



HUM-013.....Employee Assistance Program

Current Revision: 31.Jan.04

POLICY

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential help to those employees and their immediate families who are experiencing personal challenges. EAP is an undertaking of the City in conjunction with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 843. As well, the City recognizes the actual/potential detrimental effects that an employee's health challenges may have on his job performance. The city recognizes that the use of illicit drugs and misuse of alcohol and medications can limit the ability of people to properly perform their jobs. Therefore, the City provides assessment/referral and consultation/counselling services for alcohol and drug related problems as well as other personal or health challenges encountered by employees.

DEFINITIONS

Alcohol - the intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol, or other low molecular weight alcohol methyl or isopropyl.

Drug - any substance, illicit drug, prescribed or over-the counter medications, the use of which has the potential to change or adversely affect the way a person thinks, feels or acts.

Personal challenges - may be those involving spouse, children, other immediate family members, close personal friends, or job-related.

Physical problems - physical symptoms caused by mental health problems.

Family - employee, spouse, and children under the age of 18 years.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CITY

- ❖ To support the well-being of employees and their families.
- ❖ To educate employees about illness that may be self-inflicted or stress related.
- ❖ To educate employees suffering from stress-related symptoms that their problems are also treatable.
- ❖ To encourage employees with alcohol, drug, or stress-related problems to voluntarily seek assistance. The decision to seek help is strictly the responsibility of the employee.
- ❖ To support employees in rehabilitation programs, informing them of the services available to them.
- ❖ To offer, in a confidential setting, counselling services for stress-related problems, marriage breakdown or divorce, and family problems.
- ❖ To reassure the employees that, upon completion of therapy, they may return to work without prejudice to salary or promotion opportunities subject to job performance assessment.
- ❖ To create an improved work environment for employees.
- ❖ To reduce absenteeism and increase productivity.
- ❖ To advise employees that it is their responsibility to maintain a competent and satisfactory level of job performance whether or not undergoing treatment.
- ❖ To caution employees who may be unwilling to acknowledge health problems that continued employment with the City is dependent on satisfactory work performance and conduct.

PROCEDURES

This policy does not take away management's right to discipline or the employee's right to grieve.

1. Employee Responsibilities
 - a) If an employee believes unsatisfactory work performance is caused by physical, mental, or emotional problems, he has the responsibility to take action to address the problem; he may seek counseling through the referral service at Family & Community Support Services (FCSS).
 - b) The employee is responsible for his own performance, behavior, and continued therapy.

2. Supervisor Responsibilities
 - a) If a supervisor suspects that an employee's work performance is deteriorating due to alcohol and/or drug-related problems or due to personal and/or health challenges, the supervisor should meet with the employee and, if appropriate, suggest access to EAP. The supervisor may recommend that the individual seek counseling through FCSS or referral to an outside organization.
 - b) The supervisor should document concerns and suggested resolutions related to the employee's performance.

3. Human Resources Responsibilities
 - a) Ensure an effective Employee Assistant Program (EAP) is available to City staff.
 - b) Assist employees in obtaining confidential assessment, counseling, referral, and rehabilitation services.
 - c) Provide prevention programs that emphasize awareness, education, and training with respect to the use of alcohol and drugs.
 - d) Actively support and encourage rehabilitation activities.
 - e) Ensure the guidelines and Alcohol/Drug-Use work standards support other performance management systems.

GUIDELINES FOR SERVICES

1. Services may be obtained by telephoning FCSS and requesting an employee appointment (no names are necessary).
2. Employees may access EAP directly, in consultation with Human Resources, jointly with their supervisor, or through the Union, a co-worker, or anyone with whom they feel comfortable.
3. The reason for requesting service may be for a variety of personal or health problems such as depression, addiction, marital concerns, etc.
4. The City will fund up to six sessions per employee and each applicable family member per year. If further sessions are necessary, clients pay according to the FCSS fee schedule.
5. FCSS counsellors and Human Resources staff may refer the employee and/or family member(s) to outside agencies such as Mental Health, Child Welfare, Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), etc.

6. Employees accessing the EAP may use sick leave, if available, or request a leave of absence from their immediate supervisor.
7. Exceptions to these guidelines may be approved by Human Resources in consultation with the employee's supervisor.
8. The employee's identity remains CONFIDENTIAL, limited to the counsellors, psychiatrists, and any other medical personnel involved, as well as only on a "need-to-know" basis for select City staff.

The Alcohol and Drug-Use Work Standards for the City are available from Human Resources and are provided in all orientation packages. These standards strongly support rehabilitation activities and apply to all positions and personnel within the City.

City Manager