

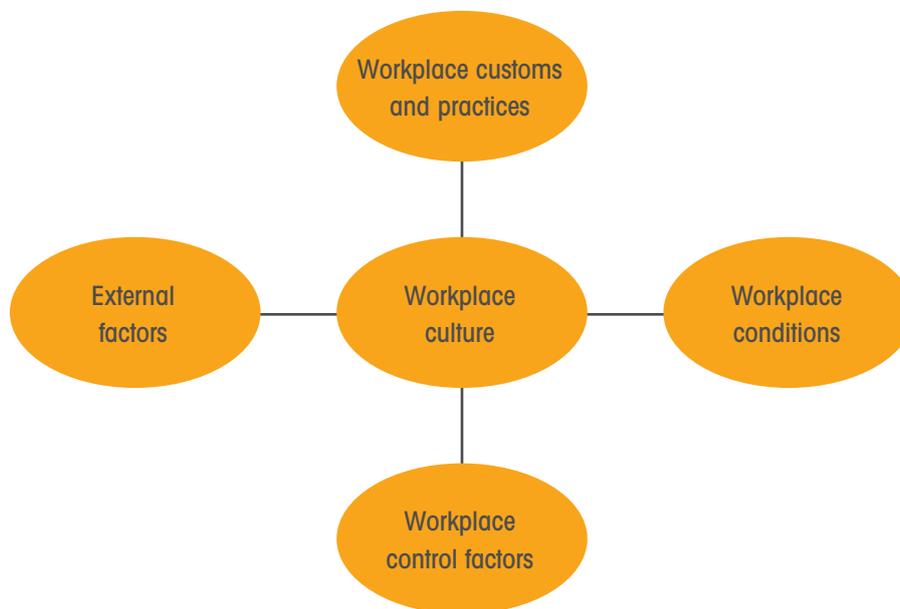


PROMOTING SAFE AND HEALTHY PRACTICES AROUND ALCOHOL—HOW TO EFFECT CHANGE IN THE CULTURE OF YOUR WORKPLACE

This fact sheet provides an overview of how workplace culture can influence alcohol use. It includes examples of what may be contributing to alcohol use in the workplace, along with suggestions for change to promote safe and healthy practices around alcohol.

UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE CULTURE

Workplace culture, which includes drinking norms, is developed and maintained by a variety of physical, environmental and social factors in the workplace.



Workplace customs and practices	Workplace conditions
<p>These consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > workplace subcultures > workplace social networks > the industrial relations climate > co-worker behavioural norms at work > co-worker behavioural norms in work-related settings > administrative/management culture. 	<p>These consist of physical factors that can impact directly on drinking or indirectly via stress or alienation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > dangerous work > shift work > physical conditions of the workplace > task complexity > lack of control over the pace or planning of work.
External factors	Workplace control factors
<p>These include factors external to the workplace that can influence the workplace culture regarding drinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > workers' pre-existing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours regarding drinking > the values, behaviours and expectations of family members > the social and cultural norms of the wider community. 	<p>These include factors contributing to alcohol availability in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > physical and social availability > alcohol policy and procedures > supervision levels > low visibility of workers.

Adapted integrated cultural model (Pidd & Roche, 2010)

PROBLEMATIC WORKPLACE PRACTICES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

The table below lists some of the key things to look for in your workplace that may be contributing to a permissive drinking culture. Included are corresponding tips and examples of how these things may be changed to support safe and healthy attitudes and behaviours around alcohol.

Comcare recognises that effecting change can be a complex process. Employers should consider working in liaison with organisational and behavioural change professionals.

Within your organisation	What to look for	How to change it
The way work is carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > High levels of work stress. > Attitudes about drinking as a way of managing work stress. > Regular social gatherings between workers involving alcohol consumption. > Workers with high or fluctuating workloads. > Workers exposed to incidents of customer aggression. > Workers exposed to a high number of risks and hazards in the workplace (for example, workers on construction sites). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Assess job duties and requirements of workers in the role or work area to identify high risk or more stressful tasks. Consider practical redesign or alternatives for these tasks to minimise work stress. > Promote effective management of work stress. Examples include injecting humour into the work day, developing a team quality-control group to come up with effective ways for managing stressful work or situations, holding regular morning teas, team sports during lunch breaks, workplace massages, and team lunches at venues external to the workplace. > Place emphasis on providing team building activities. These may pose a constructive alternative to social drinking outside of work hours.

Within your organisation	What to look for	How to change it
Team lunches and outings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Alcohol being consumed on these outings. > Attitudes encouraging the consumption of alcohol on these outings. > The use of venues that promote alcohol consumption through availability and environment type. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintain a list of organisation-recommended or preferred venues for work outings. Venues should be selected based on principles of safe drinking practices. For example, consider venues in which the sale of alcohol is not a primary service, and venues where drinks are not 'topped up' by waiters. > Consider outings which are interactive, providing other socially enjoyable activities that do not involve the consumption of alcohol. Examples include ten pin bowling, walking trails, orientation team activities or other types of outdoor activities.
Reward and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Workers and teams celebrate successes with alcohol. > The end of the working week or the completion of a project is celebrated with the consumption of alcohol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Implement formal and informal reward and recognition programs and procedures that do not involve alcohol consumption. For example, recognise workers' contributions with awards such as gift vouchers, certificates of recognition or other non-monetary entitlements. > Consider regular team activities to promote engagement and reward workers for their efforts. For example, team lunches or afternoon teas on Fridays.
Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Absence of an alcohol-and-other drugs policy. > Lack of adherence to or practical application of an existing policy. > Lack of worker and stakeholder involvement in the development of policies and procedures. > Informal processes for managing alcohol-related concerns. > Workplace practices or attitudes that place productivity over the importance of worker health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop and maintain an alcohol-and-other drugs policy that is based on best practice recommendations. > Consult with workers and relevant stakeholders, such as unions, in the development of an alcohol-and-other drugs policy. > Develop a policy that outlines clear and formal processes for managing alcohol-related issues in the workplace. > Incorporate health and safety indicators and outcomes into everyday work. For example, health and safety indicators and outcomes can be incorporated into worker KPIs, team meetings and duty procedures.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about alcohol and workplace culture, see the [National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction](#) website and the [Prevention of alcohol-related harm in the workplace](#) edition of the *Prevention Research Quarterly* published by the Australian Drug Foundation.