

UConn HEALTH

Administrative Policy

2003-39 Guidelines for Assessing the Impaired Employee in the Workplace

Title	Guidelines for Assessing the Impaired Employee in the Workplace
Policy Owner and Contact Information	Human Resources Website: https://health.uconn.edu/human-resources/
Campus Applicability	UConn Health
Applies to	UConn Health, including John Dempsey Hospital
Effective Date	June 12, 2023

PURPOSE:

To maintain the safety of employees, patients and visitors by guiding employees in the process for assessing an impaired employee in the workplace.

POLICY STATEMENT:

UConn Health shall address impaired employees in accordance with this guidance and procedures set forth herein¹. A supervisor, manager, or Human Resources Representative may refer an employee for a Fitness for Duty (FFD) assessment to the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Employee Health Service (EHS) or to the Emergency Department (ED).

Some symptoms are clearly more emergent than others. The supervisor must use discretion and be generally directed by these Guidelines for Assessing the Impaired Employee in the Workplace and consult with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as to whether observations of the employee's behavior, or declining work performance necessitate a reasonable suspicion referral to EHS, during off hours to the ED or if the situation is of a nature that can be addressed during normal business hours the following day. If deficiencies in employee performance or behavior are observed at any time during working hours, the supervisor is to document those observations. The documentation must be directly related to the employee's inability to perform his or her work duties in a satisfactory manner. If possible, a second supervisor should witness and independently confirm any observations of the employee's performance or behavior. Possible observations may include, but are not limited to:

- drowsiness and/or sleepiness, failure to respond when roused
- odor of alcohol on the breath
- slurred, slow, incoherent speech or inability to verbalize thoughts
- inability to concentrate, fidgety or restlessness
- lack of attention - unexplained work errors
- aggressive behavior
- unexplained changes in mood (argumentative, agitated, irritable)

¹ Non-employee members of the UConn Health workforce are governed by the Rules of Conduct Policy 2002-03. Any non-employee workforce member who, in accordance with this policy are impaired will be removed from the workplace and any incident reported to their employer.

- lack of manual dexterity, impaired perception of time or distance
- lack of coordination in walking (unsteady, need to hold onto furniture/walls)
- unexplained work-related accidents or injuries
- excessive absenteeism or late arrival

If there is a safety concern for the employee, co-workers, patients or visitors the employee should be immediately removed from the area and brought to a conference room or office to wait. If appropriate based on the observations of the employee call Public Safety/Police or 911 immediately.

The supervisor should arrange to meet with the employee to discuss the situation. Since the information gained at this meeting may lead to the employee being disciplined, a unionized employee has the right to have a union representative present. If the employee waives the right to union representation, the employee should sign a [Waiver of Union Representation form](#).

A Managerial/Confidential employee is entitled to have a witness with them under these circumstances as well. If the employee declines to have a witness present, the supervisor should document it in writing. An employee's following these guidelines and any recommendations will not avoid normal administrative and disciplinary procedures relating to the unavailability for work or the inability to perform satisfactorily.

Referrals:

During the hours of 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, the supervisor, manager or Human Resources representative should refer the employee to the EHS for assessment. Before referring the employee, EHS staff should be called at x4922 to ensure the ability to respond to the request immediately.

- During off hours, weekends, and holidays, this referral should be made to the ED. EHS or the ED must notify the physician who is scheduled or who is "on call" that a Fit For Duty (FFD) assessment needs to be conducted. The supervisor, manager, Human Resources representative, or where appropriate the employee's union representative will escort the employee to EHS or the ED and have a conversation in person or on the telephone with the physician or provide a written note to the physician indicating why the employee is being referred. In no case should the manager or other employee drive the employee to EHS, or the ED. If the employee is unable to safely be escorted, the supervisor or manager should call for transport or in an emergency 911.
- The physician will see the employee in a timely fashion.
- If the FFD assessment includes blood/urine testing for reasonable suspicion of alcohol or drugs, collection with chain of custody will be made in EHS or the ED. This test is voluntary and consent will be obtained unless there is a stipulated agreement. The EHS and the ED will have a supply of the consent and laboratory order forms. If the employee refuses a blood or urine test, the refusal will be treated as a positive test result and the employee should be clearly informed in writing of the consequences of a refusal. [LINK TO FORM]
- The EHS or ED physician will determine whether the employee is fit for duty and able to return to work, or is unfit for duty and must be sent home or referred for immediate medical care.

Safety Of Employee and The Public:

When an employee is sent home or referred for immediate medical care, the supervisor will help the employee get there safely, but in no event should the supervisor or manager drive the employee. An employee who is sent home as unfit to work should not be allowed to drive. If the employee is unwilling to be dissuaded from driving, he or she should be advised that the Police Department will be notified. The supervisor shall contact the Police Department at x2121 as required.

DEFINITIONS:

None

PROCEDURES/FORMS:

[Waiver of Union Representation](#)

[Written Refusal of Drug or Alcohol Test.pdf](#)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AT THE UCHC:

There are numerous resources available to staff and students seeking assistance in dealing with substance abuse. In addition to those listed below, those with private health insurance may access other resources.

Employee Assistance Program

EAP Phone: (860) 679-2877, CT toll-free: 800-852-4392

Web: <http://eap.uchc.edu>

[Employee Assistance Program | Occupational and Environmental Medicine \(uconn.edu\)](#)

Email: uchc_eap@uchc.edu

Provides confidential assessment and referrals for employees seeking assistance in dealing with substance abuse.

Confidential Help for Impaired Professional Students (CHIPS)

CHIPS HOTLINE (860) 679-4485

CHIPS Director (860) 679-4485

Email: CHIPS@uchc.edu

CHIPS WEBSITE: chips.uchc.edu

Provides early identification and confidential assistance to a student who is abusing alcohol or drugs. The resources of CHIPS are available to any student. Referrals are made through a CHIPS Council member and are held in strictest confidence. CHIPS Council members may be located on the CHIPS website. Additional details are available on the website and in the student handbook.

REFERENCES:

None

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS:

[“Drug-Free Schools & Campuses Act and Drug-Free Workplace Act” #2015-10](#)

ENFORCEMENT:

Violations of this policy or associated procedures may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with University By-Laws, General Rules of Conduct for All University Employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, the University of Connecticut Student Code, other applicable University Policies, or as outlined in any procedures document related to this policy.

APPROVAL:

Bruce Liang (Signed)
Bruce Liang
Interim Chief Executive Officer, UConn Health
Dean, UConn School of Medicine

6/10/2023
Date

Elle Box (Signed)
Elle Box
Administrative Policy Committee Co-Chair

6/7/2023
Date

Janel Simpson (Signed)
Janel Simpson
Administrative Policy Committee Co-Chair

6/7/2023
Date

POLICY HISTORY:

New Policy Issued: 7/1/03

Revised: 10/09, 12/12, 2/13, 6/23

Reviewed: 1/13, 1/23

Policy previously titled "Alcohol Abuse and Drug-Free Workplace". Portions of that policy rewritten and published as "Drug-Free Schools & Campuses Act and Drug-Free Workplace Act" #2015-10.