

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

POLICY MANUAL

Section	
Policy Number	
Policy Title	Alcohol & Drug Use Policy

POLICY OBJECTIVE

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District is committed to protecting *employees* and the public from the potential adverse effects of the inappropriate use of alcohol and drugs. The *District* and its *employees* have a responsibility to ensure that the workplace remains free from adverse health effect.

The *District* believes that *addiction* is a treatable disease and will promote employee self-awareness and voluntary referral for treatment to get well. Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District will support the rehabilitation and return to work of employees who are experiencing difficulties with *substance use disorder*.

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District recognizes that prevention and early intervention improves the probability of lasting recovery. Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District will provide education on early detection, intervention and rehabilitation initiatives.

DEFINITIONS

“*Accident*” means an event resulting in significant injury to a person(s) or significant property damage;

“*Addiction (Substance Use Disorder)*” means a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress;

“*Addiction Specialist*” means a physician certified in the specialty of addiction medicine;

“*Alcohol*” means the intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol (including but not limited to beer, wine, and distilled spirits);

“*Board of Trustees*” means the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District;

“*District*” means the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District;

“*District Premises*” means any and all property, facilities, land, parking lots, structures and vehicles owned, leased, used or under the control of the District, and /or any incident or training site to which an employee is assigned;

“*Employee*” for purposes of this policy means casual, part-time and regular employees including paid-on-call members and volunteers acting on behalf of the District;

“*Fire Chief*” means the officer position as established in the *District’s* “Fire Department Establishment and Operations Bylaw”, Bylaw No. 59;

“*Fit for Duty*” means that an *employee* is able to perform the duties of the job with competence and in a safe manner as compared to established performance standards;

“*Illicit Drug*” means any drug or *substance* that is not legally obtainable and whose use, sale, possession is restricted or prohibited by law;

“*Impaired*” means that an *employee* is unable to perform job duties in a safe and competent manner due to a functional limitation;

“*Medication*” means a drug obtained legally either over-the-counter or through doctor’s prescription;

“*Near Miss*” means a failure in work performance or other occurrence that nearly results in an accident;

“*Possession*” means the care, custody, control or ability to immediately access a substance;

“*Reasonable Suspicion*” means an understanding based on objective and articulated facts sufficient to lead a supervisor or Fire Chief to suspect that drugs or alcohol might be influencing an individual’s work performance;

“*Risk Sensitive Position*” means any job or position where an employee has direct interaction with members of the public, a role in an emergency response (whether as a field incident technician, firefighter or first responder), a role which operates potentially hazardous equipment or is required to operate a motor vehicle in the ordinary performance of their work;

“*Substance*” means alcohol or any substance listed on a schedule of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* or any impairing agent or any medication used by an individual in a manner that is inconsistent with the instructions of the prescribing physician; and

“*Substance Test*” means an analysis of the biological presence of a *substance* by means of urine, breath, blood and/or saliva sampling;

SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy applies to all *employees* including paid-on-call members and volunteers acting on behalf of the *District*.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The *District* has an obligation to provide safe, reliable and efficient service to the public. As well the *District* endeavors to provide a safe and healthy work environment and promote the general health and wellbeing of its *employees*.

In order to achieve these goals, and to have a safe workplace, the *District* will not tolerate: consumption of *illicit drugs* or *alcohol* while on duty; possession of controlled or illegal substances while on duty; or *impairment* by any means while on duty.

Under this policy the following are specifically prohibited:

1. The use of a *substance* at the work place or during working hours;
2. Being under the influence of a *substance* during working hours;
3. Reporting to work under the influence of a *substance*; and
4. The unlawful *possession* or sale of a *substance* or substance paraphernalia on *District premises*.

An *employee* may be required to take a *substance test* if after an investigation into all relevant circumstances of an *accident* or *near miss* the *Fire Chief* comes to a *reasonable*

suspicion that an *employee's* mental state may be a contributing factor to the *accident* or *near miss*.

An *employee* can be found to have been directly and immediately involved in an *accident* or *near miss* only when it is reasonably determined after an investigation that the actions or omissions of the *employee* contributed to the detrimental outcome of the *accident* or *near miss*.

Responsibility of Employees

It is the responsibility of every *employee* to arrive at work *fit for duty* and to conduct themselves in a safe and lawful manner while on duty. It is the responsibility of every employee not to use drugs or alcohol or be impaired by fatigue, *illicit drugs, medications* or *alcohol* while at work.

It is the responsibility of *Fire Chief* and every *employee* to promote and maintain an alcohol and drug-free workplace in the interests of health and safety. It is the responsibility of all *employees* to ensure that the workplace is free from the adverse effects of the use of alcohol or drugs, or the misuse of *medication*.

Employees who believe they have developing alcohol and/or drug problem are expected to assume responsibility and seek assistance from their personal physician, *Employee Assistance Plan*, and/or appropriate community resources before their job performance is affected or Operational Guidelines occur (*WorkSafeBC Regulation, Part 4;4.19(1)*.)

Employees who become aware of conduct by another *employee* which is contrary to this policy and that poses an immediate threat to the safety or health of any *employee*, the public, or damage to equipment must inform their supervisor or *Fire Chief*.

Risk Sensitive Positions

Employee and public safety concerns are paramount in *risk sensitive positions*. Most *employees* are deemed by the nature of their duties to be in *risk sensitive positions*. At their sole discretion an employee's supervisor or the *Fire Chief* may determine the degree of urgency for interventions and *risk sensitive positions* will affect decisions in determining fitness to return to work. Prior to returning to work from an absence related to *addiction* issues, an *employee's* fitness to work will be determined by an *addiction specialist*.

Medication (prescribed or self-administered)

Employees who are taking *medications* of any kind, whether prescribed or self-administered, are responsible for taking steps to ascertain whether the *medications* are

capable of causing any *impairment* to their ability to carry out their job duties safely and efficiently. *Employees* taking *medications* that may affect their work performance must report this information to their supervisor and/or *Fire Chief*. The supervisor or *Fire Chief*, will determine whether to approve accommodation (modification of duties or hours of work) or a leave of absence.

Social Events and Hosting

At *District* sanctioned social functions, on *District premises* or elsewhere, the *District* as employer is required by law to exercise reasonable care to ensure the safety of *employees* and guests. *Alcohol* is permitted at social functions, provided Operational Guideline standards are met and that consumption is controlled.

Driving Limitations/Restrictions

Employees who are required to drive *District* apparatus or vehicles or are required to maintain a valid driver's license to fulfill their job duties must report any license suspension, driving prohibition or restriction that will interfere with their ability to do their job.

On Call

Employees who are placed on call are responsible for remaining *fit for duty*. When unexpected emergencies arise, employees who are not on call may be requested to respond. If an *employee* is unfit for work due to the influence of alcohol and/or drugs it is the *employee's* responsibility to refuse the work and not to respond. The inability of an *employee* to accept work in these circumstances will not result in any disciplinary action.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The *District* will deal with *employees* with *substance use disorders* in the same manner as other diseases which can negatively affect safety, attendance, performance and behavior. It is not the *District's* responsibility to diagnose but rather to intervene in a timely way to reduce risk of unsafe acts and to offer referral to counseling, assessment, assistance and on-going support for recovery.

In addition to assistance from their personal physician, *Employee Assistance Plan* and community resources, the *District* will ensure that *employees* are given adequate time off for assessment, treatment and rehabilitation and that they may access any benefits to which they are entitled including paid Sick Leave and/or unpaid Leave of Absence.

Violations of this policy and related operational guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' DISCRETION

The provisions set out in this policy are subject to revision from time to time at the discretion of the *Board of Trustees*.

CROSS REFERENCES

APPROVALS

Approval date:		Approved by:	
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	