



The university is committed to providing a safe and healthy work, learning, and living environment for students, academic staff members, employees, appointees, postdoctoral scholars, and visitors. **This resource will help ensure you understand your responsibilities as a leader regarding workplace impairment and help you recognize and respond to an employee who may be impaired.**

A leader is a person who has charge of a work site or supervises a worker. As a leader it is your responsibility to communicate with employees about the need to report to the workplace fit for work and to remain fit throughout the entire workday. Further it is a leader's responsibility to ensure that employees understand the requirement to disclose the use of an impairing substance that may affect job performance or compromise the health and safety of themselves or others in the workplace.

What is impairment?

To be impaired is to have diminished physical and mental control for any length of time. Impairment can be temporary, long term or permanent and can result in changes to physical appearance, behavior and job performance.

What causes impairment?

There are many circumstances that can cause impairment, for example:

- fatigue or stress from personal or employment factors
- side effects of medical conditions, medications or medical treatment
- traumatic experiences or personal/family crises
- mental illness
- substance use/abuse

What should you do if you suspect your employee is impaired at work?

- Don't panic, but do act. The only thing you can do wrong is nothing at all.
- For imminent life threatening situations, call **911**, then call **Campus Security**.
- According to occupational health and safety legislation, it is a leader's responsibility to ensure a safe work environment.

Meet privately

- Take action as soon as it is safe to do so. Delaying could impact your employee and your team. Remember, it's okay to express your concern.

- Discreetly remove the employee from the work area and meet in a private space.
- Include another leader as a second observer, whenever feasible.
- Begin conversations with open-ended questions and concrete observations.
- A simple *"How are you?"* or *"How have things been for you lately?"* can go a long way.
- Share your concerns by describing the behaviour you've observed — be specific. For example:
"I notice that you are responding more slowly than usual and you are slurring your words."
or
"This morning I saw you driving erratically on campus."
- Provide an opportunity for the employee to explain the behavior, but recognize that the employee does not need to disclose the cause of impairment.
- Document your observations in detail.

If you continue to believe your employee is impaired

- Advise the employee that you will need to meet at a later time to discuss impairment and safety at work, and if applicable, advise that they may bring a union representative.
- Contact **Human Resources** for assistance in preparing for the meeting.
- Provide alternate duties if your employee is unfit to perform their own work, as per UCalgary's Workplace Accommodation policy and procedures. In rare circumstances, the employee may be unfit to remain at work.

- Do not allow your employee to drive or leave on their own. If they aren't well enough to be at work, they may not be well enough to drive home. Arrange for alternate transportation.

Offer support, but maintain firm boundaries

- Treat your employee respectfully.
- Express your concern about safety for the individual and others.
- Expect defensiveness but don't take it personally.
- If your employee discloses that they are experiencing a substance use disorder, encourage them to speak with **Staff Wellness**.
- Ensure your employee is informed of support services including resources available through the **Employee and Family Assistance Plan**.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the personal information obtained during the process and refrain from disclosing information except to the extent that is necessary for the purpose of investigating concerns, taking corrective action and protecting the health and safety of employees.

Inform and get support

- Report the incident to your leader.
- Contact **Human Resources** for additional support and guidance.

Resources

On campus resources

Campus Security (24/7)	403.220.5333
Staff Wellness (regular business hours)	403.220.2918 ucalgary.ca/staffwellness
Human Resources	Contact your area's HR Partner ucalgary.ca/hr/about/hr-services
AUPE Local 52	403.220.8511 local052.aupe.ca
The Faculty Association of the University of Calgary	403.220.5722 tuca.com
Postdoctoral Fellows Association of the University of Calgary	pdacalgary.com
Student Wellness Services	403.210.9355 ucalgary.ca/wellness-services
Safer Substance Use	ucalgary.ca/safer-substance-use

Off campus resources

UCalgary Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP)	1.866.424.0699 ucalgary.ca/hr/efap
Distress Centre Calgary (24/7)	403.266.4357

Employee and Family Assistance Plan

Some of the most valuable resources available to employees who have experienced a critical incident are offered at no cost through the **Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP)**.

Employees and their dependents can use EFAP to access professional counselling services (face-to-face, telephone, video or online). EFAP provides additional online services including online cognitive behavioural therapy, health risk assessments, e-learning courses and an extensive health and wellness library with articles, videos and podcasts.