

# Drugs and Alcohol FAQs

## **Q. Why does Network Rail have a drug and alcohol policy?**

A. The safety of the Network Rail workforce, its contractors, neighbours and the travelling public is Network Rail's first priority. Drugs and alcohol affect people's ability to work safely, which is a risk and the implementation of a drug and alcohol policy allows the organisation to control the risk of employees being unfit through drugs and/or alcohol while at work. Network Rail also has an obligation to be compliant with the Transport and Works Act 1992, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Network Rail's Health and Safety Management System, and Railway Group Standard GE/RT8070 Drugs and Alcohol.

It also supports the lifesaving rule, 'Never work or drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol'.

## **Q. What if an employee reports that they are feeling unwell when the collection officer arrives at the workplace?**

A. Before being allowed to leave the premises, the line manager should find out if the employee is genuinely ill and unable to take the test, if their name has been selected. If it seems that the employee is avoiding the test, then the line manager should advise them that avoidance may be regarded as a refusal to take the test. The line manager should consult with the collection officer about the reason for illness and whether a sample can still be given.

It is generally assumed that if an employee arrives for work, that they are well enough to complete their shift.

## **Q. What happens if the employee refuses to take the drug and alcohol test?**

A. The collection officer will notify the line manager of the refusal. The line manager will remind the employee of Network Rail's drug and alcohol policy, their employee contract and the company's lifesaving rule. Should the employee continue to refuse to take the test, they will be referred for disciplinary action. The collection officer will ask the employee to sign the refusal to test form.

## **Q. Will any medications that an employee takes, interfere with the result?**

A. The collection officer will ask what medication (either prescribed by a GP or bought over the counter) the employee is taking or taken over the last 10 days. This will be recorded on the chain of custody form and this information will be taken into consideration when the sample is screened, to avoid any positive results from medication.

**Q. I am worried that my result will be positive because I sat in a room where people were smoking marijuana.**

A. The cut-off level for cannabis is set to exclude any levels that may come about through passive inhalation of cannabis smoke.

**Q. What happens if there is a positive breath test?**

A. If there is a reading on or above the cut off level, a second breath test will be taken after 15 minutes and the collection officer will continue with the urine sample collection. The collection officer will notify the responsible manager on duty and the employee will be stood down from their duties.

**Q. Why do I have to empty my pockets before giving a urine sample?**

A. This is part of the chain of custody procedure during testing and ensures that an employee can't adulterate the sample given.

**Q. What happens if I can't provide a sample?**

A. You will be requested to stay in the location and will be given 250ml of water every 20 minutes until you feel able to provide a sample. You will be given up to two hours to provide the sample. Too much water could dilute the sample given.

**Q. If my result is positive and I fail the test, how can I arrange an analysis on my urine sample in order to challenge the result?**

A. Should there be a positive result; the laboratory will retain a portion of the sample. This can be released to another laboratory for testing, although there may be costs incurred with this, which will be paid for by you.

**Q. During testing, there is an emergency on site. What should we do?**

A. Should there be an emergency situation on-site, testing will cease until it is deemed safe to resume testing. If need be, testing will be cancelled.

**Q. Does the breathalyser work in very cold weather conditions?**

A. Our provider's technical team have confirmed that the machine works between -5 degrees Celsius to +40 degrees Celsius.

If the temperature is outside this, they will wait until the temperature is within these normal limits (it is presumed they will be in an environment where the temperature is warmer than outside) then calibrate the machine, then start testing.

**Q. I suspect my team mate (or line manager) takes drugs but I have no evidence, I don't want to work with anyone who does this what can I do about it but remain anonymous?**

A. You should report your concerns through Speak Out. Speak Out will ask you if you wish to give them your details, however you don't have to provide these.

Arrangements will then be made for the individuals/teams concerned to undergo testing. No evidence is needed to make the call, as long as it is made in good faith. Be aware that making a deliberately false allegation (malicious) could result in disciplinary action.

**Q. What does a line manager do if an employee does not have photo ID with them?**

A. The line manager will need to sign the chain of custody form that they confirm the identity of the employee, who is providing the sample.

**Q. Which employees will be selected for random drug and alcohol testing?**

A. Random drugs and alcohol testing may be carried out on any Network Rail employee whose work requires Personal Track Safety certification, or whose role is classed as a Safety Critical Work post. The drug and alcohol policy applies to all Network Rail employees, and all employees are expected to comply with the Lifesaving rule which states; Never work or drive while under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

**Q. If all employees are expected to comply with the Lifesaving rule, what should a line manager do if they suspect someone is under the influence?**

A. All Network Rail employees can be expected to be for-cause tested for drugs and alcohol, should they appear to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at work. Line managers will need to commence this testing if they suspect an employee is under the influence.

**Q. Does random testing apply to our contractors?**

A. All contractors are expected to comply with our drugs and alcohol policy and to have arrangements in place, which are equivalent to, or better, than those specified in the Network Rail policy.