

Guiding principles and history

Supplementary information

Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace – Version 6.0 – July 1, 2018

The purpose of the Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace (Canadian Model) is to contribute to a safe workplace for all workers by reducing the risks associated with the inappropriate use of alcohol and drugs. This supplementary information is intended to help create awareness and enhance understanding of the Canadian Model. If there is any lack of clarity or apparent conflict between the supplementary information and the Canadian Model, the terms of the Canadian Model Version 6.0 shall prevail. For more information, visit coaa.ab.ca and EnergySafetyCanada.com.

Guiding principles

Recognizing that the inappropriate use of alcohol, non-prescription drugs and prescription drugs can have serious adverse effects on worker health, safety and job performance, it became clear in the 1990s that a comprehensive industry-wide model, including a policy plus procedural guidelines, was needed to enhance health and safety at the workplace. In framing the idea that evolved into the Canadian Model, the following principles were considered:

- Recognizing that every person has the right to a safe and reliable workplace, companies are committed to ensuring no workers create a risk for themselves, others, the environment and/or physical plant as a result of the use of drugs and alcohol. Both companies and individuals have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.
- The application of a standard alcohol and drug model policy across the industry will help to standardize the approach to educating, testing, disciplining and rehabilitating workers. It will also assist companies in implementing and managing consistent standards to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and respectfully.
- The standard model policy must ensure the credibility of the testing processes, be legally defensible, and maintain confidentiality and employee privacy.
- Alcohol and drug policies do not reduce the need for effective performance management systems.
- Awareness, education, effective interventions and rehabilitation are all essential for a successful program. The standard model policy will provide a better understanding among industry stakeholders of the health and safety issues associated with the use of drugs and alcohol, as well as the rehabilitation support available to workers.
- There is a correlation between workplace safety culture and family and community benefits. The industry recognizes this correlation and supports a standard alcohol and drug model policy that upholds community values for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- Owner companies, contractors, workers and labour providers all share responsibility for the success of this model policy.

History

Prior to the introduction of the Canadian Model in 1999, the construction industry had no standard policy for addressing the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace. While many parties in the industry had implemented their own policies, others had none in place. At the same time, owners mandated policies for their sites, which often differed from the policies of contractors or service providers working on the sites. This lack of standardization led to confusion, redundancy and discrepancies, which were certainly inefficient and potentially unfair to employees caught in the middle.

- **February 1999 – First version of the Canadian Model**

In 1998, under the direction of the Construction Owners Association of Alberta (COAA), a group of key stakeholders came together to address this problem. Through extensive collaboration, the working group developed consistent alcohol and drug guidelines, as well as a model policy, that would standardize the approach to educating, testing, disciplining and, if needed, rehabilitating workers. In February 1999, the first version of the Canadian Model was distributed to construction industry stakeholders.

- **May 2001 – Second version of the Canadian Model**

Recognizing that the development of a Canadian Model must take into account new information, technologies and trends that may arise over time, COAA undertook periodic reviews to keep the Canadian Model current and relevant. In the fall of 2000, the working group reconvened and reviewed the document in light of initial implementation experience plus the emerging law and public policy in this area. In May 2001, a second version of the Canadian Model was completed.

- **October 2005 – Third version of the Canadian Model**

The next step in the journey was in 2004 when a COAA committee was struck to re-examine the Canadian Model with the goal of further improving safety in the workplace. In particular, the committee examined new technologies and tools that had become available, and reviewed industry and legislative trends, current scientific information relating to the use of drugs and alcohol, and stakeholder feedback. A third version of the Canadian Model was issued in October 2005.

During 2005, the safety and training arm of the upstream petroleum industry, now known as Energy Safety Canada, formed a task force to develop tools for employers to manage alcohol and drug risks in the workplace. The task force quickly concluded that adapting the Canadian Model was both efficient and effective. The alcohol and drug Policy Model for the Upstream Petroleum Industry provided guidelines for establishing and implementing company alcohol and drug policies, including treatment programs and potential re-employment opportunities for addicted employees. For the next 12 years, this document was closely aligned with and paralleled the evolution of the Canadian Model.

- **November 2010 – Fourth version of the Canadian Model**

In 2010, a fourth version of the Canadian Model was issued, incorporating the latest advances in the drug cut-off limits. The Policy Model for the Upstream Petroleum Industry was updated accordingly.

- **October 2014 – Fifth version of the Canadian Model (Version 5.0)**

The fifth version, effective October 2014, was the product of a comprehensive update by a review committee of industry experts. The Policy Model for the Upstream Petroleum Industry was updated accordingly.

- **July 2018 – Sixth version of the Canadian Model (Version 6.0)**

In 2017, COAA and Energy Safety Canada began to explore the idea of a common model policy for the heavy industrial and maintenance sector and the oil and gas sector. Approval in principle was given by the respective Boards, a stakeholder group was assembled to represent all facets of the two organizations, and many hours were invested by volunteers and medical experts to develop an updated, universally applicable model policy. The respective Boards approved Version 6.0 for issue in June 2018.

The Canadian Model Version 6.0 applies uniformly to the Canadian construction and maintenance sector and the oil and gas sector. It continues to be readily accessible and widely used by owners, contractors and labour providers in Canada. COAA and Energy Safety Canada have committed to ongoing stewardship and reviews of the Canadian Model, in consultation with industry stakeholders.