



Workplace drug and alcohol abuse prevention programmes¹

ILO Code of Practice on the management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace

The ILO's Code of Practice on the management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace was developed by a Tripartite Meeting of Experts held in Geneva and was subsequently adopted by the ILO's Governing Body in 1995. The high-level tripartite endorsement of the principles contained in the Code means that it provides an authoritative framework and guidance for joint and tripartite action at the national and enterprise levels. Originally published in English, French and Spanish, the more widespread use of the Code has been facilitated by its translation into other language versions, including Finnish, German, Russian and Slovenian.

The ILO's Code of practice, which emphasizes the preventive approach:

- **calls for joint assessment by employers and workers and their representatives of the effects of alcohol and drug use on the workplace and their cooperation in developing a written policy for the enterprise;**
- **defines alcohol- and drug-related problems as health problems and establishes the need to deal with them, without any discrimination, like any other health problem at work;**
- **recommends that workplace drug and alcohol policies should cover all aspects of the prevention, reduction and management of alcohol- and drug-related problems and that the relevant information, education and training programmes be integrated, where feasible, into broad-based human resources development, working conditions or occupational safety and health programmes; and**
- **goes a long way in establishing the ethical principles which are vital to concerted and effective action, such as the confidentiality of personal information and the authority of the employer to discipline workers for**

For further information, please contact [SafeWork](#)

Tel: +41.22.799.7875

Fax: +41.22.799.6878

E-mail: safework@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/index.htm

of alcohol and drugs.

In addition, the Code draws attention to the fundamental moral, ethical and legal issues involved in the testing of bodily samples for alcohol and drugs and the consequent need to determine when it is fair and appropriate to conduct such testing. In view of the importance and sensitivity of the issue, the Tripartite Meeting of Experts decided to include in the Code, as an Annex, the Guiding principles on drug and alcohol testing in the workplace developed by the Inter-regional Tripartite Experts Meeting, organized by the ILO in collaboration with UNDCP and hosted by Aker in Norway in 1993.

The Code of practice has played an important role in developing a comprehensive and consensual approach to drug and alcohol problems at the workplace, with particular emphasis on prevention. It has also provided the basis for the model programmes on demand reduction introduced by the ILO and UNDCP in many countries throughout the world.