

Alcohol and Other Drugs Q&As



What sort of testing is done?

Our AOD Policy allows for both 'random' and 'for cause' testing for employees and contractors (which includes labour hire workers). 'For cause' testing includes 'reasonable suspicion' testing, 'post-incident' testing and 'testing on return to work following a positive AOD test result'.

How will people be selected for random testing?

At large sites, all people on site for that shift – including employees and contractors – will be randomly selected using a name randomiser.

In large office-based locations we will use a randomiser to select desk numbers.

At small sites with less than 8 people, everybody will be tested.

How will people be selected to undergo 'for cause' testing?

Managers may nominate individuals to undergo 'for cause' testing if they have a 'reasonable suspicion' that an employee or contractor may be impaired by AOD; or if they have been involved in a 'safety incident' involving vehicles, motorcycles, other modes of transport, or powered loadshifting equipment; or 'upon return to work following a positive test'.

Managers will have to discuss cases of 'reasonable suspicion' testing with their nominated approver and the People Services Team. If the People Services Team is satisfied that there is reasonable cause, they will contact the testing agency to arrange the test.

I don't do drugs, why should I be drug tested?

Safety is our number one priority and we aim to create the safest possible work environments for everyone.

Making sure that all employees and contractors are safe from the impacts of AOD use is part of making your workplace safer.

Testing can help identify individuals who might be risking the health and safety of themselves and others (including you) at work. It's only fair that everyone has the same chance of being randomly tested. No one is saying that you, or anyone else, is doing drugs.

Is this just another case of 'big brother' prying into my private life?

We don't make any moral judgement. Your use of AOD in your own time is not our business, unless it impacts on your work.

If what you do during your own time potentially puts at risk your safety, the safety of your colleagues and/or the safety of the public while you are on duty, then that is our business.

Why has Australia Post Group chosen saliva testing over blood or urine testing for drugs?

The decision to use saliva testing technology over the more well-known urine and blood testing is based on our view that any testing undertaken should be as non-invasive as possible for our employees and contractors.

However, urine testing for drugs is undertaken by job candidates as part of their pre-employment medical assessment.

I'm taking medication prescribed by a doctor or pharmacist. Will that show up on a drug test? Do I need to tell my manager or supervisor about every prescription and non-prescription medication I am taking? What if I do not wish to discuss my personal health condition?

You are not required to discuss your personal health condition with your manager or reveal every medication you are taking.

However, some over the counter drugs or prescribed medicines may show up during testing.

We expect that, for any prescription or over the counter medication you take, you will:

- get professional medical advice from your doctor or pharmacist about the medication and any effects it might have on your ability to work safely and effectively; and
- tell your manager or supervisor if any medication is likely to affect your ability to perform your work safely, or if you should not perform your work while taking the medication.

This requirement is about ensuring that your health and safety at work – and that of your colleagues – is not put at risk due to any medication you are taking.

My culture or religion does not allow me to consume alcohol. Will I still be required to undergo an AOD test?

All Australia Post Group employees and contractors, regardless of culture or religion, are subject to the AOD Policy, which includes participation in AOD testing procedures. The AOD Policy has been developed to apply fairly and consistently to all employees and contractors.

If I know of someone who has an AOD problem and it may be affecting their safety, health and work performance, what should I do?

You should notify your manager or supervisor if you believe you or a colleague is at risk at work due to AOD use, or is otherwise in breach of the AOD Policy. This is a sensitive area, so please raise any concerns in a discreet and respectful way.

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What are the qualifications of the testers?

AOD technicians from an external AOD testing agency will conduct the testing. AOD technicians have completed training which certifies them as competent and authorised for this work.

All testing will be carried out in accordance with the Australia Post Group AOD testing procedure and relevant Australian Standards, to ensure the integrity of testing.

What are the breath alcohol limits?

All employees and contractors who drive a vehicle/motorcycle for work must not have a breath alcohol content (BrAC) over the legal driving limit for the type of vehicle they use and the type of licence they hold while they are on duty. This will range from 0.00% to 0.05%.

All other employees and contractors must not have a BrAC greater than 0.05% while they are on duty.

I am not aware of Australia Post Group's new approach to AOD management and I have not received training on its content. Why should I be tested?

You should have received a briefing from your supervisor or manager plus an information booklet about AOD, which was sent to your home address. The booklet includes information about the impacts of AOD on individuals and the workplace, our position on AOD, and where to go to get more information and support.

All employees must have completed the online AOD training prior to being tested. If you have been selected for testing and have not completed the training, please tell your manager or supervisor. They will verify your training status and arrange training for you as soon as possible. If you have not been trained you will not be tested at that time.

Can I be discriminated against by being tested too often? What can I do if I believe I am being harassed and victimised?

We do not want to discriminate against any individual or group in the AOD testing process.

The selection is random, and is managed by an external AOD testing agency, not Australia Post Group. It will not 'target' individuals.

Managers will have to discuss cases of 'reasonable suspicion' testing with the nominated approver and the **People Services Team**. If the **People Services Team** is satisfied that there is reasonable cause, they will contact the external AOD testing agency to arrange the test.

If you are concerned about the number of random or 'for cause' AOD tests that you have had to undertake, please talk to your manager or supervisor, or **call the People Services Team on 1300 116 947**.

Will natural herbal drugs used by naturopaths show up in these tests?

It is important, even with 'natural' remedies that you understand:

- what substances you are taking;
- how they may affect your ability to work safely and effectively; and
- any possible impacts in terms of testing.

If you are taking herbal drugs that contain the substances being screened, then they may show up in the test result. If you are taking herbal substances, you should check with your healthcare provider.

What happens if I have been randomly selected for testing and then fall ill, need to go to the toilet or need to leave work?

Your manager will discuss your specific circumstances with you at the time and offer to get medical assistance if required. However, if, after becoming aware that AOD testing is occurring, an employee or contractor leaves the site or engages in other conduct which indicates that they may be avoiding AOD testing, the Australia Post Group management representative will direct them to return to the site immediately (if applicable) and attend a meeting to discuss the reasons for their conduct. A failure to comply with such a direction and/or provide a reasonable explanation for their conduct may result in the employee or contractor being deemed to have refused to undergo AOD testing.

I was at a party last night and side-streamed marijuana smoke. Will this show up in the drug screening?

Scientific evidence says that you cannot pick up enough side-stream smoke from being near a marijuana or pot smoker to test positive in an AOD testing process.

How long after consuming drugs will I produce a positive result from saliva testing?

The actual time after consumption that drugs will be detected varies between individuals and the type and quantity of drugs taken. It could range from hours to days. It is not possible to give a definitive answer.

Is using a discipline process appropriate for me if I am having difficulty managing my use of AOD?

The discipline process we use in relation to breaches of the AOD Policy is no different to how we deal with other breaches of the Australia Post Group policies and procedures.

Our Ethics is clear about the behavioural standards required of all workers, and if a worker falls short of those standards, then the relevant disciplinary process is used.

If you are an employee and you are having difficulty managing your use of AOD, please contact our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counselling and assistance with rehabilitation. You can contact the EAP directly, or be referred by your manager. EAP is available on 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327).

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You may also wish to consult your GP or access a community-based program for assistance. A list of resources is available in the AOD information booklet that has been sent to you. These resources can also be found on OurPost.com.au

If you are a contractor, please talk to your employer or principal contractor about getting support. You can also contact Australia Post's Workforce Assistance Program (WAP) for confidential counselling and assistance with rehabilitation. WAP is available on 1300 687 327.

How many EAP/WAP sessions will Australia Post Group provide an employee or contractor who decides to seek help?

Generally we will fund up to six free sessions per person per year - this includes immediate family members. Additional free sessions may be permitted after discussions with the EAP/WAP Co-ordinator and treating medical practitioners.

Has the union been consulted about the AOD Policy?

Yes, we have engaged the relevant unions in consultation about the AOD Policy.

Can I refuse to take an AOD test?

You are required to comply with Australia Post Group's policies and procedures. If you refuse to take an AOD test after being randomly selected for testing or as part of 'for cause' testing, it will be treated the same as if you returned a confirmed positive test result.

What happens if I test positive? Will there be a "three strikes" policy?

On the day of testing, if you return a positive breath test or a non-negative drug test result which requires confirmatory testing, you will be directed to leave the site pending further notification. Appropriate arrangements must be made for you to travel home safely.

There is no hard and fast rule about the number of chances you get. We will take a case by case approach to all breaches of the AOD Policy.

How will the new AOD Policy impact StarTrack workers?

The new policy supersedes the StarTrack Drug and Alcohol Policy.

The AOD levels applied for alcohol readings and drug saliva results will not change.

It is expected that there will be minimal changes to the way breaches of the AOD Policy by employees are managed under StarTrack's Fair Treatment Policy.

For StarTrack managers, all requests for 'for cause' testing will be booked by the AOD Co-ordinators. Managers will no longer be able to contact the external AOD testing agency directly after hours.

How will the new AOD Policy impact Transport workers?

The new policy supersedes the current Australia Post AOD Policy for Transport.

The breath alcohol content (BrAC) limit for NSW becomes 0.02% in line with NSW road-rules.

'For cause' testing also now applies (for further details refer to the Q&A 'What sort of testing is done?').

Will the senior manager on duty be routinely tested when random testing is occurring at their site?

All managers on-site are included in the random testing selection process and there is no requirement for the senior manager on duty to be routinely tested. However, during the first year of the AOD Policy, the senior manager on duty is expected to volunteer for testing when random testing is occurring at their site.

What records will be kept if I return a positive test? Will it be reported to the police or other authorities?

A positive AOD test result will not be reported to police or other authorities.

The external AOD testing agency will provide the name of any employee or contractor who returns a positive test result to the **People Services Team** who will maintain a National AOD Register.

If you are an employee and subjected to the relevant disciplinary process as a result of a positive AOD test result, the usual records will be kept for that process.

Where can I access the AOD Policy and testing procedure?

The AOD Policy, testing procedure, and other information about AOD is available on OurPost.com.au. Ask your manager or supervisor for assistance if you are unable to access this information.

Where can I go for more information?

If you have further questions, please speak to your manager or supervisor, or call the **People Services Team** on 1300 116 947.

Advice and support is available from the Employee Assistance Program and Workforce Assistance Program i.e. (for contractors) on 1300 687 327.

Contact details for other organisations that can give you expert information and advice about AOD are in the AOD information booklet that was sent to all employees and can be found on OurPost.com.au.