



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority



CASA Avmed – Drug and Alcohol Management

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Acknowledgement and welcome

Disclaimer

This presentation provides general information only

The information presented does not necessarily represent official CASA or Australian Government policy

Drug and Alcohol Management in Australian Aviation

Overview of the problem

Part 99 regulations

Drug and Alcohol Management Plans

Medical certification

Overview of the problem

In 2021–22, around 131,000 Australian people aged 10 and over received treatment from alcohol and other drug treatment services.

Overview of the problem

The four most common drugs that led clients to seek treatment were:

- alcohol (42% of episodes),
- amphetamines (24%),
- cannabis (19%),
- heroin (4.5%).

The median age of clients was 37 years

Overview of the problem

NTSB 2013 – 2107 Update to Drug Use Trends in Aviation

During the 5 years ending in 2017, 266 (28%) fatally injured pilots tested positive for at least one potentially impairing drug, 5% for an illicit drug

Overview of the problem – NTSB Update

Illicit substances:

- THC 77%
- Cocaine 15%
- Meth 13%

Non-illicit drugs:

- Sedating antihistamine in 11.9% of fatally injured pilots
- Sedating analgesics 5.3%

Substances where presence indicates safety relevant diseases:

- Hydrocodone
- Citalopram
- Diazepam

A Key Events – influencing change in Australia

2002 – Hamilton Island accident

ATSB recommendations to establish an aviation drug and alcohol management program

Drug and Alcohol Management Plans

Part 99 of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) sets out:

- a framework for the development of drug and alcohol management plans (DAMPs) for people involved in safety sensitive aviation activities (SSAAs)
- a regime for random drug and alcohol tests conducted by, or on behalf of CASA.

Safety Sensitive Aviation Activities

SSAA roles are those that might affect the safe working of an aircraft and include (but are not limited to):

- flight crew
- cabin crew
- ground handlers
- maintenance teams
- aircraft dispatchers
- aviation security staff
- refuellers
- *anyone who works airside.*

Purpose of DAMPs

- Help manage the risks of alcohol and other drugs at work
- Outline an organisation's policy on the use of drugs and alcohol
- Record how an organisation is following the rules.

DAMP requirements

- an education program
- a testing program
- a response program.

These programs apply to anyone who does safety sensitive aviation activities (SSAAs), including contractors.

DAMP requirements - education

Drug and alcohol education program must include awareness of:

- the organisation's policy on alcohol and other drug use
- testing in the workplace
- support and help services for people who use alcohol or other drugs in a way that might be a problem
- the potential risks to aviation safety caused by using alcohol and other drugs.

CASA and Employer testing

There are 2 types of alcohol and drug testing that can be done under the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR):

- non-notice testing, also known as CASA testing (CASR Subpart 99C)
- employer testing, as part of their organisation's DAMP (CASR Subpart 99B).

CASA testing

We can conduct random drug and alcohol testing on anyone in an aerodrome testing area without notice, except for passengers.

We can test SSAA employees for:

- alcohol
- opiates
- cannabinoids
- cocaine
- amphetamines.

CASA Alcohol testing

Only done by breath testing.

If the first alcohol breath test is positive, a second test will be done.

If the second test is positive (0.02 grams of alcohol per 210 litres of breath or higher), the person must stop doing SSAAs.

If the second test is positive, we will:

- issue you with a notice
- ensure you stop doing SSAAs.

If the second test is negative, we treat the whole test as negative.

CASA Drug testing

Drug tests can be done using samples of oral fluid.

If the first drug test is positive, a second test will be done to confirm the result.

If the second test is positive, another sample will be sent to an approved laboratory to confirm the result.

The person must stop doing or being available to do SSAAs until the result is confirmed.

CASA Positive results

A CASA medical review officer (MRO) must review a positive alcohol or drug test result before CASA will decide to take action.

If a person has a positive test result they can't do, or be available to do, SSAAs until:

- they have a full assessment
- they start taking part in an alcohol or drug intervention program (if CASA recommends it)
- they are considered fit to resume duties by their organisation's MRO, CASA's MRO or their treating clinician.

CASA Test refusals

CASA can't force people to have a test. But if they refuse, or won't give a sample they may be prosecuted.

They must stop doing a SSAA. If they don't, they can face a criminal charge.

Employer testing

Organisations with DAMPs can test their employees:

- when an employee first joins an organisation as a regular SSAA employee (unless they have tested negative in the past 90 days)
- when an existing employee is going to start a new SSAA role
- when a DAMP supervisor thinks an SSAA employee could be affected by drugs or alcohol
- when an SSAA employee is returning to work after being suspended for testing positive to a testable drug
- after an accident or serious incident.

DAMP requirements – Drug and Alcohol Response Program

These make sure that anyone who carries out safety sensitive aviation activities (SSAAs) under the influence of alcohol or other drugs stops doing those activities *until it's safe for them to start again*.

Program of treatment, rehabilitation, supervision and return to work planning

DAMP Response – ceasing SSAAs

DAMP organisations must stop an employee from doing SSAAs if:

- the employee tests positive for alcohol or drugs. They must not return to performing SSAAs until a confirmatory test returns a negative result
- a second (confirmatory) test returns a positive result and a medical review officer (MRO) finds the result wasn't due to medical treatment or a harmless source
- the employee refuses a test or interferes with a test
- a DAMP supervisor suspects on reasonable grounds that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or a testable drug
- an accident or serious incident happens.

DAMP Response – resuming SSAAs

If an employee has been stopped from doing SSAAs, due to a confirmatory alcohol or drug test, they can only start doing these activities again if:

- they have a comprehensive assessment for alcohol or drug use
- they start an intervention program (this only applies if a medical review officer recommends it)
- the medical review officer and treating clinician (where relevant) say the employee is fit to start doing SSAAs again
- the employee returns a test showing no drugs are present
- the medical review officer is satisfied that the employee is not using alcohol or other drugs.

Organisations can decide if an employee can return to work or not. This depends on the organisation's policies and procedures about alcohol and other drug use in the workplace.

Assessments and Interventions

A comprehensive assessment aims to:

- find out more about an employee's alcohol or other drug use
- recommend the most suitable treatment options.

Comprehensive assessments can be conducted by:

- a psychiatrist
- a doctor who specialises in addictions
- a doctor and an appropriately qualified alcohol and other drug professional.

A medical review officer can recommend an employee take part in a tailored intervention program.

This could include:

- assessment
- education
- counselling
- treatment
- monitoring
- follow-up.

DAMP Key roles – Medical Review Officers

A DAMP organisation must consult a MRO:

- When a positive result is confirmed by a second drug test, to exclude appropriate use or a harmless substance.
- If an SSAA employee has failed to give a body sample for alcohol and drug testing due to a medical condition, to review the relevant medical information to confirm a valid medical reason.
- If an employee returns to work after a suspension, they must be fit for SSAAs. A MRO needs to check that they are safe to start doing these activities again.

DAMP key roles - Supervisors

Supervisors can

- stop an employee from continuing to perform SSAA
- refer the employee for drug and alcohol tests if they have reasonable grounds to believe an employee is affected by alcohol or other drugs.

Reasonable grounds can include:

- Observation
- the person's work habits
- a report from another employee or source.

Is it working....?

Aviation DAMP test positivity rates = Less than 1%

The overall positivity rate in the combined U.S. workforce (nine million urine drug tests, January and December 2021) was up in 2021 to 4.6% compared to 4.4% in 2020 and 3.5% 10 years ago (2010-2012).

2022 post accident test is for THC in urine drug tests in the general U.S. workforce was 7.3%, compared to 6.7% in 2021

Is it working...?

Yes

Sort of

But also, not really.

It's complicated....

Questions

And THANK YOU