



WADING RIVER FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

5.6 Drug Free Workplace Policy

OBJECTIVE:

The Wading River Fire District is a community in which responsibilities and freedoms are governed by policies and codes of behavior, including penalties for violations of these standards as stated in its rules and regulations. The District has a standard of conduct which prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by employees and volunteer firefighters (use of the term employee hereafter shall refer to employees and volunteer firefighters) on the District's site and/or other sites which may be considered a work site for employees or as a part of the District's activities. The District will impose disciplinary sanctions on employees ranging from educational and rehabilitation efforts up to and including expulsion or termination of employment/ membership and referral for prosecution for violations of the standards of conduct. Each situation will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

POLICY:

It is the goal of the District to maintain a drug-free workplace. To that end, and in the spirit of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the District has adopted the following policies:

1. The unlawful manufacture, possession, distribution, or use of controlled substances is prohibited in the workplace.
2. Employees who violate this prohibition are subject to corrective or disciplinary action as deemed appropriate, up to and including termination.
3. As an on-going condition of employment, employees are required to abide by this prohibition and to notify, in writing and within five (5) days of the violation, her/his supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction they receive.
4. If an employee receives such a conviction the District shall: take appropriate personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination.
5. The District provides information about drug counseling and treatment.

6. The District reserves the right to search and inspect for the maintenance of a safe workplace.

Health Risks of Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Even though specific physical and mental responses to alcohol and drug use differ, the consequences for using either are usually similar. Negative health reactions can result from both abusive and moderate use of any substance. While on-going health problems are often associated with long-term misuse and abuse, acute and traumatic instances can occur from one-time or moderate use.

Alcohol

Ten (10) percent of adults can be classified as heavy drinkers. That is, they consume an average of two or more drinks per day. Virtually all body systems are affected by the long-term abuse of alcohol. Heavy constant consumption may result in hangovers and serious health consequences. Another sixty (60) percent of the population is moderate drinkers. The most common negative health consequences from occasional drinking are trauma related and involve both the drinker and non-drinker victims. The consumption of alcohol is involved in 200,000 deaths in this country per year, ten (10) percent of the US annual mortality. Half of all traffic deaths are alcohol related and driving under the influence is the number one killer of American teenagers.

Narcotics

The most serious medical consequences of opiate abuse are toxic reaction, more commonly known as overdose. Generally incurred accidentally, overdose leads to death when the respiratory and circulatory systems slow down to the point of ceasing to function. More common health consequences of opiate abuse occur not from the chemicals themselves, but from the lifestyles that frequently accompany their use.

Hypnotics and Anti-Anxiety Drugs

Such prescription medications as Nembutal, Seconal, Quaalude, Milltown and Equanil have serious negative health consequences when abused. The most common is toxic overdose which results in depressed central nervous systems, cardiac and respiratory functioning.

Stimulants

Abusers of stimulant drugs are more likely to experience drug-induced psychiatric disturbances than are other abusers. Differences in health-related responses to stimulant drugs are dependent on the mode of ingestion. Nasal and intravenous use creates more acute responses than an oral dose use.

Marijuana

Chronic long-term use affects most body systems resulting in bronchitis and other respiratory difficulties, decreased strength of heart contractions, possible negative consequences on the immune system, acute memory impairment, and possible reduction on growth-hormone production. Episodic use of marijuana can result in panic reactions including feelings of anxiety, fears of losing control or going crazy, or fears of physical illness.

Hallucinogens

The most common health-related responses to hallucinogen use include panic reactions, flashbacks and toxic reactions with ingestion of high levels of some compounds.

Legal Implications of Alcohol and Other Drug Use

A variety of implications surround the use of alcohol and other drugs. This summary is designed to alert you to some of the legal risks you assume when you use alcohol or other drugs. Penalties for illegal use will also be described. However, this summary is only a descriptive document. It should not be interpreted as legal advice or counsel. The regulations summarized here are those most likely to affect employees of the District.

Possession and Use

Check with counsel for specifics of alcohol consumption and use, as maximum levels differ from location to location.

Anyone under twenty-one (21) years of age who buys alcohol is committing a misdemeanor. It is also an infraction of the law for a minor to attempt to buy alcohol.

Public intoxication which interferes with the personal safety or use of public ways is a misdemeanor crime.

It is unlawful to drive a motor vehicle with blood alcohol content (BAC) over the legal limit. The presence of a child in the vehicle may increase the possible punishment of the offender.

It is unlawful for a person under the age of twenty-one (21) to consume alcohol and operate a motor vehicle (zero tolerance for persons below the legal drinking age).

The act of driving implies consent to be tested for BAC.

It is unlawful to operate a water vessel, to water ski, or to use an aquaplane, with a BAC over the legal limit.

It is unlawful to operate an aircraft in the air or on the ground or engage in sport parachuting with a BAC over the legal limit.

Marriage licenses will not be issued to applicants under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

It is unlawful to manufacture controlled substances in the home or in any other unregulated facility.

Growing or processing peyote is punishable by imprisonment.

It is a felony to use alcohol or drugs to aid the commission of a felony, including rape and other sex offenses.

Applicants for professional licenses must not be addicted to alcohol or other drugs at the time of application.

Distribution

It is a misdemeanor crime to sell, give or furnish alcohol to anyone less than twenty-one (21) years of age.

It is a misdemeanor crime to sell or furnish alcohol to a common drunkard or incompetent.

Only holders of retail liquor licenses may sell or expose for sale alcoholic beverages.

It is unlawful for sellers of alcoholic beverages by the drink to employ a person for the purpose of encouraging the sale of such beverages.

Manufacture, distribution and receipt of "imitation controlled substances" or any drug that is falsely advertised, adulterated or misbranded is unlawful.

Possession of paraphernalia is unlawful as is providing a minor with paraphernalia for the ingestion of tobacco or any controlled substance.

It is illegal to use the postal service or other interstate conveyance to offer to sell or transport, import or export paraphernalia.

It is unlawful to import controlled substances except for medical or scientific purposes.

It is unlawful to export controlled substances to any country that has a treaty with the United States prohibiting such export. Penalties vary depending on the country involved.

Consequences

Carriers of motor vehicle insurance can increase premiums, or cancel or deny renewal as a result of driving under the influence convictions.

In certain cases employers' motor vehicle coverage can also be canceled or renewal denied if employees have been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

The Department of Motor Vehicles may refuse or revoke driver's licenses of practicing alcoholics or addicts or those convicted of alcohol or drug related offenses.

Refusal to submit to blood alcohol content tests will result in a six-month suspension of driving privileges, two-year suspension if there has been a prior such offense within seven years, and three-year suspension for two or more offenses within seven (7) years. In such cases, vehicles can also be impounded and sold as nuisances.

Employers may refuse to hire or may fire an employee who cannot perform job duties or endangers his/her or others' health or safety due to current use of alcohol or other drugs.

State disability retirement allowances are not paid if the disability is due to the intemperate use of alcohol or other drugs.

No addict or person in danger of becoming an addict may be employed as a peace officer.

Drunkenness on duty, intemperance or addiction are causes for discipline for any employee.

Examinations for certifications can be refused and certifications withdrawn by the State Personnel Board for anyone who is addicted to alcohol or other drugs.

Discharge from employment "as a result of an irresistible compulsion to use or consume intoxicants" disqualifies claimants from receiving unemployment benefits, as does any institutionalization as a drug addict.

Disability insurance benefits may be denied "for any loss sustained or contracted in consequence of the insured's being intoxicated or under the influence of any controlled substances unless administered on the advice of a physician."

Permanent or probationary employees of the District may be terminated, demoted, or suspended for addiction to controlled substances or drunkenness in the workplace.

Penalties for the manufacture, distribution or dispensing of, or possession with intent to manufacture, illegal drugs vary significantly depending on the substance and the amount in question. Both fines and incarceration are imposed.

Drug traffickers lose federal benefits for five (5) to ten (10) years to life after conviction. Drug possessors lose benefits for up to one (1) year and can be required to enter treatment, undergo testing and/or perform community service.

Where to Get Help

A number of community resources are available to help you, including:

Community Resources

Employee Assistance Program

Alcoholics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

County Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Services

This document is intended solely as a resource. The District does not endorse programs and/or agencies listed on this document and accept no responsibility for treatment provided by these agencies/programs, nor does it guarantee insurance coverage of treatment.

This document is not a comprehensive listing of alcohol/chemical dependency treatment programs. Other sources for both in-patient and out-patient alcohol/chemical dependency treatment programs may be located by consulting your family physician, local telephone directory under the heading "Drug Treatment Programs," or through the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

RELATED POLICIES

1.2 Whistle Blower Policy

1.12 Disciplinary Procedure Policy

5.0 Leave Policy

5.5 Physical Examination Policy

5.7 HIPAA Policy

Adopted by the Wading River Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners on Monday, 09/26/11.

Edward Frost, Chairman
Timothy Deveny, Commissioner
Michael Harrigan, Commissioner
Thomas Lateulere, Commissioner
James Meier, Commissioner