Fit to Work and Impairment

Impairment at Work

Impairment (also known as unfit for duty/work) at any worksite can have severe consequences for not only the impaired worker, but also their coworkers, supervisor, and employer.

Impairment is a hazard and, as with any workplace hazard, employers must identify, assess, and control it. Having a workplace policy that details the importance of workers being fit for duty; identifies roles within the internal responsibility system; and outlines requirements for reporting and controlling impairment is vital to keeping worksites safe across the north.

What is impairment?

The term impairment refers to a variety of conditions and/or substances that impact a worker's normal ability to work safely. Impairment can come from fatigue, stress, illness, or the use of alcohol, illicit drugs, prescribed and over-the-counter medication.

What does impairment look like?

While it varies from one individual to another, some general red flags for impairment include:

- erratic behaviour, increased conflicts, and overreaction to feedback or during interactions;
- ignoring safety procedures or taking risks;
- poor coordination or working in an unsafe manner;
- reduced productivity or work quality;
- consistent absence or lateness;
- smell of alcohol or drugs, red eyes, or slurred speech.

Review the following WSCC safety sheets for more information on the different forms of impairment: fatigue, alcohol, cannabis, and medication and illness.

Impairment policy

Employers can reduce the impact of impairment in their workplace by having clear policies and procedures in place. They do this by:

- conducting a hazard and risk assessment for impairment in the workplace, including aspects of work which could create a state of impairment (late shifts, stressful deadlines) and risks if a worker is impaired;
- training supervisors and workers on how to recognize impairment and how to report it;
- giving clear guidance within the policy on the roles and responsibilities of employers, managers, supervisors, workers, and volunteers:
- ensuring managers and supervisors apply worksite policy and procedures consistently and have a schedule for reviewing the policy regularly;
- preparing for impairment—employers do not need details on medication or illness, but need to know how these factors impact a worker's ability to do their job safely.

Northwest Territories and Nunavut Safety Legislation

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Section 35.1, Impairment, and Mine Health and Safety Regulations, Section 18.1.01 (NT), Impairment and Section 18.02.1 (NU), Impairment





Sample Impairment Policy

Relevant Legislation: Mine Health and Safety Act, Mine Health and Safety Regulations, Safety Act, and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

SCOPE

(Insert Company Name) is responsible for creating a safe work environment for all workers, management, visitors, contractors, and members of the public. This includes addressing any issue that may impair a worker's ability to safely complete their work functions.

OBJECTIVES

<u>Definition:</u> Impairment includes, but is not limited to, the effects of alcohol, illicit drugs, recreational drugs, prescribed medications, non-prescription medications, fatigue, stress, illness, and/or any issue which may impair a worker's judgment or performance.

<u>Roles and Responsibilities:</u> Managers and supervisors must be able to identify and promptly address all concerns about an individual's ability to perform their job safely. Owners, managers, supervisors, and workers will be trained on hazard identification specific to impairment at the worksite, as well as how to mitigate and control the risks of impairment.

(Insert Company Name) will specifically identify hazards through the following methodology:

<u>Employee Conduct Standards and Procedures:</u> All individuals working at (Insert Company Name), including contractors, must report fit for work and be able to perform their duties safely without limitations due to impairment.

- Workers will receive training on how to identify and report impairment at the worksite.
- (Insert Company Name) will provide an anonymous reporting system for workers to notify a supervisor of the potential impairment of an individual at the worksite.

<u>Management Conduct Standards and Procedures:</u> Any workers suspected to be impaired will be sent home immediately in transportation provided by (Insert Company Name). The manager or supervisor must document and report the incident to the CEO, Human Resources Department, and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (representative).

- Owners, managers, and supervisors will receive training on how to identify, document, and report impairment at the worksite. They will also receive training on employee protection, and corrective actions respecting employees who breach this policy.
- (Insert Company Name) will provide access to this policy and additional resources to all workers. The implementation plan is as follows:
- (Insert Company Name) will accommodate (when applicable) and will determine if a worker is fit to perform job-specific procedures which align with the bona fide occupational requirements of the position.

<u>Confidentiality:</u> All workers reporting impairment will be kept anonymous through the reporting system. The names and identifiable information of those who report impairment to supervisors in person will be kept confidential.

Prevention: (Insert Company Name) and its workers commit to the following measures to prevent workplace impairment:

- (Insert Company Name) and its workers do not permit the presence or influence of illicit drugs, recreational drugs, or alcohol on the worksite at any time.
- (Insert Company Name) commits to providing education to workers on substance dependence, stress, life/work balance, mental health, and their requirements under this policy. Examples of education provided are:
- (Insert Company Name) will, alongside the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, review work hours, scheduling, and evening process every 3 years in an effort to minimize the requirement for shift work and night/evening work.

<u>Violation:</u> Any individual who does not adhere to the impairment policy is subject to discipline, which may include immediate dismissal, and/or their actions being reported to the RCMP.

<u>Evaluation:</u> This policy will be reviewed once every year by (Insert Company Name) with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (Representative). Details of the evaluation mechanism:

Authorized by (print name):		Effective on:
Signed	To be reviewed by:	To be reviewed on: