



Drugs and alcohol testing



Drugs and alcohol can cause slower reaction times, poor decision-making and memory lapses. This is true even at low-levels of impairment.

Even minor lapses can have major consequences. Understanding the risks, responsibilities and support available helps protect everyone.



Key insights

In 2024–25, Network Rail conducted 5,694 random drug and alcohol tests, of which 20 tested positive.

Across all test types, 55 Network Rail employees tested positive.

220 Sentinel suspensions were issued across the rail industry, due to breaches of NR/L2/OHS/00120 – each resulting in a 5-year ban from safety-critical duties.

40–65 % of workplace accidents in safety-critical sectors are linked to impairment from alcohol, drugs or medications.



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What to know

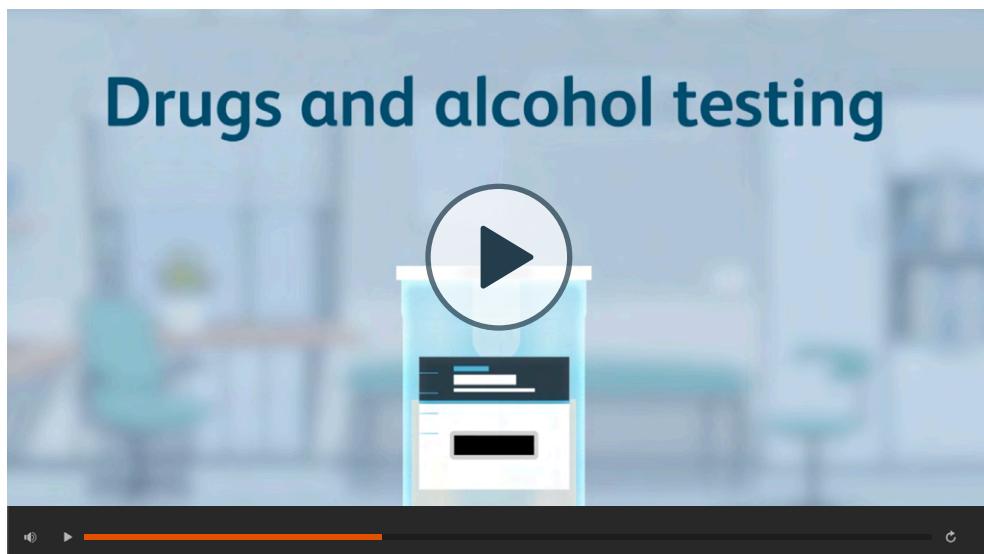


Types of testing

Type	Trigger	Who it applies to
Random	Scheduled via approved randomisation tool	Safety-critical & safety-impact roles
Post-incident	After an accident, near miss or unsafe act	Any employee involved
For-Cause	When impairment is suspected	Any employee
Pre-Appointment	Before entering a safety-critical role	New or transferring employees
Active Monitoring	Following voluntary disclosure or Drug and Alcohol Support Programme (DASP)	Voluntary misuse disclosers only

What happens after a test?

Select the play button below to see the key points.



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What to do



Employees

Do

- ✓ Always report fit for duty – free from alcohol, illegal drugs or unprescribed medication
- ✓ Declare all medications before testing
- ✓ Check all medications – call Chemist on Call
- ✓ Bring photo ID or Sentinel card to testing.

Don't

- ✗ Don't assume 'legal' means 'safe' – CBD oils can contain THC
- ✗ Don't delay or refuse testing – this may be treated as a positive result
- ✗ Don't take someone else's medication – even for a headache
- ✗ Don't wait for a positive test to ask for help – voluntary misuse disclosure is supported under DASP.

Managers

Do

- ✓ Know the triggers for each test type
- ✓ Use the For-Cause checklist before arranging a For-Cause test
- ✓ Stand employees down after a non-negative result, complete a risk assessment and open an HR case
- ✓ Promote early misuse disclosure and direct staff to support (DASP).

Don't

- ✗ Don't ignore signs of impairment
- ✗ Don't breach confidentiality
- ✗ Don't apply judgement inconsistently – follow NR/L2/OHS/00120
- ✗ Don't assume Active Monitoring for drug and alcohol support applies to everyone – only DASP.



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Resources



Questions to consider

1

Would I recognise the signs of impairment in a colleague?



2

What signs would make me raise a For-Cause referral?

3

How confident am I in escalating concerns without judgement?

4

Would I challenge unsafe behaviour or check in on a colleague?

5

Do I know how to access support through DASP or the EAP process?



Resources and support

Network Rail
Safety Central –
D&A Hub –
search: “drug
and alcohol”

MyConnect:
D&A Standard -
NR/L2/
OHS/00120

DASP Guidance:
available on
SharePoint

Chemist on Call:
Check your meds
before use –
details on
SharePoint

Employee Assistance Programme
(EAP): details on SharePoint



Contact:
healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk



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