

*Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District*

**POLICY MANUAL**

Section	Employment
Policy Number	AE-2405-01
Policy Title	Alcohol, Drug Use and Impairment 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 inappropriate use of alcohol and drugs

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District recognizes that *addiction* is a treatable disease and will promote employee self-awareness and voluntary referral for treatment to get well. The 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 further recognizes that prevention and early intervention improves the probability of lasting recovery.

*Employee* and public safety concerns are paramount in *risk sensitive positions* that require the public trust.

**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 full 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/ prescribed drug* ” 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 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 in the schedules contained in 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 *impairment* by any means while on duty including but not limited to consumption of *drugs* or *alcohol* causing impairment while on duty and or possession of controlled or illegal substances 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*;
4. *Operating vehicles, apparatus or equipment under the influence of a substance*, and
5. The *possession* or sale of a controlled or illegal *substance* or substance paraphernalia on *District premises*.

An *employee* may be required to take a *substance test* if after an investigation into the 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 investigation may be undertaken to determine 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 workplace health and safety as well as public 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 a 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. Employee obligations are further set out in Operational Guidelines and WorkSafe BC regulations.

*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**

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 work and /or 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* are not to operate apparatus or vehicles while *impaired*.

*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 not "fit for duty" due to impairment it is the *employee's* responsibility to refuse the work and not to respond.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

The District will provide education on early detection, intervention and rehabilitation initiatives.

The *District* will deal with *employees* with *substance use disorders* as a condition which negatively affects 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:	2018-05-28	Approved by:	Board of Trustees
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	