

**COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE
POLICY HANDBOOK**

EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 16/2001	SECTION: 100 No. 138
APPROVED BY:	County Council	SUBJECT: Alcohol & Substance Abuse
REVISED DATE:		

APPLICATION OF POLICY

Applies to all employees of the County of Lethbridge.

DEFINITIONS

“Banned Substance” – means any alcoholic beverage, un-prescribed drug for which a prescription is legally required in Canada, the misuse of prescribed or over the counter medications, or illegal drug.

“Employee” – means any person employed by the County of Lethbridge without regard to their job classification.

“Work Site” – means any County owned, leased, operated or maintained facility, property or equipment or any place where an employee is on County business.

“Employees’ Union Representative” – means a shop steward, the Chief Steward or any member of the Union’s Executive.

“Unable to Perform their Duties a Competent Manner” – means that an employee is unable to safely perform the regular and customary duties of their job as a result of being under the influence of a banned substance.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. County of Lethbridge is committed to the health and safety of its employees, residents and visitors of the community we serve.
2. The County’s corporate responsibilities include the maintenance of a diverse infrastructure system, which consists of public roadways, utility services, and commercial airport facilities.
3. The County recognizes that the use of illegal drugs and the inappropriate use of alcohol and other substances, including medications, can seriously affect the safety and well-being of employees and the general public.

**COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE
POLICY HANDBOOK**

EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 16/01	SECTION: 100 No. 138 Page 2
APPROVED BY:	County Council	SUBJECT: Alcohol & Substance Abuse
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4. The County of Lethbridge and its employees have a responsibility to eliminate alcohol and substance abuse that undermines safety and employee well-being within the work place.
5. The County also recognizes alcohol and other substance abuse is a treatable illness.
6. It is vital that County employees directly engaged in the provision of these public services be capable of functioning without impairment and further that measures be taken to eliminate the potential for employees to become impaired during their work schedule.
7. The possession, sale, distribution, or use of banned substances will not be tolerated under any circumstances on County premises or work sites. Any employee violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures outlined herein.
8. The use of alcohol on County premises is subject to the prior approval of the County Manager or designate.

THE COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE:

1. Will clearly communicate its expectations with respect to substance use by its employees;
2. Will provide specific programs of education and awareness on substance use and identification;
3. Supports prevention and referral programs or other initiatives based on shared responsibilities with employees;
4. Recognizes substance addictions and chronic substance abuse as an illness under the Sick Leave provisions of the Collective Agreement or Personnel Policy, and will assist employees in securing treatment through suitable agencies.

**COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE
POLICY HANDBOOK**

EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 16/01	SECTION: 100 No. 138 Page 3
APPROVED BY:	County Council	SUBJECT: Alcohol & Substance Abuse
REVISED DATE:		

5. Will share the responsibility with employees for the identification and early resolution of all performance, attendance or behavioral problems arising from alcohol or substance use and abuse.

EMPLOYEES:

1. Have a responsibility to report to their supervisor, breeches of this policy. The information received will be held in strict confidence. Failure to report incidents that have been observed may result in disciplinary action.
2. Will recognize an individual responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy work environment and will assist the County through prevention and referral programs and other initiatives based on the principle of shared responsibilities with fellow employees and the employer;
3. Have an obligation to seek assistance when the use of alcohol or other banned substances have an adverse effect on their ability to safely and satisfactorily perform job functions;
4. Upon an alcohol or drug abuse problem being identified, will submit to initial assessment and diagnosis and faithfully maintain any course of treatment prescribed;
5. Failure to maintain treatment as prescribed will constitute grounds for discipline.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

No employee with an alcohol or substance abuse problem will be disciplined or have their employment terminated if they voluntarily request assistance in overcoming substance abuse or alcohol dependency.

If any employee violates provisions of this policy, or does not meet satisfactory performance standards as a result of substance abuse, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

**COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE
POLICY HANDBOOK**

EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 16/01	SECTION:	100 No. 138 Page 4
APPROVED BY:	County Council	SUBJECT:	Alcohol & Substance Abuse
REVISED DATE:			

APPLICATION OF POLICY:

When employees voluntarily disclose a substance abuse problem and request assistance to overcome an addiction, the County will:

1. Assist the employee in accessing treatment services or a rehabilitation program.
2. Ensure that provisions of the County's Sick Leave Program are applied to all employees participating in a treatment or rehabilitation program.

If reasonable and probable grounds exist, to suspect the drug and alcohol impairment or possession of an employee in the workplace, and when there is no less intrusive means of confirming the suspicion, and when the employee in question has not voluntarily disclosed a substance abuse problem, the County may:

1. Require that the employee submit to drug or alcohol testing.
2. Require that the employee submit to a search of personal effects, assigned storage area or individual work space.
3. The employer will ensure employees are present when searches are carried out in accordance with #2 above. Employees may also request the presence of the employee's union representative.
4. Refusals to submit to required tests or searches will result in disciplinary measures outlined herein.

The following are examples of what may constitute reasonable probable grounds:

- Post incident evaluation
- Observation of related physical symptoms or manifestation of use or impairment
- Direct or indirect monitoring or observation of abusers or
- The reported use or possession of a banned substance in the workplace.

**COUNTY OF LETHBRIDGE
POLICY HANDBOOK**

EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 16/01	SECTION:	100 No. 138 Page 5
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DISCIPLINARY MEASURES:

Breeches of this policy will result in the following measures:

First Offence – Written warning combined with a minimum two-week suspension without pay.

Second Offence – Termination.

Where a union or employee is of the opinion that a member of administration is not exercising their duties pursuant to this policy in an appropriate manner, their actions shall be reported directly to the County Manager.

Where an employee covered under the Terms of the Collective Agreement grieves the decision of a supervisor or management staff, the normal grievance process shall apply.

Where a non-union employee wishes to appeal the decision of their supervisor or management staff, they shall be entitled to appeal to the County Manager, or directly to County Council in the case of employees who report directly to the Manager.