

Workplaces and Substance Use

Safety-Sensitive Positions*



Policies ... to help managers ... or employees address the use of alcohol or drugs and the workplace could take a step back and look at the [impact of] workplace culture and environment, the employee health and wellness, as a base. — Study participant



Workplace culture may encourage substance use.

Some workers and managers reported thinking that it is **generally acceptable to use** alcohol or cannabis before or during work.

Acceptance of alcohol use In their workplace culture



By their close co-workers



■ Workers
■ Managers

Acceptance of cannabis use In their workplace culture



By their close co-workers



■ Workers
■ Managers

2 in 10

workers



and

1 in 10

managers



reported **feeling pressure from others** at their workplace to use alcohol or other drugs before or during work

... there's kind of a macho expectation and any sort of mental health or addiction ... would be looked at as a weakness or something. There's not a lot of discussion about it.

— Study participant



Pressure to use substances and general acceptance of substance use in some workplace cultures are likely working against employers' efforts to manage or reduce substance use risks and improve workers' well-being.



Some businesses have improved approaches to managing substance use risks, such as developing comprehensive policies, training staff, offering accommodations, fostering peer support programs, and setting up mental and substance use health supports.

Contact us at workplace@ccsa.ca for training or for more information and resources such as our [trades toolkit](#).

Background: The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction conducted a national study about workplace policies and practices related to substance use and working in various industries. The information presented here is from workers and managers in safety-sensitive positions who participated in a survey and focus groups, and individuals affected by substance use.

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*Safety-sensitive positions pose potential risks to self, co-workers, the public or the environment (e.g., airline pilots, heavy equipment operators, medical practitioners).