

Concerns around the new RMS drug and alcohol policy

Recently, your union, the PSA along with other unions attended a meeting with RMS management and the WHS team to listen to a proposal for a new drug and alcohol policy for the Department. This policy would cover all RMS employees. This included a number of key changes to the existing policy including but not limited to:

- » Reducing the acceptable BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) level at work from 0.02 to 0.00 for all employees.
- » The introduction of pre-employment urine testing for those seeking employment with the department.
- » The introduction of random testing for drug and alcohol levels of staff while at work.

After consulting with your RMS Departmental Committee which is made up of delegates from across the state, a number of key concerns with this policy were brought forward.

Firstly, the policy in its current form is a 'one size fits all' approach to managing the risks associated with drug and alcohol use and provisions which may be necessary for some roles and job descriptions may not be necessary or appropriate in others.

Secondly, certain aspects of this policy appear to be aimed at attempting to penalise staff for their behaviours outside of work rather than managing their safety at work. It is our belief that any changes to a policy should have a sole focus of ensuring safety at work and should not have an overbearing impact on staff's personal lives.

Lastly, we believe that with the introduction of randomised testing there is the potential for victimisation of individual staff members. In certain instances, and without strong safeguards this policy could be used to target specific employees.

In light of these concerns, the PSA has sought another meeting with management to further discuss these changes. This meeting will occur next week and we will of course advise the membership of the outcomes.

