

CHARLESTON/DORCHESTER COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Charleston, South Carolina

POLICY REGARDING EMPLOYEE ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING

I. Scope and Purpose

This directive defines the policy concerning alcohol and drug testing for Charleston/Dorchester Community Mental Health Center (C/DCMHC) employees. It applies to all persons employed by the center

The purpose of this directive is to explain the procedures for obtaining laboratory testing for alcohol and drug testing of employees. These procedures are to be used to assist supervisors in the evaluation of an employee's fitness for duty. Supervisors should also become familiar with Department for Mental Health directives "Drug Free Workplace" "Employees Assistance Program" and "Standards of Disciplinary Actions". Supervisors who supervise employees who operate commercial motor vehicles as part of their duties must also comply with the federal regulations concerning drug and alcohol testing for employees with commercial driver's licenses.

II. Policy

The C/DCMHC is committed to providing within its resources, a healthy and safe work environment; to provide the best services possible to its clients and consumers; to establish and maintain public confidence in the work force employed; and to protect itself from the significant adverse impacts on service delivery and productivity which occur because of alcohol and other substance abuse. There is no reason to believe that alcohol abuse or illegal drug use among C/DCMHC employees is greater than in any other work place. However, the level of performance required of employees demands the center take necessary actions and precautions to prevent substance abuse and illegal drug use by employees.

C/DCDMH employees are expected to report to work fit for duty and free of the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, and are further expected to refrain from the use of alcohol or illicit drugs while on duty

The Department of Mental Health does offer assistance to employees having problems with alcohol abuse, substance abuse or other person problems. Employees who desire confidential assessment and referral for professional treatment should contact the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department/ Job Retention Services

III. Reasonable Suspicion Testing

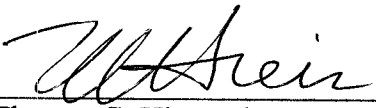
Whenever a supervisor has a reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on duty, the supervisor, after consulting with senior management, will require and arrange for the employee to be tested for the presence of certain illicit drugs and alcohol. Reasonable suspicion must be based upon the supervisor's own observations or reports from individuals who have personally observed the employee, and arises whenever an employee displays physical or behavioral symptoms or reactions commonly attributed to intoxication or other after-effects associated with the use of alcohol or controlled substances

A. Employees are required to cooperate in all aspects of the testing procedure, to include reporting where and when requested, answering questions concerning their use of alcohol or illicit drugs, providing any written consent necessary for sample collection, as well as providing necessary samples of breath, blood, or urine. An employee's refusal to cooperate will subject the employee to discipline for refusal to cooperate in an official investigation. Moreover, in the event an employee refuses to be tested, the employee is still subject to discipline for reporting to work under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol based on the physical or behavioral symptoms giving rise to the supervisor's reasonable suspicion.


B. After the employee has completed the testing process or following the employee's refusal to cooperate in the testing process, the employee shall be relieved of duty for the remainder of their shift, with the explanation that they were found to be unfit for duty, and are being placed on authorized leave without pay. In the event it is later determined that the employee's symptoms or behavior was due to an illness, the employee shall be permitted to apply for sick leave for the period of absence. The supervisor may also approve an annual leave request for the period of absence, in the sole discretion of the supervisor.

C. After receipt of the test results, the supervisor, in consultation with senior management, shall review all circumstances of the incident in order to make a studied and reasonable determination as to whether the employee was under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol while on duty. If it is concluded that the employee was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on duty, the supervisor shall discipline the employee for such misconduct in accordance with Department guidelines for disciplinary actions.

D. As with any medical information concerning employees, the test results should be treated as confidential information and disclose as allowed by applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations



Thomas G. Hiers, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Date
(Revision of policy dated 2/12/97)