

NR/L2/OHS/00120 - Drugs and Alcohol Standard

Frequently Asked Questions

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A. Drugs and Alcohol (D&A) Testing Contact Information

Reason for Contact	Contact Details
Requesting a For-cause or Post-incident D&A test	Tel: 0800 3160066 - Option 6. PIN: 1925
Medication Enquiry Service (chemist on call)	Tel: 0800 3160066 - Option 2. WEB: https://app.chemist-on-call.com/ PINS: Central Business Functions – 6065 Eastern – 6060 North West and Central – 6062 Route Services – 6066 Scotland – 6063 Southern – 6061 Western and Wales – 6064
Service complaints, escalations and investigations	Email: Toxeu.complaints@abbott.com
Service queries, Active Monitoring D&A testing, toxicology requests	Email: toxeu.workplacebookings4@abbott.com
Network Rail internal contact	Email: healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk

This document will be regularly updated as new questions are asked. Please ensure you check back to the D&A [MyConnect page](#) for the latest version. The questions and answers contained within this document apply to all Network Rail colleagues.

B. General

1. How long will a D&A test take?

Approximately 15-20 minutes

2. What time of the day and day of the week can random D&A testing occur?

Random testing is scheduled in line with the main shift patterns of employees based onsite. Testing can occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Other types of D&A testing (e.g., for-cause) occur as and where required.

3. Who can carry out a test?

Only qualified clinicians employed through our occupational health service or the D&A testing provider (Abbott Toxicology) can carry out testing on Network Rail candidates or employees.

4. How are alcohol tests conducted?

Alcohol tests are carried out using a breathalyser.

5. How are drugs tests conducted?

Drugs tests are carried out via providing a urine sample and using Point of Contact Testing (POCT) methodology.

6. What is POCT?

A type of drugs testing methodology which can provide instant negative or non-negative outcomes.

7. What is a non-negative test?

A non-negative test is only applicable for POCT. It means that within the sample you provided, a substance was detected in your body which is in line with the drugs testing panel used within Network Rail. However, your sample will need to be sent to a laboratory for analysis to confirm a result. A non-negative test is not a positive/fail result.

8. What happens if I refuse to attend, leave site before being tested or leave site part way through my D&A test?

This will be reported as a positive test result and is likely to lead to dismissal from your role at Network Rail.

9. What if my shift is due to finish before I have a random D&A test? Will I be expected to stay onsite?

Collecting Officers will, in all cases, aim to be onsite for the start of a normal working day/night shift pattern at the location randomly selected. Random D&A tests will be expected to be carried out within normal working hours. If you are contacted to undergo a test and you are onsite, in your normal working hours, you will be expected to attend for the test.

You will not be expected to undergo the test outside of your normal working hours; including remaining onsite past the end of your shift.

10. Where are D&A tests carried out?

All D&A tests will occur at a Network Rail workplace or an occupational health clinic. Testing is carried out in a private toilet (cubicle or designated toilet) and room. Only the collection officer will be present in the room (not the toilet) when testing is being undertaken.

The only exception to this is if a second breath sample is required. In that scenario the Network Rail responsible manager will be invited into the room to witness the test.

11. What photographic proof of identification is accepted?

This is an indicative list but not exhaustive:

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Sentinel card (hard or electronic version)
- Network Rail ID card

12. What information will I be asked to read and sign for a D&A test?

- Prior to the test you will be asked to read and sign:

The donor consent to test form. This form explains the testing process and how your test results will be processed. Once signed you are consenting to undergo the test.

Should you have any problems reading the form, you can ask the collection officer to help read for or with you.

- Following the test you will be asked to confirm and sign:

The chain of custody form. The chain of custody form is the clinical document which specifies the type of test, the results of the tests and any medication declared at the time of the test. Once signed this confirms the test was carried out as explained by the collection officer and the information written is correct.

13. What information am I provided after the test?

You will be provided with a copy of the following:

- Print out result(s) from the alcometer following your alcohol breath test.
- A signed copy chain of custody form.

14. What happens to the other copies of the documents?

They are sent to and retained by the D&A testing or medical service provider.

C. Random Testing

15. When could I be randomly tested?

Only employees who are eligible for random testing will be selected. Roles eligible include those which are safety critical, key safety or identified as safety impact, or employees who hold Personal Track Safety (PTS) competence.

If you are eligible for random testing, you may be randomly selected for a test if you are 'at work' and at a Network Rail location which on that day has been randomly selected for testing.

16. Do I have to attend immediately after being contacted?

Yes. Unless there is an exceptional circumstance, in which case you must attend on the same day you are contacted.

17. Can I be randomly tested whilst working at home?

No.

18. How many employees onsite can be randomly tested?

The number is not pre-determined and there is not a minimum or maximum number. It is based on the number of people who are eligible, at work, onsite at the time of the collection officer arriving.

19. Who randomly selects which employees are tested?

The random selection process is determined by the collection officer from the list of employees onsite.

20. What happens following a non-negative drugs test?

- If the non-negative POCT is following a random D&A test:

Your line manager will be informed and will implement the [non-negative risk assessment](#) and store this on your employee record file. Where possible you will remain at work under additional mandatory measures whilst awaiting the final outcome result to be reported from the laboratory. If following the risk assessment there are reasons why you aren't able to remain at work, your line manager will suspend you until the final outcome result is reported. HR Direct should be contacted.

- If the non-negative POCT is following a for-cause or post-accident/incident test:

You will remain suspended from duties until the laboratory results are reported.

21. Will I be paid if I am suspended following recording a non-negative drugs test?

Yes, full pay for the period of suspension.

D. For-Cause or Post-Accident/Incident Testing

22. Where can I find the 'For-Cause Test Form' or the 'Post-Accident/Incident Test Form'?

Both forms can be accessed from MyConnect on the following links:

[For-cause Test Form](#)

[Post-Accident/Incident Test Form](#)

23. Can I be requested to undergo a for-cause or post incident test whilst working at home?

Yes. On grounds of reasonable suspicion or admission that you are working under the influence of D&A, your line manager can request you attend your closest Network Rail workplace and will arrange transport for you.

The collecting officer will be provided the location details and meet you to perform the test within 2 hours of the request being made. This may mean the test is undertaken outside of your normal working hours.

24. What if I cannot leave home to attend a test at a Network Rail site?

In exceptional circumstances where it is not logistical or practical for an employee to travel to a Network Rail site, yet there is reasonable belief that or admission by the employee they are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, an investigation as per NR/HR/POL/013 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure can commence without a confirmatory drugs and alcohol test result.

25. I suspect someone else is working whilst under the influence of D&A. What can I do?

You should report your concerns through Speak Out or to your line manager if you feel confident enough to do so.

All reports of this manner will be investigated.

Be aware that making a deliberately false allegation (malicious) could result in disciplinary action.

26. How is a for-cause D&A test arranged?

A for-cause test 8.00am-5.00pm, by submitting a request via email to the following address - Toxeu.workplacebookings4@abbott.com or 24/7 by calling Tel: 0800 3160066 - Option 6.

Then use **PIN: 1925**.

You will be asked for:

- Route/Regions/Function;
- cost centre number;
- address of the Network Rail location where the tests are required for and directions;
- the number of employees or contractors and their names; and
- name of a responsible manager

27. How soon after arranging the test can it be carried out?

Once arranged, the collection officer will aim to be onsite within 2 hours.

E. Prescription and Over The Counter (OTC) Medicines

28. If I am using prescribed or OTC, do I need to seek guidance on this?

Where the medication has known side effects that may potentially affect your ability to work safely, you are expected to speak to your GP or medical specialist to discuss potential alternative medicines which may have less impact on your ability to work safely.

If your medication use does have known side effects that can affect your ability to work safely, you need to seek guidance from the medication enquiry line (chemist on call – see Section A).

Line managers can make a referral to the occupational health service if further guidance is required on continued working in relation to any declared medicine and/or health condition.

29. What if I cannot use a different type of medication which has less impact on my ability to work safely?

Employees are required to contact the [chemist on call](#) service who will provide clinical guidance on any known side effects and recommend which types of duties may require adjustments or restrictions put in place.

Further assessment and guidance on fitness for work and adjustments can be provided via a management referral to the Network Rail occupational health service.

30. How do I know if the medicine I am using is considered to have a 'legitimate medical reason' for use?

NR/L2/OHS/00120 defines legitimate medical reason for use as '*A licensed therapeutic medicine or treatment which is recognised within the British National Formulary (BNF).*'

You can check this with your GP or medical specialist at the time of prescription or OTC purchase.

A legitimate medical reason is determined by use of a licensed medicine, including off-label use. It is not determined by the condition for which the licensed medicine is prescribed to treat.

It is not permitted for employees to use a medicine without a legitimate medical reason for use.

31. What if I am prescribed a licenced medicine that is 'off-label' or for a condition which is not listed next to the drug type on BNF?

Off-label means that the person prescribing the medicine wants to use it in a different way than that stated in its licence. This could mean using the medicine for a different condition or a different group of patients, or it could mean a change in the dose or that the medicine is taken in a different way. This is common medical practice.

Use off label-licensed medicines are considered be a 'legitimate medical reason for use' is not considered a breach of the drugs and alcohol standard.

If you have any concerns about whether you are able to continue working whilst using your medication, contact the [chemist on call](#) service for clinical guidance. Further assessment and guidance on fitness for work and adjustments can be

provided via a management referral to the Network Rail occupational health service. Please speak to your line manager.

32. Why are only licensed medicines allowed?

All licensed medicines have been through rigorous clinical trials to demonstrate safety, effectiveness and side effects prior to approval by Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

33. Can taking a prescription or over the counter medication cause a non-negative drugs test?

In some cases, yes. It is important you disclose any medications (prescription or over the counter) or any other substances you have taken or had administered within the two weeks prior to the test, to the collection officer at the time of the test.

If a non-negative drugs test is recorded, your urine sample will be sent to the laboratory for further analysis. The medical review officer from the laboratory may contact you to discuss any medications or substances disclosed and where necessary request proof of prescription. This information will help the medical review officer determine if the final test result is negative or positive.

34. What if I forget to declare at the time of the test, don't know the medication / substance name or don't have my prescription?

You can submit further information regarding any medications or substances taken by emailing: tox.eu.urinequeries@abbott.com. This is required within 5 days of the date of your D&A test.

35. Will consuming foods such as poppy seeds or using mouthwash, that contains alcohol, affect the test result?

Some foods and substances may lead to a non-negative test. However, where you have declared a substance that has been taken at the time of the test, this will be taken into consideration before reporting the final result.

Using mouthwash will not affect the test result.

36. Will taking CBD oil and other similar herbal substances affect the result?

Some herbal or therapeutic substances or supplements may lead to a non-negative test. However, where you have declared a substance that has been taken at the time of the test, this will be taken into consideration before reporting the final result.

Note some CBD oil products may contain psychoactive components which could affect your safety and that of others. It is not recommended you begin using these products until you have sought appropriate medical advice.

Further information can be found in the [medications and drugs tests guide](#).

F. Test Results

37. When and how will I know if the test result is negative?

Negative drugs and alcohol test results are provided immediately.

38. What is a non-negative drugs test?

A POCT drugs test which has detected a substance within the urine sample or the sample has not passed quality checks (pH, temperature, creatinine) and requires further laboratory analysis to confirm a negative or positive test result.

Approximately 5 % of all drugs tests are expected to be non-negative. A non-negative test is not a final result.

The collection officer may use the term 'requires laboratory analysis' (RLA).

39. Will I be informed of the reason why a sample requires laboratory analysis?

No. All non-negative tests are treated equally. The information will be written on the chain of custody form which will inform the laboratory what further analysis is required.

40. How long do laboratory results take to return?

A maximum of 3 working days if the test result is negative.

A maximum of 5 working days if the test result is positive.

During this time period, the 'medical review officer' (MRO) at the testing provider may contact you to discuss your test result in relation to any medications declared should further information be required. However, it is not mandatory for the MRO to contact the employee as this may not be necessary.

41. Where can I request a copy of the toxicology report from my D&A test?

Email a request to tox.eu.workplacebookings4@abbott.com

42. Where are test results stored?

All test results are securely stored on the Sentinel database.

Pre-placement and periodic test results are stored within the occupational health service IT platform.

Random, for-cause, post-incident and active monitoring test results are stored by Abbott Toxicology. See the [D&A privacy policy](#).

G. Appeals Against a Positive Test Result

43. I want to challenge the positive D&A test result. Can I make an appeal against a D&A test result?

Yes, where evidence can be provided in accordance with criteria specified in clause 14.1.1 of Issue 8 – NR/L2/OHS/00120 Drugs and Alcohol Standard.

You can make an appeal yourself or you can request the support of your line manager, HR or investigating manager.

Appeals should be submitted to healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk within 60 days of the positive result being reported.

44. I think the sample I provided has been affected. Can I request the sample be retested?

You can request 'sample B' to be tested at another approved laboratory.

Click [here](#) for the sample B process and [here](#) for the sample B release form.

Any cost associated to a sample B analysis shall be paid by the employee.

45. If my D&A appeal is successful and my Sentinel suspension is lifted, will I keep my job?

The disciplinary and investigation process is separate to the D&A appeal process. Whilst the D&A appeal process could find in favour of your appeal and overturn the positive result, the outcome of the disciplinary and investigation process will determine the status of your continued employment with Network Rail. The circumstances around the D&A test, such as following an incident, could be deemed serious enough that disciplinary outcomes are applied.

46. If my D&A appeal is unsuccessful and the suspension on Sentinel remains, will I lose my job?

In most cases this is the likely outcome as a breach of the drugs and alcohol standard is considered a reason for gross misconduct.

H Unable to Provide a Urine Sample

47. What if I cannot provide a urine sample when requested to?

You will be required to stay onsite and under supervision by the Network Rail responsible manager who will provide you with a minimum of 250ml of water every 20 minutes until you feel able to provide a urine sample.

48. What if I still cannot provide a urine sample?

Unless you have a known existing medical condition which prevents you providing a sample and you have followed the required process for guidance on alternative drugs testing methods, your test will be reported as a positive – refusal to test.

49. I have developed or have an existing medical condition which means I cannot provide a urine sample. What do I do?

You need to ask your line manager to refer you to the occupational health service for assessment and consideration of an alternative drugs testing methodology. Once determined, any alternative drugs testing methodology will be specified within your occupational health records and your line manager will be informed via the occupational health report.

Your line manager is required to implement the 'Reasonable Adjustments Policy' and process to record the alternative testing method as a reasonable adjustment.

I Support

50. I am concerned that I am misusing alcohol or drugs. Can I get help?

Yes. See:

- Drugs and Alcohol Support Programme [guide](#) for further information.
- Section 16 of Issue 8 NR/L2/OHS/00120.

51. Are there rules around when I can ask for help?

Yes. To remain eligible for support, you must declare to your line manager or HR:

- a) prior to your start time at work; and
- b) prior to being informed of the requirement to undergo a drugs and alcohol test; and
- c) not as a consequence of a positive D&A test result.

If you declare after any of the above your line manager could apply the for-cause testing process if there are grounds for reasonable suspicion that you are working whilst unfit due to drugs or alcohol.

If you have attended work with drugs or alcohol in your body, and you undergo a drugs and alcohol test, this could cause a positive test result and lead to HR Disciplinary action.

52. I'm worried or anxious about being tested for drugs and alcohol. Who can I contact for support?

You can contact and declare a misuse issue to the following:

- a) Your line manager
- b) Network Rail [employee assistance programme](#) (PAM Assist). You can call or email the service direct and confidentially on **0800 3160066** or counsellingteam@pamassist.co.uk or you can use the webchat option on www.PAM-assist.co.uk (access code is NWR1)

Further support is available from:

- c) Your local trade union health and safety representative
- d) Your local HR team
- e) Central occupational health and wellbeing team via healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk