to safely and productively perform assigned duties without limitations resulting from the use of, or potential impairment from, drugs of concern. This includes where an employee has a drug or alcohol level equal to or in excess of any cutoff level(s) set out in the drug and alcohol standard.

Authority

The Branch Manager, Workforce Safety & Employee Health may, after review by the City Solicitor (or another Barrister and Solicitor delegated by the City Solicitor), approve or amend manuals, guidelines, forms, processes or other documents which support or provide further detail to the above processes (including for greater certainty, the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual). However, any amendments to the processes contained in this Standard document must be approved by the City Manager.

Additional Resources

Additional information relating to the implementation and operation of the City’s drug and alcohol standard, including drug and alcohol cutoff levels, can be found in the Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual.

References

The following legislative and administrative references may be relevant to the drug and alcohol standard:

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act, SA 2020 c O-2.2](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Alta Reg 184/2021](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Code, Alta Reg 191/2021](#)
- [Traffic Safety Act, RSA 2000 c T-6](#)
- [Drug and Alcohol Operating Manual](#)
- City of Edmonton Code of Conduct
- City of Edmonton Driver's Manual