



# TOOLBOX TALK #17

## Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)

Updated August 2016

**I AM safe**  
alcohol and other drugs

**Construction work involves high-risk activities. To work safely everyone must be physically and mentally alert. On site, it's up to you and your teams to manage the risks associated with alcohol and other drugs.**

<b>Project site:</b>	<b>Employer:</b>
<b>Foreman/Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Attendees:</b>	

*This toolbox talk is intended to help start a health and safety conversation and raise awareness about Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD). It is not designed as a complete risk management tool for the activity.*

### Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) in construction

Problem drinking and drug taking at work covers any instance that impacts negatively on the workplace, even if it happens outside work hours and away from work. For example if a person turns up to work after an evening of heavy drinking and is unable to function properly, having slower reaction times and impaired decision making.

Ask your team what impacts of alcohol and drugs in the workplace they've seen? For example – injuries, lateness, decreased performance etc.



## Our AOD policy

This is an opportunity to go through your organisation's AOD policy with your teams. Hand out a copy, or show them where to find a copy of the policy and go through it. Reinforce to everyone that the policy is about:

- Minimising harm associated with AOD use
- Helping workers who may have a problem with AOD
- Giving workers the information they need to take the right actions with anyone affected by AOD
- Promoting a sensible and responsible attitude.

It's really important to go through the following parts of your policy well:

- Why the policy is important to your organisation
- Who is responsible for what – workers roles, supervisors roles and managers roles
- What, if any, testing the organisation carries out - i.e. random, pre-employment
- Where they can find tools to help themselves, such as drink check self-assessments
- The availability of help for people with AOD issues, such as EAP, the Alcohol and Drug Helpline or other providers
- The consequences of violating the AOD policy.

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## Reinforce these three key messages to everyone on site:



### 1. No drugs and alcohol here

Your policy will outline what's acceptable on site – but drugs and alcohol while working is a big no. Not only does it impair workers, but combined with the high-risk work everyone is carrying out in construction it can have devastating consequences.

The AOD policy may not always mean simply stopping work, banning alcohol from the workplace, or suggesting staff abstain in their lives beyond work. It's about supporting the prevention of harm in the workplace with a focus on education, training and where it's needed, rehabilitation.



### 2. I'm fit and ready for work

Being alert and physically ready for work in a high-risk industry is crucial. Turning up to work tired, hungover or stoned reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively in a physically demanding job. It can also put your colleagues and everyone else on site at risk.



### 3. We look out for each other

We look out for each other by:

- Making sure you don't harm yourself or your workmates
- Helping workers who may have a problem
- Giving workers the support they need to do the right thing when someone may be having problems with AOD
- Promoting a sensible and responsible attitude to AOD use.

Ultimately having an AOD policy in place on site protects everyone. We're all here to look out for and support each other.

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## Where do we get more information?

The Safety Charter's Impairment **Alcohol & Other Drugs** webpage has more information which is regularly updated. You can view it [here](#) or by clicking on Improve Health & Safety – Impairment – Alcohol & Other Drugs from the homepage.



**Employee issues raised:**

**Date to be resolved by:**