TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-DNA · Drugs and Alcohol Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: All workers · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 8 November 2026

For every worker: how drugs, alcohol and some medicines affect safety at work, what fitness for work means, and where to get help.

Alcohol, illegal drugs and some prescription and over-the-counter medicines can impair judgement, coordination and reaction time, putting the worker and others at risk. Impairment can last into the next day.

This talk covers fitness for work, the effects of common substances, medicines and declaring them where your policy requires it, what to do if a colleague seems impaired, the workplace's policy and any testing, and confidential sources of help.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain how alcohol and other drugs affect safety at work, including next-day effects
- Describe what fitness for work means, and the worker's duty not to put themselves or others at risk
- Recognise that some prescription and over-the-counter medicines can impair, and check with a doctor or pharmacist
- Explain the workplace's drug and alcohol policy and any testing arrangements
- Respond appropriately if a colleague appears impaired: do not ignore it, tell a supervisor
- Find confidential support, such as an employee assistance program if the business has one

What it covers

Module	Covers
Impairment and safety	Alcohol, cannabis and other drugs; Medicines; How long effects last
Fitness for work	Duties of the business and workers; Your workplace's policy; Testing, where it applies
Your part	Coming to work fit; If a colleague seems impaired; Getting help confidentially

Activities

- Next morning: a scenario about drinking the night before an early start, and the decision to make
- What would you do: workers discuss responding to a colleague who seems affected

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What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does the package include a drug and alcohol policy? No. It explains fitness for work and how a policy works, and the facilitator guide marks where to add your own policy and testing arrangements.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Drugs and Alcohol Awareness

How drugs, alcohol and medicines affect safety, and what fitness for work means

20–30 minutes · All workers

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

DNA

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ How alcohol, drugs and medicines impair
- ✓ Fitness for work, and the duties
- ✓ Our policy and any testing
- ✓ A colleague who seems impaired, and getting help

This talk is not

- ✕ Our drug and alcohol policy itself
- ✕ Training to conduct tests
- ✕ Medical advice
- ✕ Our policy: **[Your drug and alcohol policy]**

Awareness only. Testing is done by trained people to your policy. Advice on a medicine comes from a doctor or pharmacist.

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Impairment and safety

Alcohol, drugs and some medicines slow reactions, affect coordination and cloud judgement. At work, that hurts people.

- Alcohol: the body clears roughly one standard drink an hour, and nothing speeds it up
- Cannabis: slows reactions and affects attention and judgement for hours
- Other drugs: effects, and the comedown and fatigue that follow, can last into the next day or longer
- Combined with fatigue, or with each other, the effects get worse

A composite example

- A forklift operator has a big night for a mate's birthday. At 6 am he feels fine.
- At 9 am, he misjudges a turn and clips a racking upright. The load above shifts. Nobody is under it, this time.

Feeling fine is not the same as being fit.

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Medicines

Some medicines can impair

- Strong pain relief, including some prescription painkillers
- Some antihistamines, for allergies, colds and travel sickness
- Sleeping tablets, and some medicines for anxiety or depression
- Medicinal cannabis, even when it is legally prescribed
- New medicines, changed doses, or mixing with alcohol

What to do

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist: 'Can I work safely, drive or use machinery on this?'
- Read the label and the warnings
- Tell your supervisor if it could affect your work, where the policy requires it
- You need to say how it affects your work, not what it is for
- Our rule: **[Your rule on declaring medicines]**

Prescribed is not the same as safe to operate.

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Fitness for work: duties under WHS or OHS laws

The business must

- Manage the risk of impairment like any other
- Have a clear policy, consulted on with workers
- Manage fatigue, long hours and stress
- Keep health and test information private

You must

- Come to work fit to work safely
- Not put yourself or others at risk
- Follow the policy, including any testing
- Tell your supervisor if you are not fit

Fitness for work means being able to do your job safely. Some industries have extra drug and alcohol laws and testing.

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TOOLBOX TALK · HAZ-DNA

Drugs and Alcohol Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

Alcohol, drugs and some medicines can impair judgement, coordination and reaction time, and the effects can last into the next day. Keep this page.

Impairment

- Alcohol: the body clears roughly one standard drink an hour; nothing speeds it up
- Cannabis and other drugs: impairment, comedowns and fatigue can last into the next day
- Feeling fine is not the same as being fit

Medicines

- Some painkillers, antihistamines, sleeping tablets and medicinal cannabis can impair
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist: 'Can I work safely on this?'
- Tell your supervisor where the policy requires it

The order of controls

1. No alcohol at work, or before driving or operating
2. Low and no-alcohol options at events
3. Remove an impaired person from safety-critical work
4. Interlocks and fit-for-work checks
5. Policy, testing where it applies, rosters, transport home
6. Self-declaration: say when you are not fit

If a colleague seems impaired

- Don't ignore it or cover for them
- Don't let them drive or operate
- Tell a supervisor: **[Who to tell here]**
- Unwell or unresponsive? Call Triple Zero (000)

Our policy

- **[Your drug and alcohol policy]**
- Know what fit for work means here, and any testing

Getting help, confidentially

- Employee assistance program: **[Your EAP or support contact]**
- Your doctor or pharmacist
- National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline: 1800 250 015
- Lifeline: 13 11 14, 24 hours

Come to work fit. If you're not sure, say so.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not a drug and alcohol policy, testing training or medical advice.

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