

RESPONDING TO ILLEGAL DRUGS AT YOUR CLUB

Reference for the club officials

1. INITIAL RESPONSE

- Always focus on the safety and welfare of those involved
- Follow the club's illegal drugs policy or duty of care procedures
- Seek medical attention when required
- Contact and include the club's welfare representative or club official as soon as possible

Safety first!

- Make an assessment of the situation
- If there is a risk of the person experiencing an overdose, losing consciousness, or harming themselves or someone else:
 - Stay calm.
 - Reassure them if they are distressed that the effects will wear off.
 - Call an ambulance if the person is having chest pains, difficulty breathing, or is unconscious (non-responsive). Calling an ambulance does not have to involve the police, unless you think it is necessary.
 - Ask others around you for help, you don't need to do this on your own.
 - You might need to contact the person's emergency contact, parent or guardian to advise them of the situation and/or arrange safe transport home.

If there are drugs present, advise police and ask for advice, and record details in your incident register, as per your club's policy.

2. INVESTIGATING A CONCERN OR INCIDENT

- Only once the safety and welfare of everyone involved has been established should the club official begin exploring the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident.
- This process should be conducted fairly and privately.
- The club official should recommend an appropriate action based on the context of the situation and the guiding principles set out in the club's illegal drugs policy.

The aim of the investigation is to provide the club committee with a thorough understanding of the event and the meaning it has for the people involved.

Depending on what is learned in this process, the club may decide to take further actions based on its illegal drugs policy.

Get the facts

- Establish your own understanding of what has happened.
- Check your club's policy if you need to.
- If the matter is about a particular substance, inform yourself about its effects and risks to aid in the discussion with the person(s) subject to an investigation.

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Have the conversation at an appropriate time

Make a time to speak to all individuals involved in the incident reasonably quickly. Depending on the nature of the incident this may be on the same day, or sometime later.

Speak to individuals one-on-one, to reduce embarrassment, peer pressure, and to respect privacy as much as possible.

Have this conversation when you are both calm, sober, and in a friendly or neutral environment. It is critical that you:

- Never converse with someone in the heat of the moment.
- Find a quiet and private space and time to talk.
- Avoid making accusations or judgments.
- If the person is under 18 years you should ensure a parent or guardian is present.

Ask questions

Let the person know that as a club official you want to make sure they are alright and to work out if they need some help or support.

Also explain you will make a report on the incident to the club committee so the committee is fully informed before deciding on further action.

Use open ended prompts to encourage the other person to engage in the conversation; e.g. tell me, explain, describe, etc.

- First, check in with the person's overall sense of wellbeing:
 - Are you ok? Is there anything in your life that is causing you worry or stress?
 - Is there anything I can help you with?

- Explain that you want to find out what happened when the incident occurred. If it is not clear that drugs were involved ask the person:
 - Can you tell me what happened?
 - What do you think caused the incident?
 - Could it have been a result of medication or other drugs?
 - Were drugs involved in this event?
- When it is known that the incident involved drug use, explain that you need to have a clear understanding of the drug use:
 - Which drug was it that you used on this occasion?
 - How much did you take?
 - How often do you use this drug?
 - Have you experienced problems or been harmed in any way due to drug use?
 - Do you have any concerns about your use of the drug?
 - Has anyone ever expressed concern over the effect the drug has on you? Have you ever sought help related to your drug use?
 - How did you come to use this drug (or be affected) at the club/club event?
 - Would you like some help or advice regarding your drug use?

Ask the person whether there is another person (e.g. partner, friend or parent) who could provide additional information that is relevant to understand the incident.

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3. TAKING ACTION

- When deciding on the appropriate action to take following a drug related incident, it's only fair to consider all the facts with an unbiased view
- Take in to account the impact of the decision on the individual and club community. Every incident will be different, and some less serious events may allow more leniency
- Keep these tips in mind when developing your club's strategy:
 - Focus on the safety and welfare of those directly or indirectly involved
 - Responses should always be based on actual evidence
 - Consider the impact on the club, members, players, patrons, visitors and community
 - Consider the age of those involved
 - Consider the nature of the incident (possession, under the influence, distribution or selling)
 - Consider whether or not it is an individual's first breach of the policy
 - Consider sending an official warning letter to the individual advising that a second breach could result in suspension or expulsion. Make this call based on your club policy and personal circumstances
 - Consider appointing a mentor for the person, or referring them to a community service, if required
 - Notify the individual's club if they're part of a visiting team, if required
 - Cooperate with the police, including contacting them according to club policy

Offer support and follow-up

Once the facts have been established and the incident has been resolved remember to follow up with the individual:

- Offer the person(s) the name and contact details for a local doctor, health service or counselling service if they want further advice.
- Agree to check in with the person(s) after a nominated time.
- If the club does decide to suspend the person(s), ensure to appoint a senior member at the club for a nominated period of time as a mentor for this person to assist them to reintegrate into the club.

4. DISCRETION

When responding to any incident, it's important to use discretion. Incidents will often involve personal circumstances that must remain confidential. Involve only the appropriate people with the investigation and never raise the issue in a public space. The club should play a trusting role and never share personal details unnecessarily.

Remember, the Good Sports team is here to help you along the way. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The [Good Sports website](#) and the [Alcohol and Drug Foundation websites](#) are full of resources to help you along