



Workplace *Wellness* Program

A survey of construction industry workers showed that their rates of harmful alcohol consumption were 64% compared with 15% of the general population.

In our previous Workplace *Wellness* edition 7 we emphasised that all people at the workplace should be aware that alcohol and other drugs may impact on their ability to work productively and safely.

The statistics above suggest that many businesses in our industry could be employing staff who consume risky levels of alcohol. As an employer it's important for you to understand the potential impact alcohol and drug consumption by your employees can have on your business but it's also helpful for you to have an awareness of the potential damage alcohol consumption can have on an individual's health.

Most of us like to have an alcoholic drink particularly if socialising with family or friends. In recent times there's been lots of media attention surrounding Australia's 'drinking culture' and whilst focussed on the younger generation binge drinking affects older people too.

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in Australia, and Australian workers are consuming risky amounts. Regular drinking of alcohol can cause health, personal and social issues, which have the potential to impact on work attendance and performance.

The harmful consumption of alcohol can also impact on workplace safety. Workplace health programs can address alcohol by implementing a workplace alcohol policy and supporting employees to address high-risk and problem alcohol consumption.



Discuss the information below with your staff !

How many standard drinks are in a...?

Sometimes it can be difficult to keep track of how much alcohol you are actually drinking because:

- glass sizes are not the same in different places
- different types of drinks contain different amounts of pure alcohol
- sometimes drinks are mixed with unknown quantities of alcohol, such as in cocktails and alcoholic punches
- sometimes jugs and casks are shared
- glasses may be 'topped up' before they are empty

Some of these problems can be overcome by using a **standard** measure of the amount of alcohol that is being drunk, called a 'standard drink'.



Try this interactive drinks calculator – it's harder than you think to recognise a 'standard' drink.

<http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/fact-sheets/what-is-a-standard-drink-web-fact-sheet>

Or check out this visual guide to standard drinks

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/file/your_health/healthy/alcohol/std-drinks-large.jpg

The Australian measure of a standard drink contains **10 grams of alcohol** (equivalent to 12.5 mL of pure alcohol). By law, all bottles, cans and casks containing alcohol must state on the label the number of standard drinks that they contain.

So now that we know what a standard drink is how many standard drinks are considered safe?



Guideline 1: Reducing the risk of alcohol-related harm over a lifetime

The lifetime risk of harm from drinking alcohol increases with the amount consumed.

For healthy men and women, drinking no more than **two** standard drinks **on any day** reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

Guideline 2: Reducing the risk of injury on a single occasion of drinking

On a single occasion of drinking, the risk of alcohol-related injury increases with the amount consumed.

For healthy men and women, drinking no more than **four** standard drinks **on a single occasion** reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion.

In our next edition we'll take a look at how alcohol in the blood is measured and why this is important in a workplace environment.

Parts of this information were reproduced from:

<http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/topics/bac>

http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/alcohol_and_drugs_0.pdf

www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol-guidelines

Landscape Queensland is working with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on a Healthy Workers Initiative as part of the Queensland Government's Healthier. Happier. Workplaces. Initiative.

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