

1. Purpose

Northern Lights Library System (NLLS) is committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and productive workplace. This policy outlines expectations regarding substance use, impairment, and support for employees who may be struggling with substance-related issues.

NLLS recognizes that substance abuse and dependency are medical conditions and supports employees seeking assistance without fear of automatic disciplinary action.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all NLLS employees, contractors, volunteers, and board/committee members while:

- Working on NLLS premises or remote locations,
 - Attending work-related events,
 - Using NLLS property or equipment,
 - Representing NLLS in any official capacity.
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3. Definitions

- **Fit for Duty:** The physical, mental, and emotional state in which an employee is able to perform their job safely, competently, and without risk to themselves, others, or NLLS property.
 - **Impairment:** A condition where an employee's judgment, motor skills, alertness, or behavior is affected by substances, including alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or the misuse of prescription/over-the-counter medications.
 - **Substance Use Disorder:** A medical condition that affects a person's ability to control substance use and may require professional treatment and accommodations.
 - **Medical Cannabis:** Cannabis prescribed for a medical condition that must be accommodated in compliance with human rights legislation.
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4. Workplace Expectations

4.1 General Substance Use Guidelines

- Employees must report to work Fit for Duty and capable of performing their tasks safely and effectively.
 - The use, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or other impairing substances is prohibited during working hours, including meal periods and scheduled breaks.
 - Prescription & Over-the-Counter Medications: Employees may take legally prescribed or over-the-counter medications as long as they do not impair work performance or safety.
 - Employees must notify their Department Manager if taking medication that could impair their ability to safely perform job duties. NLLS will work with the employee to determine reasonable accommodations.
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4.2 Alcohol & Workplace Events

- Alcohol consumption is prohibited during working hours unless explicitly authorized by the Executive Director for an NLLS-sponsored event.
 - Employees consuming alcohol at authorized events must do so responsibly and remain professional in their conduct.
 - Employees who feel unfit to work following an event should arrange alternative transportation home.
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5. Addressing Impairment in the Workplace

If an employee appears impaired or unfit for duty:

- The Department Manager or Executive Director will privately discuss concerns with the employee.
 - If necessary, the employee may be asked to leave work for the remainder of the day and should arrange safe transportation (e.g., taxi, ride from a family member).
 - Employees will not be permitted to drive if impairment is suspected. If an impaired employee insists on driving, NLLS will contact local authorities for safety reasons.
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6. Support, Treatment, & Accommodation

- NLLS recognizes substance use disorders as medical conditions and encourages employees to seek help without fear of immediate discipline.
- Employees struggling with substance dependency are encouraged to confidentially discuss their situation with their Department Manager or the Executive Director.
- NLLS will provide reasonable accommodations for employees who disclose a medical condition related to substance use, in compliance with human rights obligations.
- Employees may access extended health benefits for counseling, addiction treatment, or rehabilitation services.

7. Employee & Manager Responsibilities

7.1 Employee Responsibilities

Employees who are prescribed or taking medication that may impair their ability to perform their duties safely must notify their manager if an accommodation may be required. Employees are not required to disclose specific medications but may need to provide documentation confirming their fitness for work or outlining necessary accommodations.

Employees are expected to:

- Report to work fit for duty and free from impairment.
- Disclose if they are using medication that may impact job performance.
- Report concerns if they believe a coworker is impaired in a way that affects workplace safety.
- Exercise responsibility when consuming alcohol at approved events.

7.2 Manager Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- Monitoring employee fitness for duty and addressing concerns promptly.
- Having private, professional conversations with employees if impairment is suspected.
- Ensuring safe transportation if an employee is deemed unfit for work.
- Supporting employees who disclose a substance use disorder and facilitating accommodations where appropriate.

8. Reporting Concerns & Non-Retaliation

- Employees concerned about a coworker's impairment should report it confidentially to their manager or the Executive Director.
- Reports must be made in good faith and based on reasonable concerns.
- NLLS strictly prohibits retaliation against employees who report concerns about workplace safety.

9. Enforcement & Discipline

9.1 Progressive Discipline

Violations of this policy will be handled fairly and consistently using a progressive discipline approach:

1. Verbal or written warnings for minor infractions.

2. Suspension or required assessment for repeated or serious concerns.
3. Termination for serious misconduct, including:
 - Being impaired at work in a way that endangers others.
 - Possessing, distributing, or selling illegal substances at work.
 - Repeated violations without willingness to seek support or corrective action.

9.2 Immediate Dismissal

- Employees who engage in severe misconduct (e.g., endangering safety, illegal activities) may face immediate dismissal with cause.

10. Confidentiality

All information related to substance use concerns, medical disclosures, or accommodations will be handled confidentially in compliance with privacy laws.

NLLS Executive Board Chair

Date of Approval