

Alcohol and **workplace wellbeing**



Each day 47,000 people in the UK take a sick day due to alcohol and 200,000 people turn up to work with a hangover.¹

This paper highlights the importance of alcohol awareness in the workplace to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of your team.

The statistics shown here reflect the concerns of many HR directors, with a significant percentage describing 'alcohol consumption' as a major problem for their organisation.² When surveyed they highlighted the following concerns in order of priority;

- Loss of productivity and poor performance
- Lateness and absenteeism
- Safety concerns
- Effect on team morale and employee relations
- Bad behaviour or poor discipline
- Damaging effects on company image and customer relations.

Evidence shows that even small amounts of alcohol can impair performance – through affecting sleep and inducing tiredness, increasing anxiety and causing poorer co-ordination and slower reaction times. This can impact your employees in their day-to-day work life whether it's decision-making or operating machinery.

The cost to employers¹



UK INDUSTRY LOSES £7.3 BILLION A YEAR TO ALCOHOL-RELATED SICKNESS ABSENCE.



17 MILLION SICK DAYS ARE TAKEN EVERY YEAR DUE TO ALCOHOL.



200,000 PEOPLE EVERYDAY TURN UP TO WORK WITH A HANGOVER.



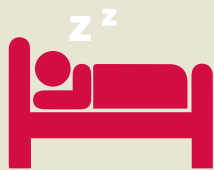
40% OF ACCIDENTS AT WORK ARE RELATED TO ALCOHOL USE.

Confessions of employees

A large sample of employees from a wide range of industries revealed that, due to alcohol:³



59% HAD ARRIVED LATE OR LEFT EARLY



57% MISSED WORK



50% HAD DONE LESS WORK



42% HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH A CO-WORKER



38% HAD DONE A POOR QUALITY JOB



12% HAD BEEN HURT ON THE JOB

The next day

On average it takes the body around one hour to process one unit of alcohol. This means drinking three pints would take around seven hours to leave your system. The following effects have been observed up to 18 hours after alcohol consumption:

- Longer reaction times
- Poor motor performance
- Decreased motor sensory skill
- Decreased vision

In some industries – such as transport, emergency services, construction, utilities – these impairments could be deemed ‘business critical’ as strict policies relating to alcohol are enforced.

Most employees will be aware of these policies and appear to adhere to them. However the problem remains that many people are simply not aware of the impact a few drinks in the evening the night before work can have. Over 20% of all drink-driving offences are people being over the limit the ‘morning after’.⁴

Alcohol education in the workplace is critical, so that employees at all levels and in all industries are aware of the impact and potential harms of alcohol.





Helping employees to think about their drinking

The last three years have seen significant growth in employers implementing wellbeing strategies and programmes, based largely on the premise that a happy and healthy workforce is an engaged and productive one.

The focus of most workplace wellbeing strategies is the physical and mental health of employees, which means alcohol education should be considered an essential component for the delivery of preventative alcohol work.

Drinkaware for Employers is flexible and adaptable, designed to fit around your organisation's needs. It can be integrated into a wider in-house health initiative, or sessions can be delivered by Drinkaware specialists.

Our approach is based on presenting the facts about alcohol and its impact in an accessible, non-judgement way for employees at all levels. After any of our sessions your employees will:

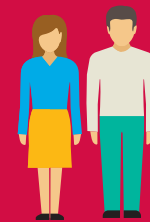
1. Know the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines for low-risk drinking i.e. no more than 14 units a week
2. Know what a unit is – i.e. the ability to calculate how many units are in their preferred drink, and how many units they are drinking a week
3. Understanding the harms of drinking more than the low-risk guidelines
4. The ability to calculate and track their alcohol consumption on an ongoing basis



The alcohol awareness session run by Drinkaware for our staff was informative and interactive with some surprising misconceptions blown out of the window.

Lloyd's Register

The UK Chief Medical Officers' low-risk guidelines say it is safest not to drink more than 14 units a week – it's the same for both men and women.



14 units
a week for both men & women

How many units are in common drinks?



1 bottle (330ml) of premium beer
based on 5% ABV



1 pint of beer
based on 4% ABV



1 pint of cider
based on 4.5% ABV



1 glass of 25ml measured spirits
based on 40% ABV



1 bottle (275ml) of alcopop
based on 4% ABV



1 medium (175ml) glass of wine
based on 11.5% ABV

Whether you're a large multi-site organisation with substantial in-house training resources, or an SME that puts workplace health high on the agenda, there are delivery options to suit.

All come with the full support and backing of the experienced Employer team at Drinkaware, able to advise you on how to maximise the impact of your alcohol awareness initiative.

For the employee, drinking less helps them feel better and enjoy a healthier life. For the employer, it leads to a healthier and more productive organisation.



Sources

1. Institute of Alcohol Studies 2014, Alcohol in the Workplace Factsheet, London IAS
2. Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 1996 Don't mix it: a guide for employers on alcohol at work.
3. Mangione TW et al. 1999. Employee Drinking Practices and Work Performance. Journal of studies on Alcohol 60(2): 261-270.
4. Department for Transport statistics 2015. Reported breath test failures, all drivers and riders involved by day of week and time of day, Great Britain, 2015.

About Drinkaware

Drinkaware is an independent charity which aims to reduce alcohol-related harm by helping people make better choices about their drinking. We achieve this by providing impartial, evidence-based information, advice and practical resources; raising awareness of alcohol and its harms, and working collaboratively with partners.

drinkaware

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