

A DRUG FREE COLLEGE

Information for Employees Regarding Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

- Standards of Conduct Prohibiting Unlawful Possession, Use or Distribution of Illicit Drugs and Alcohol
- Health Risks Associated with Use of Drugs and Alcohol Abuse
- College Penalties for Prohibited Conduct Related to Drugs and Alcohol
- Counseling Referrals
- Criminal Penalties Under State and Federal Law for Unlawful Possession, Use or Distribution of Drugs and Alcohol

Board Policies

Blinn College prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, as defined in state and federal law, either in the workplace or at any school-related event. Employees who violate this prohibition may be referred to drug counseling programs, drug rehabilitation programs, or may be terminated from employment with Blinn College. Employees who voluntarily reveal to the institution that they have a drug abuse problem at the workplace, will be given one opportunity, without risk of termination, to seek and complete a rehabilitation program.

– ***Blinn Board of Trustees, July 11, 1989***

The Blinn Board of Trustees also adopted Alcohol-Free Workplace Requirements (Sept. 12, 1989), which extend the same prohibitions listed above to “intoxicating beverages in the workplace.” The same conditions of treatment of sanctions also apply.

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol in the workplace has serious effects on employee health, morale, discipline, behavior, and job performance. Adverse job performance includes efficiency, productivity, attendance, safety, and quality of performance.

The Blinn College Counseling Services maintains a referral list of treatment centers and healthcare providers for those seeking help. Many of them have sliding scale fees or accept insurance. Blinn College’s group medical policy includes in-patient and out-patient coverage for these services. Confidentiality will be maintained.

- ***See Board Policy Manual, DH (Local), DO (E), GFA (Local), found on the Blinn website at www.blinn.edu, under Faculty and Staff, Board Policy Manual or at www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/239501***

Health Risks

Alcohol

Alcohol consumption causes a number of marked changes in behavior. Even low doses significantly impair the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts. Moderate to high doses of alcohol cause marked impairments in higher mental functions, severely altering a person’s ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses cause respiratory depression and death. If combined with other depressants of the central nervous system, much lower doses of alcohol can lead to dependence. Sudden cessation of alcohol intake is likely to produce withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and convulsions. Alcohol withdrawal can be life threatening. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol can also lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and the liver. Females who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome. These infants have irreversible physical abnormalities and mental retardation. In addition, research indicates that children of alcoholic parents are a greater risk than other youngsters of becoming alcoholics.

Tobacco (Nicotine)

The smoking of tobacco products is the chief avoidable cause of death in our society. Smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to contract heart disease. Some 30 percent of cancer deaths (130,000 per year) are linked to smoking. Chronic obstructive lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis are 10 times more likely to occur among smokers than among nonsmokers. Smoking during pregnancy poses serious risks such as spontaneous abortion, preterm birth, low birth weights, and fetal and infant deaths. Perhaps the most dangerous substance in tobacco smoke is nicotine. Because nicotine is highly addictive, addicts find it very difficult to stop smoking. Of 1,000 typical smokers, fewer than 20 percent succeed in stopping on the first try.

Designer Drugs

Illegal drugs are defined in terms of their chemical formulas. To circumvent these legal restrictions, underground chemists modify the molecular structure of certain illegal drugs to produce analogs known as designer drugs. These drugs can be

several hundred times stronger than the drugs they are designed to imitate. Many of the so-called designer drugs are related to amphetamines (MDMA, X). Bootleg manufacture creates overdose and contaminated risks. These substances can produce severe neurochemical damage to the brain. The narcotic analogs (fentanyl, china white) can cause symptoms such as those seen in Parkinson's disease: uncontrollable tremors, drooling, impaired speech, paralysis, and irreversible brain damage. Analogs of amphetamines and methamphetamines cause nausea, blurred vision, chills or sweating, and faintness. Psychological effects include anxiety, depression, and paranoia. As little as one dose can cause brain damage. The analogs of phencyclidine cause illusions, hallucinations, and impaired perception.

Cocaine

Cocaine stimulates the central nervous system. The use of cocaine can cause death by cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. Its immediate effects include dilated pupils and elevated blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and body temperature. Occasional use can cause a stuffy or runny nose, while chronic use can ulcerate the mucous membrane of the nose. Injecting cocaine with contaminated equipment can cause AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases. Cocaine can produce psychological and physical dependency, a feeling that the user cannot function without the drug. In addition, tolerance develops rapidly. Crack or freebase rock is extremely addictive, and its effects are felt within 10 seconds. The physical effects include dilated pupils, increased pulse rate, elevated blood pressure, insomnia, loss of appetite, tactile hallucinations, paranoia, and seizures.

Other Stimulants

Stimulants can cause increased heart and respiratory rates, elevated blood pressure, dilated pupils, and decreased appetite. In addition, users may experience sweating, headache, blurred vision, dizziness, sleeplessness, and anxiety. Extremely high doses can cause a rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremors, loss of coordination, and even physical collapse. An amphetamine injection creates a sudden increase in blood pressure that can result in stroke, very high fever or heart failure. In addition to the physical effects, users report feeling restless, anxious, and moody. Higher doses intensify the effects. Persons who use large amounts of amphetamines over a long period of time can develop an amphetamine psychosis that includes hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia.

Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are a group of powerful compounds closely related to the male sex hormone testosterone. Steroid users subject themselves to more than 70 side effects ranging in severity from liver cancer to acne and including psychological as well as physical reactions. The liver and the cardiovascular and reproductive systems are most seriously affected by steroid use. In males, use can cause withered testicles, sterility, and impotence. In females, irreversible masculine traits can develop along with breast reduction and sterility. Psychological effects include very aggressive behavior known as "roid rage" and depression. While some side effects appear quickly, others, such as heart attacks and strokes, may not show up for years.

Narcotics

Narcotics initially produce a feeling of euphoria that often is followed by drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting. Users also may experience constricted pupils, watery eyes, and itching. An overdose may produce slow shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death. Tolerance to narcotics develops rapidly and dependence is likely. The use of contaminated syringes may result in diseases such as AIDS, endocarditis, and hepatitis. Addiction in pregnant women can lead to premature, stillborn, or addicted infants who experience severe withdrawal symptoms.

Marijuana

All forms of cannabis have negative physical and mental effects. Use of cannabis may impair or reduce short-term memory and comprehension, alter sense of time and reduce ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination, such as driving a car. Research also shows that employees do not retain knowledge when they are "high." Motivation and cognition may be altered, making the acquisition of new information difficult. Marijuana can also produce paranoia and psychosis. Because users often inhale the unfiltered smoke deeply and then hold it in their lungs as long as possible, marijuana is damaging to the lungs and pulmonary system. Marijuana smoke contains more cancer-causing agents than tobacco smoke. Long-term users of cannabis may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives.

Hallucinogens

Lysergic acid (LSD), mescaline, and psilocybin cause illusions and hallucinations. The physical effects may include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and tremors. Sensations and feelings may change rapidly. It is common to have bad psychological reactions to LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin. The user may experience panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety, and loss of control. Delayed effects or flashbacks, can occur even after use of ceased. Users of PCP report persistent memory problems and speech difficulties. Some of these effects may last 6 months to a year following prolonged daily use. Mood disorders-depression,

anxiety, and violent behavior-also occur. In later stages of chronic use, users often exhibit paranoid and violent behavior. Large doses may produce convulsions and coma, as well as heart and lung failure.

Depressants

The effects of depressants are in many ways similar to the effects of alcohol. Small amounts can produce calmness and relaxed muscles, but somewhat larger doses can cause slurred speech, staggering gait, and altered perception. Large doses can cause respiratory depression, coma and death. The combination of depressants and alcohol can multiply the effects of the drugs, thereby multiplying the risks. The use of depressants can cause both physical and psychological dependence. Regular use over time may result in a tolerance to the drug, leading the user to increase the quantity consumed. When regular users suddenly stop taking large doses, they may develop withdrawal symptoms ranging from restlessness, insomnia, and anxiety to convulsions and death.

Inhalants

The immediate negative effects of inhalants include nausea, sneezing, coughing, nosebleeds, fatigue, lack of coordination, and loss of appetite. Solvents and aerosol sprays also decrease the heart and respiratory rates and impair judgment. Amyl and butyl nitrite cause rapid pulse, headaches, and involuntary passing of urine and feces. Long-term use may result in hepatitis or brain damage. Deeply inhaling the vapors, or using large amounts over a short time, may result in disorientation, violent behavior, unconsciousness, or death. High concentrations of inhalants can cause suffocation by displacing the oxygen in the lungs or by depressing the central nervous system to the point that breathing stops. Long-term use can cause weight loss, fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, and muscle fatigue. Repeated sniffing of concentrated vapors over time can permanently damage the nervous system.

Counseling Referrals

Drug/alcohol counseling referrals are available in the Human Resources office of the college.

Blinn College Policy Statement on Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse

In accordance with the Drug Free Schools and Campuses Drug Prevention Program Certification, Blinn College has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs/alcohol by its employees on school premises or as part of any of its activities. Blinn College recognizes the importance of information about drug/alcohol abuse. Provided here, for the benefit of each employee, are standards of conduct and legal and disciplinary sanctions for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs/alcohol. Listing of area resources for drug/alcohol counseling and rehabilitation are available in the Human Resources office.

Legal Sanctions

Employees found in violation of any local, state or federal law regarding the use, possession or distribution of alcohol or other drugs (as defined by the Texas Health and Safety Code, Subtitle C. Substance Abuse Regulations and Crimes) may receive the full legal penalty in addition to any appropriate college disciplinary action. Information about the college disciplinary process is available on the Blinn College website at www.blinn.edu. The most common legal violations and their consequences are:

PENALTIES UNDER FEDERAL LAW*		
OFFENSE	MINIMUM PUNISHMENT	MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT
Manufacture, distribution, or dispensing drugs (includes marijuana)	A term of imprisonment up to 5 years, and a minimum fine of \$250,000	A term of life imprisonment without release (no eligibility for parole) and a fine not to exceed \$8,000,000 (for an individual) or \$20,000,000 if other than an individual)
Possession of drugs (including marijuana)	Imprisonment for up to 1 year plus fine.	Imprisonment for not more than 20 years or not less than \$5,000 plus costs of investigation and prosecution
Operation of a Common Carrier under the influence of alcohol or drugs		Imprisonment for up to 15 years and a fine not to exceed \$250,000
Penalties may be enhanced for prior convictions and offenses within specified distances of a public college or university.		
*Additional penalties may apply in resident halls. These penalties are listed in the Residence Hall Handbook.		

PENALTIES UNDER TEXAS LAW*

OFFENSE	MINIMUM PUNISHMENT	MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT
Manufacture or delivery of controlled substances (drugs)	Confinement in the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) for a term of not more than 2 years or less than, 180 days or confinement in a community correctional facility for not more than 1 year, and a fine not to exceed \$10,000	Confinement in TDC for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 15 years, and a fine not to exceed \$250,000
Possession of controlled substances (drugs)	Confinement in jail for a term of not more than 180 days, and a fine not to exceed \$2,000	Confinement in TDC for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 15 years, and a fine not to exceed \$250,000
Delivery of Marijuana	Confinement in jail for a term of not more than 180 days, and a fine not to exceed \$2,000 or both	Confinement in TDC for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 10 years, and a fine not to exceed \$100,000
Possession of Marijuana	Confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days, and a fine not to exceed \$2,000 or both	Confinement in TDC for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 5 years, and a fine not to exceed \$50,000
Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol	<p>FIRST OFFENSE: Maximum fine of \$500; 20 to 40 hours community service related to education about or prevention of misuse of alcohol; 60 or 120 day suspension of driver's license.</p> <p>SECOND OFFENSE: Maximum fine of \$500. 40 to 60 hours community service related to education about or prevention of misuse of alcohol; 120 or 240 day suspension of driver's license.</p>	<p>THIRD OFFENSE: Fine not less than \$500 or more than \$2,000; confinement in jail for term not to exceed 180 days or both the fine and the confinement; 180-day or 1 year suspension of driver's license.</p> <p>An offense under this section is not a lesser included offense under Section 49.04, Penal Code. (DWI).</p>
Public Intoxication		A fine not to exceed \$500
Purchase of alcohol by a minor	Fine of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$500	Varies with age and number of offenses
Consumption of alcohol by a minor	Fine of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$500.00	Varies with number of offenses
Possession of alcohol by a minor	<p>FIRST OFFENSE: Maximum fine of \$500; 8 to 12 hours of community service; 30-day suspension of driver's license.</p> <p>SECOND OFFENSE: Maximum fine of \$500; 20 to 40 hours of community service; 60-day suspension of driver's license.</p>	THIRD OFFENSE: Fine not less than \$250 or more than \$2,000; confinement in jail for term not to exceed 180 days or both fine and confinement; 180-day suspension or driver's license.
Furnishing alcohol to a minor	Fine not to exceed \$4,000; confinement in jail for term not to exceed 1 year ; or both such fine and confinement.	