



SITREP 46/13

Drug and alcohol testing to commence Sunday

The new FRNSW Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Policy and Procedures that were confirmed in Commissioner's Orders 2013/20 and reported in SITREP 34/2013 both commence operation, including random workplace drug and alcohol testing, this Sunday 1 December.

Members should by now have familiarised themselves with their rights and responsibilities under the AOD Policy and Procedures (available by link in the online version of this SITREP), but with workplace testing due to start there are two important points to note.

Firstly, be aware that members who return a "non-negative" oral test result for drugs may (not must) complete and sign a Medical Declaration Form and have their test results sent for laboratory analysis (see Procedures point 5.3). If you are certain that your "non-negative" oral test result is due solely to your use of legal medications (eg, prescribed medicines or codeine and/or cold and flu tablets), then you may fill out the Medical Declaration Form and remain at work while Workplace Standards waits for the laboratory result. If that result is clear then you will be too. If, however, the laboratory result confirms the presence of a prohibited substance (ie, a positive result) then the consequences may be severe. If you choose not to fill out the Medical Declaration Form then you will be stood down on sick leave pending the laboratory test result which, if clear (ie, a negative result), will result in your sick leave being re-credited. So think carefully before you agree to fill out and sign a Medical Declaration Form.

Secondly, know also that a member who returns a "non-negative" oral test result can choose to accept that result or challenge it (see Procedures point 5.3). If you choose to accept a "non-negative" result then it will be treated as a positive result and your sample will not be sent for laboratory analysis, which is more sensitive and which produces quantitative results as opposed to simply an indication of whether readings exceed the 'cut-off' levels. So while you have the right to a full laboratory test of a "non-negative" result, you also have to the right to avoid one.

Members should cooperate with the testing contractors, and may request the attendance of the Duty Commander while workplace testing is carried out. A member who returns a positive breath test result for alcohol (the limit is 0.02) and/or a non-negative oral test for drugs must leave the workplace if directed to do so, but is not required (or advised) to explain, admit or even discuss their test results before they have contacted the Union for advice and assistance.

Movember

I would like to acknowledge the many FBEU members, both those who grew moustaches and those who donated so generously, who have made Movember a success. Movember aims to "change the face of men's health" and raise awareness and funding for men's health issues. As of today, the NSW firefighter/FBEU Team (lead by Team Captain and FBEU President, Darin "Horseshoe" Sullivan) is heading the Triple Zero Challenge in donations with only one day remaining. Congratulations comrades for all your hard work this month.

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Friday 29 November 2013