SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY Management Directive 505.25

Who's Covered?

All commonwealth employees are expected to comply. If your agency receives federal funding or your position is federally funded, then additional requirements exist as mandated by the Drug-Free Workplace Act and detailed in MD 505.25.

Prohibited Behavior While on Duty or in Commonwealth Workplaces

- Reporting to work or remaining at work in an unfit condition.
- Inappropriate use of alcohol or other controlled drugs.
- Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol or other controlled drugs.

Other Policy Requirements

- Employees are to receive information on the dangers associated with alcohol and drug use in the workplace.
- If federally-funded, agencies are to annually certify to that the worksite is drug-free.
- Agencies are to take appropriate action, including discipline, when a violation occurs.

WHAT HAPPENS IF...

I self-disclose a problem to my supervisor?

The policy requires your supervisor to refer you to SEAP. This referral is voluntary and confidential. If you have certain job responsibilities (such as operating CDL equipment, carrying weapons, having direct care/custody/control of patients/inmates/students/residents, or are a licensed professional) you will be required to participate in SEAP before you can return to work.

I have violated the policy but have not been arrested or convicted?

In accordance with agency procedures, you may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Given the circumstances, you may be required to participate in SEAP as a Condition of Continued Employment.

I have been arrested and convicted of a crime as defined in the policy?

You must report the conviction* within 5 days to your supervisor. If you are not terminated, as may be required by the Governor's Code of Conduct, you may be disciplined and will be required to participate in SEAP as a Condition of Continued Employment.

*Conviction means a finding of guilty, including a plea of nolo contendere, disposition in lieu of trial, probation without trial, and Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD).

AM I IMPAIRED?

Drinking or drug use becomes a problem when they begin to impact negatively on your life. These consequences may show up in your family or social relationships, in your personal finances, or in your physical and emotional health.

In the workplace, impairment may be seen in terms of lateness or lost work time, diminished ability to function on the job, or an inability to get to your worksite as a result of a driving under the influence (DUI) conviction and loss of driving privileges.

While you may feel that your alcohol or drug use is not affecting your work performance or behavior, others may perceive you differently. Feedback from family members, friends, co-workers, or supervisors may be your first source of insight that impairment exists.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP: 800.692.7459

The State Employee Assistance Program (SEAP) provides free and confidential assistance for a wide array of work and personal problems, including substance abuse. As a selfreferral, you are assured total confidentiality and no one in the workplace will ever be informed without your expressed written consent.

The SEAP program may be considered an option when an employee has violated the commonwealth's Substance Abuse Policy or has reached the point of being terminated from the job. In cases where management chooses to offer a SEAP referral as a Condition of Continued Employment, the employee has the right to accept or reject the offer.

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MOST COMMONLY ABUSED SUBSTANCES

Cannabis

The most common form of this drug is marijuana. Other forms include hashish, hashish oils and pills. While not physically addictive, it is considered moderately addictive psychologically. The use of cannabis results in euphoria; impaired memory, concentration, and knowledge retention; loss of coordination and motivation; animated behavior; and other similar conditions.

Inhalants

Inhalants are commonly-found substances that produce certain effects similar to drugs. Examples include glue, marking pens, gasoline, butane, amyl nitrite, and aerosol sprays. Effects include loss of muscle control, slurred speech, respiratory failure, cardiac arrest and brain and lung damage.

Stimulants

Amphetamines, methamphetamine and cocaine increase heart rate, respiratory functioning, and alertness. The use of stimulants results in feelings of restlessness, agitation, and decreased appetite. The risk of accidents and errors increase with the use of stimulants. Generally, stimulants have a high rate of psychological dependency and possibly can lead to a physical dependency.

Hallucinogens

LSD, PCP, psilocybin mushrooms, and peyote are all examples of hallucinogens. Signs of abuse include extreme changes in behavior and mood, a trance-like state, disoriented perception of time, hallucinations, and heightened suspicion.

Narcotics

Opium, morphine, codeine, heroin, and other opiates are all classified as narcotics and are considered highly addictive, both physically and psychologically. Effects include feelings of euphoria, drowsiness, and respiratory depression. Although some narcotics can be obtained legally, heroin and opium cannot. The use of narcotics will significantly impair the user's ability to operate equipment and to mentally function.

Designer Drugs

"Designer drugs" are created by modifying the molecular structure of an existing regulated drug. These drugs are made illegally by clandestine chemists and can be very toxic. An example of such a drug is ecstasy.

Alcohol and Depressents

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance. It acts as a depressant, decreasing the response of the central nervous system. As little as one or two beers or drinks can impair coordination, concentration, judgment, and thinking. Other depressants include barbiturates, tranquilizers, diazepam (valium), methaqualone, and many other over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Although alcohol and other depressants may be used legally, they represent a significant risk if used in the workplace or while operating equipment. Many depressants are highly addictive and can cause serious medical problems, which if untreated, can cause death.

Although some of the substances described are legal and have a medical benefit, others do not. However, all of the substances discussed in this flyer can impair judgment, mental functioning, and coordination, which can be dangerous to everyone in the workplace, regardless of the type of work being performed.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP: SEAP 800.692.7459 TDD 800.824.4306

