

Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace

The University's policy on drugs and alcohol in the workplace is designed to address the University's concern for the health and well-being of its employees, and to ensure that the Harvard community complies with the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989. Penalties for violations of these policies, or for violations of the laws regarding controlled substances or alcohol, range from warning to permanent separation from the University depending on the seriousness of the infraction and the degree to which violation of the policy adversely affects the well-being of the community or the fulfillment of the University's educational mission. Detailed information on local, state, and federal laws concerning drugs and alcohol is available upon request from the Office of the General Counsel.

This policy applies to every Harvard employee, including temporary and less than half-time (LHT) employees.

1. Controlled Substances

Employees may not consume, manufacture, distribute, dispense, or be under the influence of controlled substances in the workplace, including in vehicles provided by Harvard, at any worksite or location at which University duties are being performed by Harvard employees, or as part of any other Harvard activities. Common examples of controlled substances include, but are not limited to: cocaine, marijuana, and heroin.

The University will take disciplinary action against violators, consistent with Harvard policy, and federal, state and local laws. Such disciplinary action may include satisfactory participation in a substance abuse treatment, counseling or education program as a condition of reinstatement or continued employment; suspension; termination of employment; and referral for prosecution.

Reporting Requirements

The Drug-Free Workplace Act requires that employers who are engaged in activities funded by federal grants or contracts notify the relevant federal agency of convictions under the criminal drug laws for violations occurring in the workplace. To ensure Harvard's compliance with this federal law, an employee must report any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace to their immediate supervisor, department director, dean, vice president or human resources officer within five days of the conviction. Within ten days of learning of such a conviction of any individual engaged in work under federal grants or contracts, Harvard is required to notify the relevant federal agency. Upon notification of a conviction, supervisors should immediately contact their local human resources office.

2. Alcoholic Beverages

Harvard University, consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, prohibits the consumption, possession and sale, and the provision or serving of alcoholic beverages by and to persons less than 21 years of age.

All University employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol during work hours or in the workplace (except that it will not be a violation of this policy for an employee to engage in the responsible consumption of alcohol at approved social functions held during work hours or in the workplace, provided that the use of alcohol has been permitted in these circumstances.) Under no circumstances may a Harvard employee consume or be under the influence of alcohol while operating Harvard vehicles or equipment. The consumption of alcohol will not constitute a mitigating circumstance when it contributes to the violation of University policies.

Vice Presidents, deans, and heads of administrative units have the authority and responsibility to govern the use of alcohol in areas they control, and to require measures to ensure that at events where alcohol will be served only individuals of legal age will have access. Those hosting such events must take reasonable steps to ensure that the acquisition, distribution and consumption of alcohol otherwise complies with applicable law and University policy.

3. Available University Resources

Substance abuse is potentially harmful to health. Because of the considerable health risks involved in drug and alcohol use, resources are available to assist the Harvard community in understanding and dealing with drug and alcohol abuse problems. Harvard staff members can learn about the dangers of substance abuse and get information about treatment and counseling options available to the Harvard community through the [Office of Wellness and Health Communication of the University Health Services](#), and [Harvard's Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). For more information on Harvard's resources, staff members, and others may consult the [Harvard University Police Department brochure Playing It Safe](#), or contact Harvard Human Resources. These programs and offices are part of Harvard's ongoing efforts to maintain a drug-free workplace. Additionally, any member of the University community may use the University Health Services on an emergency basis at any time, day and night.