Maintaining a safe working environment is of paramount importance, this does not only apply to the workforce but also nearby public and anyone else who may be affected. The influence of drugs and alcohol pose enormous safety risks for the construction industry, the smallest lapse in attention or focus could cause serious consequences.

33. Drugs and alcohol – ‘Health, Safety and Environmental Policy’ V21
“The Company does not permit the consumption of alcohol during working hours and forbids the use of illegal drugs. Operatives are reminded that alcohol, on average takes one hour per unit to be processed from the body, and therefore care must be taken to ensure that you are not still under the influence of alcohol when reporting for work, therefore care should be taken with regard to the amount that is consumed during the previous evening. The Company reminds all employees that the consumption of alcohol on company premises or sites is strictly forbidden. In addition, any employee attending work whilst suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, the effects of alcohol will be dismissed from site and sent home. It is also forbidden to drive any Company vehicle while under the influence of alcohol even during non-working hours.

The consumption of any illegal or non-medicinal drug whilst on Company premises or sites is also strictly forbidden. Any employee suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, the effects of illegal or non-medical drug abuse will be dismissed from site and sent home. Any employee taking a legitimate drug (prescribed or bought over the counter) must take into account is effects and where necessary, must not drive or operate plant or machinery where this would put himself or others in danger. Employees are to ensure that a superior company manager is informed in all cases. Any individual or contractor found or suspected of alcohol or drug abuse will be dismissed from site without further pay, and where necessary, their contract will be terminated”.

The effects of alcohol or drugs can vary, dependent on the individual’s state of health and fitness as well as their resilience to the chemicals. Alcohol and drugs can remain in the body for a considerable time after consumption and its effects still be present several hours after consumption and therefore still affecting the individual when at work.
Drug and Alcohol effects include:
• Impaired awareness including hearing and vision
• Poor attitude – lack of adherence to rules
• Perception ability is reduced
• Poor health including fatigue, poor concentration and stress
• Increased risk of violence
• Compromised balance and coordination

So, while it can be difficult to know for certain whether or not a person is under the influence of a controlled substance, it is possible, in a general way, to say that there are certain signs and symptoms that MAY indicate substance abuse.
Here are a few of them:

• **EYES**: Blood Shot: constricted; dilated;
• **PUPILS** are different sizes
• **SPEECH**: Slurred; Incoherent; Rapid;
• Loud; Soft
• **HEART RATE**: Slow; Fast
• **OTHER SIGNS**: Wobbly walk: Jittery;
• Sleepy: Nervous; Paranoid

If you have been prescribed medication, you must seek advice from your GP or pharmacist about the possible effect on your ability to carry out your job and whether your duties should be modified or you should be temporarily reassigned to a different role. If so you must tell your line manager without delay.

Reference:
COMPANY HS&E POLICY -
33. Drugs and alcohol

COMPANY HR HANDBOOK – Page 58 & 59

Think safely, work safely 🚫