Fit to Work and Impairment

Cannabis and Work

Cannabis is a broad term used to describe various products such as dried leaves, oils, hash, and concentrates that may be used for medical, recreational, and industrial purposes (hemp). It can enter the body in many ways, such as:

- Inhalation of smoke (on its own or mixed with tobacco) or vapour
- Ingestion (pills, or mixed with other edible products)
- Absorption through the skin (patches, creams, or salves)

Impairment (also known as <u>unfit for work</u>) at a worksite can have severe consequences for not only the impaired worker, but also their co-workers, supervisor, employer, and any public they serve.

Symptoms of impairment (from any source) can include:

- Inability to concentrate, think clearly, and make decisions
- Dizziness, drowsiness, disorientation, and confusion
- Slowed reaction times and lack of coordination
- Confrontational behaviours, disinterest

Employers: Use policies and procedures to address worker impairment

Policies and procedures on impairment at the worksite – no matter the source of the impairment – set clear direction and guidance for supervisors and workers.

An impairment policy should cover all possible sources of impairment and, since October 2017, must include cannabis.

To help reduce cannabis impairment in the workplace, the policy should clearly indicate the expectations for being fit for work, restrictions on cannabis use, and how supervisors will manage for impairment caused by the use of cannabis.

Supervisors: Inform workers on policies and procedures and apply them consistently

The impairment policy must include:

- The requirement that all employees and contractors arrive fit for work
- Clear expectations on workers' responsibility to complete tasks unimpaired
- How supervisors and workers will be trained to be able to recognize signs of impairment
- How to report suspicion of impairment
- How supervisors are to respond to such reports

Workers: Report to your supervisor if you believe someone at the worksite is impaired

Reporting suspicion of impairment will allow your supervisor to respond and manage the worker and the worksite for safety.

Testing

Employers should seek legal advice before implementing substance testing in the workplace.

Individual worksites may opt for specific worker requirements within their policy, such as how, when, where, or why cannabis can be present at the worksite.

A sample impairment policy is available with the impairment safety sheet.

Northwest Territories and Nunavut Safety Legislation

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Section 35.1, "Impairment"

Mine Health and Safety Regulations, Section 18.01, "Duties of Employees"