

Alcohol Consumption

WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Improving your workplace alcohol culture is not limited to your physical worksite. Promoting responsible consumption of alcohol to workers who are working remotely is just as important.

Why address alcohol when working from home?

Addressing alcohol culture is everyone's responsibility. In NSW 31% of adults drink at levels harmful to their long-term health¹. Organisations can play an important role in supporting workers, both onsite and working remotely, to reduce their alcohol consumption.

The Role of the Workplace

While many organisations do not provide alcohol during a typical work day, it is important that everyone takes responsibility for changing the culture of alcohol in Australia. Organisations can play an important role in supporting workers, both onsite and working remotely, to reduce their alcohol consumption.

Approximately 90% of Australians who work also drink alcohol². The culture of many workplaces in Australia is impacted by alcohol. Alcohol culture is a part of many workplace social functions which can extend to staff working from home e.g. virtual drinks.

Many Australians drink alcohol to deal with work-related issues including stress. People working from home on a regular, long term basis may experience social isolation. In some cases this may influence a person's alcohol consumption levels. Organisations can play an important role in supporting workers to reduce their current levels of drinking.

Ensure your organisation has clear policies and procedures in place when it comes to alcohol consumption.

Tips to improve your workplace alcohol culture among remote workers



Workplace Alcohol Policy: Have a clear Workplace Alcohol Policy that encompasses working from home arrangements. Ensure this is circulated to all employees during orientation and when commencing remote working arrangements.



Communication: Communicate regularly with your workforce to ensure that workers understand your expectations regarding alcohol consumption in the workplace and when working from home.



Education: Provide alcohol awareness education to promote cultural and behavioural change. E.g. Present the *Get Healthy at Work* "Cutting Down on Alcohol" toolbox talk via videoconference to remote workers.



Support: Check in regularly with workers who are working from home to support them and prevent social isolation. E.g. Organise weekly or fortnightly check-ins rather than monthly.



Socialising: Organise online social catch-ups that do not promote alcohol consumption, e.g. an online morning coffee catch-up, lunch time team yoga session or a virtual afternoon tea.



Promote: Circulate and promote free alcohol support services to your workers. Some services include:

- Get Healthy Service – Reduce Alcohol Program gethealthynsw.com.au
- Counselling Online counsellingonline.org.au
- NSW Alcohol and Drug Information Service – 1800 250 015
- Drinks Meter App – track how much you drink in a week with the confidential app, including advice from doctors and the Australian guidelines. yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/getting-help/Pages/drinks-meter-app.aspx

¹ NSW Health Stats 2018

² alcoholthinkagain.com.au Alcohol and the Workplace - 2016. WA Dept Health

