

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

DATE: April 2015

TO: All Management Employees

FROM: Nicole McKay, Employee & Labor Relations Manager

SUBJECT: Employee Relations Bulletin 5
Dealing with the Impaired Employee

We have received a number of questions asking what to do when you suspect that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at work. Listed below are recommended steps to follow:

1. First, you should annotate your observations. The attached checklist is an excellent document to use for this purpose.

Next, you should ask another manager to observe the employee and complete a checklist without reviewing the checklist you have completed. In this way, you have two independent observations of the employee.

2. If the other manager concurs that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and impaired from performing his/her duties, you should send the employee home. Do not allow the employee to drive. You should call a friend or family member or call and pay a taxi to take them home. Do not drive the employee, nor allow any other county employee (other than a family member) to drive them home.
3. When the employee returns to work, conduct an investigative interview. Ask the employee if he/she was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If he/she acknowledges that he/she was under the influence, ask why he/she came to work in that condition. If the employee denies being under the influence, show him/her the checklist and ask for an explanation of the appearance/behavior you observed. Since this interview may lead to disciplinary action, the employee is entitled to union representation if he/she requests it.
4. Once you have completed your investigation, call Employee Relations for guidance on the appropriate action to take.

Note: For employees covered under the Department of Transportation Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, follow the steps outlined in the Policies and Procedures for Supervisors and Managers provided in the Drug and Alcohol Testing Program training.

OBJECTIVE SIGNS OF IMPAIRMENT

Balance/Walking

- Normal
- Staggering
- Swaying
- Stumbling

Speech

- Unusually slow
- Unusually fast
- Angry
- Other: _____

Appearance

- Normal
- Dilated pupils
- Sunglasses worn indoors
- Red eyes
- Dry mouth
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose/sniffling
- Sweating
- Crying
- Flushed face/pale
- Odor of alcohol
- Odor of marijuana
- Other: _____

Behavior

- Normal
- Sleepy
- Hostile
- Confused
- Moves slowly
- Involved in accidents
- Near miss of serious accident
- Wide mood swings
- Takes risks that endanger others
- Cannot control equipment
- Refuses to do assigned work
- Increased/repetitive errors
- Lack of concentration
- Waste of materials/damage to equipment
- Engages in arguments
- Verbal abusiveness
- Physical abusiveness
- Memory problems/losses
- Unexplained disappearances
- Long breaks or lunches
- Other: _____

Physical Evidence/Miscellaneous Observations

- Alcohol
- Drugs (suspected)
- Drug paraphernalia

Employee Name

Manager completing the form

Date