



Position Statement

Drug and Alcohol-Free Awareness

Submitted by the IAFC Safety, Health and Survival Section

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) supports and encourages drug and alcohol-free fire and emergency services agencies/organizations.

All fire and emergency services agencies/organizations should develop written policies and have procedures in place to support and enforce this policy recommendation. Agencies should have drug and alcohol testing procedures, including provisions for random testing, testing for cause, and critical event testing as a result of any incident that causes measurable damage to apparatus or property; or injury/death of civilians or agency/organization personnel.

A. Alcohol

No member of a fire and emergency services agency/organization shall participate in any operational or support aspect of the organization while under the influence of alcohol, including but not limited to, any fire and emergency operations, fire-police, training, administrative functions, rehab, etc.

If a member of a fire and emergency services organization has consumed alcohol within the previous eight (8) hours, or is still impaired by alcohol consumed previous to the eight (8) hours, they should voluntarily remove themselves from the activities and functions of the fire and emergency services agency/organization and from any capacity in which they are representing their agency/organization.

No alcohol shall be permitted on the premises of any operational portion of the fire and emergency services organization, including but not limited to the apparatus, the apparatus floor, the station living areas, administrative offices, etc.

A.1. Social Halls

Fire and emergency services agencies/organizations that raise funds by operating and renting or hosting events in social halls should provide a clear and distinct separation of facilities to help enforce this position. Further, the agency/organization's drug and alcohol-free awareness position should be shared with other users of the department's facilities to support enforcement. Departments should obtain appropriate legal advice concerning insulation from liability associated with any activities that occur on their premises.

B. Illegal Controlled Substances

Fire and emergency services agencies/organizations should not tolerate the possession, use and/or sale of illegal controlled substances. If there is reasonable cause to believe a member of the department is involved with the possession, use and/or sale of illegal controlled substances, they may be suspended until the completion of an internal and/or external investigation, which may include drug testing.

Additionally, organizations shall not tolerate the misuse of legal substances for illegal purposes.

C. Over-the-Counter and Prescription Medications

Agency/organization personnel who use over-the-counter and prescription medications should consult with a health professional on the specifics of their operational position to ensure that such medications do not negatively impact their ability to perform the essential functions of their position.

Any personnel using over-the-counter or prescription medications where potential side effects that may reasonably affect the performance of their duties have been identified by a healthcare provider or manufacturer's packaging should report their use to their supervisor when they are functioning in a capacity responsible for emergency and non-emergency operations. Upon notification, supervisors should, in the case of prescription medications, direct personnel to obtain appropriate documentation from the prescribing healthcare provider attesting to the medication's safety while performing the essential duties of the fire service position. In the case of over-the-counter medications, supervisors should contact the fire department physician or other health care provider to consult on the potential side effects. Personnel should refrain from engaging in such activities until the appropriate release is obtained.

D. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Many agencies/organizations have Employee Assistance Program which provide assistance to personnel and their families suffering from alcohol or drug abuse.

It is the individual member's responsibility to seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program before alcohol or drug problems lead to disciplinary actions.

Assistance should not be construed as condoning any form of substance abuse nor interpreted as a waiver of the agency/organization's right to maintain discipline, a safe environment, and respond to unsatisfactory job performance or other problems due to substance abuse.

ADOPTED BY: IAFC Board of Directors

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