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## Introduction of CASA Drug and Alcohol Management Legislation

As a result of a fatal accident on Hamilton Island in 2004, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau recommended that the Department of Transport and Regional Services and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) jointly examine the safety benefits of a testing regime for alcohol and other drugs in the aviation sector.

Following receipt of the report, the Australian Government directed CASA to commence work to implement the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) initiative, which would include AOD testing for aviation safety-sensitive personnel.

The aim of the initiative is to minimise AOD-related risks associated with the performance of safety-sensitive activities in the aviation industry. It is not aimed at identifying people who may have used AOD at times when this use did not impact on aviation safety.

New Commonwealth legislation is scheduled to be passed in mid September which will prescribe the process and penalties associated with the CASA drug and Alcohol program.

DSE/CFA and associated agencies are organisation's which employ aviation Safety Sensitive Personnel (SSP). Upon the passing of the proposed legislation SSP will potentially be subject to random testing by CASA or their agents. In the event that they test positive through the prescribed process, they will be dealt with by CASA as individuals under the legislation.

Roles which may be the subject of testing are: Air Attack Supervisors, Air Observers, Air Base Managers, Incendiary Bombardiers, Incendiary Operations Supervisors, Driptorch Crew, Hot/Cold Refuellers, Aircraft Loading Crew, Rappel Dispatchers, Rappel and Hover Exit Crew, FLIR Operators, Linescan Operators, Pilots, Engineers and any other person who is on the "airside" area of an airport and is performing an airborne or ground support role. (Note: This list is not exhaustive.)

## Practical implications:

Until the legislation is in place it will not be certain as to the full implication of the initiative. At this stage as far as we can ascertain, agency personnel will be required to comply with a legitimate request for testing and to provide appropriate details in much the same way as if they were the driver of a vehicle and were requested by a member of the police force. In the event that a person is detected they will be required by law to cease the safety sensitive role and leave the immediate operational area. (ie move behind the fence at an airport for example)

In terms of limits for substances the following is likely to apply: for cocaine, cannabis, opioids, amphetamines ("Illicit Drugs") and benzodiazepines - below the relevant "*confirmatory target concentrations*" set out in Australian/NZ Standard 4308 for urine testing or Australian/NZ Standard 4760 for saliva testing, as confirmed by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner and for alcohol - a blood alcohol content ("BAC") of below **0.02%**, as confirmed by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. It should be noted that the alcohol concentration is relatively low and that it may be possible for some people to meet or exceed this limit with very small amounts of beer, wine or other alcohol. Significantly, personnel who have consumed significant quantities in the late evening may still have significant BAC readings the next morning.

In addition to any action required by law, agency personnel who are detected whilst working on agency operations will be dealt with in accordance with their agency's appropriate drug and alcohol policy.

This information will be updated as appropriate

## More information:

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