



SUBJECT	THE RISK OF BEING IMPAIRED BY ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS
RESOURCES	PowerPoint Presentation – Alcohol & Drugs

ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Facilitator:

The following scenario is from Safework SA resource – read it to the trainees.

Example of a transport incident.

A commercial vehicle driver travelling south from Marree died when his 16-tonne truck left the road before coming to a stop in a dry riverbed. The driver is understood to have been awake for a long period and it is believed he may have fallen asleep while driving. The forensic pathologist's report found evidence of alcohol and prescription medicine that contained a stimulant. The driver's journey was in the early hours of the morning, when fatigue is most likely to take effect. There was no flexible scheduling practice in place at work to enable him to sleep.

ASK TRAINEES THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

What factors contributed to the incident?

Possible answers:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prescription drugs• Lack of sleep• Fatigue | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of concentration• Insufficient recovery times between shifts• Lack of information on use of alcohol and other drugs |
|---|---|

Some things to think about before we start the session and the questions will be answered in this toolbox talk:

- What is the issue of drinking alcohol and taking drugs?
- Do you understand the impact that alcohol and drugs can have on your ability to drive safely?
- Are you aware of the potential consequences of alcohol and drug use while driving a vehicle?
- Do you recognise the effects of alcohol and drugs on the safety of others while under the influence?
- How does your behaviour as a heavy vehicle driver employee impact on your employer's business when you are under the influence of alcohol and drugs?
- What is the business's COR duty to manage safety risks for employees relating to alcohol and drugs risks?

We will cover a broad range of issues from normal driving to driving as an employee.



Substance abuse involves overuse (often to dangerous levels) of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Substance abuse can also be called substance use disorder.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MANAGE SAFETY RISKS IN DRIVING RELATING TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

As a driver, it is important to prioritise not only ensure your safety and that of your passengers, but also the safety of other road users and the general public.

It is crucial to both the business and their employees must prioritise the safety of their transport activities.

For both driver and employee fitness to work, the effective control of alcohol and other drugs should form the basis of any fitness plan.

If alcohol or drugs are found to be the cause of a vehicle crash or any other safety related incident that can result in bodily harm, eg: disability, death and legal consequences.

A business may suffer harm to their reputation if alcohol or other drugs are determined to be factors in a heavy vehicle accident or any other safety incidents eg: a forklift accident in a warehouse. However, effective and ongoing management of these safety risks can help a business become a contractor of choice.

Taking proactive measures to address safety risks will help all parties in the Chain of Responsibility (COR) and Workplace Health & Safety, in ensuring the safety of employees and the public while avoiding regulatory penalties.

WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISUSE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS?

Alcohol and other drug related problems can occur in any workplace.

Many factors that contribute to the misuse of alcohol and other drugs use can be brought on through:

- grief
- family and relationship problems



- health concerns
- gambling
- financial problems
- harassment or bullying
- tight deadlines and unrealistic performance targets
- long and/or irregular working hours

WHAT IS THE ISSUE OF DRINKING ALCOHOL AND TAKING DRUGS?

The use of alcohol and other substances (including prescribed and over-the-counter medications) can hinder an individual's capacity to work safely, posing significant safety hazards to themselves, co-workers, fellow road users, and the public at large.

A heavy vehicle driver who is impaired can also affect a business's capacity to fulfill its legal responsibilities under the HVNL and other regulations, including workplace health and safety laws.

Are you aware that being impaired by alcohol and drugs can be categorised as a hazard and poses a potential risk.

The potential risks resulting from these hazards may include:

- risks to the safety and wellbeing of co-workers and the public
- risks of damage to infrastructure (including business owned and public infrastructure)
- financial risks due to disruptions in a business operations caused by an employee

Did you know in Australia, that drink driving is responsible for approx. 30% of fatalities and marijuana is the second most common drug found in road fatalities.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT THAT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS CAN HAVE ON YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE SAFELY?

The consumption of alcohol and drugs can significantly impair an individual's ability to drive safely, leading to decreased coordination, slower reaction times, impaired judgment, and an increased risk of accidents on the road. It is crucial to refrain from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs to ensure the safety of oneself and others on the road.

Driving is a complex task which depends on vision, decision making, reaction time, coordination, judgement and divided attention. Alcohol and many prescription drugs and



over the counter medications can adversely affect such skills impairing driving ability and placing you and others on the road at risk of accidents.

The issue with impairment is you feel fine driving in a straight line, but when an unexpected event occurs and you suddenly must respond, your reflexes are slowed down.

It is crucial to refrain from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs to ensure the safety of oneself and others on the road.

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE WHILE DRIVING A VEHICLE?

Impairment from alcohol or drug substance use (being “drunk”, “stoned”, “high” or “buzzed”) can cause changes in the body and mind. The negative impacts of driving whilst under the influence of alcohol and drugs are:

- impaired co-ordination
- impaired judgement, thinking and decision making
- reduced reaction times – decrease motor co-ordination and sensory perception
- psychological or stress related effects, such as mood swings and personality changes
- increased risk of accidents
- legal consequences
- potential harm to oneself and others on the road

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is a measure of grams of alcohol in the body per 100 millilitres of blood. Australia has strict laws around driving under the influence of alcohol.

Note: Each state and territory in Australia have a Driver’s legal BAC limit for heavy vehicle drivers, please check your relevant state for information or see link below and read Appendix 4.

<https://austroads.com.au/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive/ap-g56/drivers-legal-bac-limits>

In many studies, it has been found that there is an association between the use of alcohol and other drugs and crashes. Alcohol and drugs impair the mental capacity of a human being and therefore effect their driving ability.



For professional drivers it is illegal to drive a vehicle while impaired by drugs, which includes prescription and over the-counter medicines

Side effects of prescription medication include drowsiness, shakiness, blurry vision, slower reaction times, poor co-ordination, confusion and difficulties to concentrate.

It is estimate 1 in 4 Australian drivers ignore medication labels.

There is evidence of the statistical association between marijuana use and increased motor vehicle crash risk. Its use has consistently been found that impair driving performance, cognitive functions, and increase the risk of a crash, to the point of “moderately diminish virtually every driving-related capacity”. Even when prescribed by a GP, medicinal Marijuana can impair driving, and driving under its influence is an offence.

WHAT IS THE BUSINESS’S COR DUTY TO MANAGE SAFETY RISKS FOR EMPLOYEES RELATING TO ALCOHOL AND DRUGS RISKS?

Businesses who undertake transport activities, as an employer or executive in the Chain of Responsibility, should conduct a risk assessment to evaluate the potential risks related to impaired workers.

Employers and executives should understand and support the final risk assessment, determining necessary controls to reduce those risks. Executives must ensure that the business has adequate financial, human, and other resources to implement these risk controls. They should also be actively engaged in monitoring activities to evaluate the ongoing efficiency of the controls and encourage the continuous enhancement of safe business practices.

It is the duty of employers and executives to ensure and oversee employees to prevent impairment by alcohol and drugs, which could jeopardise their safety or that of others.

As an employee you are responsible for your own safety as well as that of your co-workers and any other individuals.

HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISK OF DRIVING WHILE DRINKING?

As a driver if you plan to drink don’t drive, you can reduce the risk of driving by planning:



If planning to drink during personal time, if you do then:

- designate a sober driver
- use public transport, eg: taxi, uber
- book accommodation ahead of time

After a 'big night' of drinking, don't drive use public transport and if you drive a work vehicle organise to take leave from work. It has been proven that alcohol can stay in a person's system up to 72 hours.

If you operate any vehicle for work, such as a heavy vehicle, and find yourself under the influence of alcohol, it is imperative that you refrain from driving to ensure the safety of yourself and others on the road. Driving under the influence not only puts lives at risk but also jeopardises your job, has legal consequences, and can impact on the reputation of your employer.

The following is some reasons why you should not drink and drive:

- Alcohol can impair the ability to drive because they slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times.
- Mixing alcohol and drugs can amplify the impairing effects of each drug a person has consumed.

WHAT IS THE RISK OF DRUGS AND DRIVING?

Any type of drugs can impair the mental capacity of a person, whether it is prescription or over the counter (OTC) medicines and the misuse of illegal drugs.

Prescription or OTC medicines can cause extreme drowsiness, dizziness and other side effects. Always read and follow all warning labels before driving and note the warnings against "operating heavy machinery" includes driving a vehicle. Remember to ask the doctor or pharmacists if the medication is likely to affect your driving.

Illegal drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and methamphetamine can cause different reactions that can affect driving:

- Marijuana (cannabis), and other drugs can impair the ability to drive because they slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times.
- Cocaine and methamphetamine can make drivers more aggressive and reckless.
- Using two or more drugs at the same time, including alcohol, can amplify the impairing effects of each drug a person has consumed



Note: Even if medicinal marijuana has been prescribed by a GP, it still can impair driving and driving under its influence is an offence.

WHAT ARE SOME NOTICEABLE PHYSICAL SIGNS THAT SOMEONE IS AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS?

Under the HVNL a person must be fit to drive a heavy vehicle, they must be physical and mentally fit to drive the vehicle and not be affected by alcohol or drugs.

Some examples of the noticeable physical signs that someone is affected by drugs and alcohol include:

- Glassy or bloodshot eyes
- Smell of alcohol or drugs (for example, marijuana) on the breath or clothes
- Slurred or incoherent speech and talking too loud or too fast
- Lowered inhibitions – doing or saying inappropriate things
- Impaired coordination or motor skills – poor balance and clumsiness
- Sense of confusion, appears lethargic or “spaced out”
- Memory problems or problems concentrating
- General personality changes or mood swings, irritability or outbursts additionally, for drugs:
 - periods of hyperactivity (“wired”), agitation or giddiness
 - appears fearful, anxious or paranoid.
- Near miss incidents
- Habitual lateness and frequent absences

HOW CAN BUSINESSES MONITOR AND ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE WITHIN THE WORKPLACE?

What are some things that a business can do to monitor and address alcohol and drug use is by:

- implement policies and procedures related to alcohol and drug use, eg: drug and alcohol policy
- conduct regular training for employees on the risks and consequences of substance abuse
- provide resources for employees seeking help with addiction, and enforce consequences for violations of the company's substance abuse policies

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- create a supportive and open environment where employees feel comfortable discussing any issues related to alcohol and drug use
- conduct a fitness for work assessment that includes physical and cognitive physical activities
- implementing a drug and alcohol screening program
- recommend counselling and support, eg: employee assistance program
- use your daily vehicle checklist where there is a series of questions to check the driver's fitness to drive (see below)

	Yes	No
I am alert and in good health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not under the influence of alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not under the influence of illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not affected by prescription medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have a backlog of sleep deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMEMBER:

Being impaired by alcohol and drugs can be categorised as a hazard and poses a potential risk.

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REFERENCES:

<https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/chain-of-responsibility/regulatory-advice/managing-the-risks-of-employees-impaired-by-alcohol-and-other-drugs>

<https://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/03.%20RSIYW%20Factsheet%20-%20Alcohol%20and%20drugs.pdf>

https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/topics-tips/alcohol#Combined_drink_and_drug_driving_offence

[DrinkWise-Australian-Drinking-Habits-2007-vs-2017-web.pdf](#)

[Drug-Impaired Driving | NHTSA](#)

[Drugs and driving - Alcohol and Drug Foundation \(adf.org.au\)](#)

https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/49962/drugs_alcohol_workplace_guide_1359.pdf

National Road Safety Partnership Program – VIDEO



Alcohol-Drugs-Video
-1w0ons.mp4

AFRA Drug & alcohol policy

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Items Raised/Corrective Action	Action By	Action completed	
		Sign off	Date

DATE:.....

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