PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ILLICIT DRUG USE

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
Alcohol abuse and illicit drug use disrupt the special environment of personal growth that the employees of The Texas A&M University System Engineering Program seek to develop. Our research and educational community must participate in preventing alcohol abuse and illicit drug use from negatively impacting this precious environment. To follow is basic information about A&M System policy, applicable legal sanctions, and health risks associated with alcohol abuse and illicit drug use. Additionally, information about the availability of counseling, treatment and rehabilitation through community and campus programs is included.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

All employees of The Texas A&M University System must abide by state and federal laws on controlled substances, illegal drugs and use of alcohol. A&M System Policy states:

“The unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of illicit drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited on System property and/or while on official duty.”

The safety and health of its researchers, administrators, faculty, support staff and students is important to the Engineering Program.
**Drug Definitions**

“Controlled substances” include all prescription drugs, as well as drugs for which there is no generally accepted medicinal use (i.e., heroin, LSD, marijuana, etc.). “Illicit drugs” are: (a) any drug or chemical substance, the use, sale or possession of which is illegal under any state or federal law; or (b) one which is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained. The term includes prescription drugs illegally obtained and prescription drugs not being used for prescribed purposes.

**Alcohol Definitions**

“Alcohol” refers to any beverage that contains more than 0.005 percent of alcohol by volume, which is capable of use for beverage purposes, either alone or when diluted. “Alcohol abuse” is the excessive use of alcohol in a manner that interferes with (1) physical or psychological functioning, (2) social adaptation, (3) educational performance or (4) occupational functioning.

**Health Risks**

Alcohol abuse causes approximately 150,000 deaths annually. Alcohol abuse can lead to alcoholism, premature death through overdose, and complications involving the brain, heart, liver and other body organs. The abuse of illicit drugs can result in other health problems such as drug addiction, death by overdose, death from withdrawal, seizure, heart problems, infections (i.e., HIV/AIDS), liver disease and chronic brain dysfunction. Additional effects include occupational, social and family problems as well as a reduction in motivation. Drug use by a pregnant woman may cause additional health complications in her unborn child.
A copy of the A&M System’s drug and alcohol abuse policy is provided to new employees. A form acknowledging receipt of the policy is signed by the new employee and becomes part of the payroll/personnel file. A&M System employees on government grants or contracts must abide by the required notification statement. They must report all criminal drug convictions for a violation occurring in the workplace or on System business to their employers no later than five days after such conviction. The A&M System is required by law to report employee convictions within 10 days. An A&M System agency must impose sanctions on the employee involved. Such sanctions may take the form of personnel actions against such an employee, up to and including termination, or requiring the employee to participate satisfactorily in an approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. When work-related performance causes suspicion of use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance, an employee may be tested in accordance with the System policy related to testing and chemical screening. A refusal to submit to a test may be sufficient basis for termination.

Off-duty use of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances that results in absenteeism, tardiness, impairment of work performance, or is the cause of workplace accidents, will not be tolerated. Employees may be subject to discipline (up to and including termination) if they reject participation in a program. Any disciplinary action will be governed by A&M System policies on discipline and dismissal; and academic freedom, responsibility and tenure. A record of the action will be placed in the personnel file.
Individuals who may have an alcohol or other drug abuse problem have several resources available to them.

**COUNSELING SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH A&M SYSTEM HEALTH PROVIDERS**

- BlueCross BlueShield of Texas (A&M Care plans) (866)295-1212 www.bcbstx.com
- FirstCare (800)884-4901 www.firstcare.com
- Humana Health Plans (800)448-6262 www.humana.com
- Mercy Health Plans (800)617-3433 http://mercyhealthplans.com
- Scott & White (800)791-8777 www.sw.org
- Graduate student Health Plan (800)452-5772 www.associatedinsuranceplans.com

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

- Alcoholics Anonymous (979)361-7976
- Narcotics Anonymous (979)822-9094
- Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse (BVCASA)
  405 W. 28th Street - Bryan, TX 77803
  (979)823-5300 www.bvcasa.org
- Brazos Valley Intergroup
  837 Harvey Mitchell Pkwy (FM 2818) - Bryan, TX 77807
  (979)823-6391 www.bvig.org
- Texas First Call for Help/2-1-1
  Provides information on over 1,200 support agencies including those that offer substance abuse assistance. Simply Dial 2-1-1
- Hearing Impaired Hotline
  Via TTY telephones to call Relay Texas
  (800)735-2989

**SYSTEM POLICY 34.2 SUMMARY**

This information is to be used as a summarized statement of the Texas A&M University System Policy 34.02, “Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Rehabilitation Programs”, and does not include complete or detailed information. System Policy 34.02 and the applicable laws will be used to delineate an individual’s actual remedies or sanctions. Detailed information concerning health risks and community resources may be obtained from an accredited health care provider and the community resources listed.