

INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURE: ILLICIT DRUGS



PURPOSE

Community sporting clubs may face situations involving illicit drugs. Illicit drugs are substances that are illegal to possess, use or supply, including prescription medications used without a prescription or not as directed.¹

This procedure helps volunteers prioritise safety, meet duty of care obligations and support those involved.

WHEN TO USE THIS PROCEDURE

Use this procedure when responding to incidents involving illicit drugs, including:

- drug intoxication or suspected intoxication
- aggressive, threatening, or violent behaviour
- injury, medical emergencies, overdose, or loss of consciousness
- sexual harassment, assault, or other inappropriate behaviour
- property damage
- drug-driving, or attempts to drive while affected by drugs
- possession, use, supply, or distribution of illicit drugs
- incidents involving drug paraphernalia or suspected drug use on club premises.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Safety first: protect people from immediate harm and avoid confrontation.

Work within your responsibilities: volunteers should respond appropriately within their role and seek assistance from other club officials or emergency services when needed.

Remain calm: this helps you assess the situation clearly, make appropriate decisions, and communicate effectively with others.

Use facts, not assumptions: record what was seen, heard, and done. Avoid making assumptions about a person's intentions or level of intoxication.

Protect privacy: share information only with people who need it to manage the incident.

Support wellbeing: consider the needs of the person involved, witnesses, volunteers and the wider club community.



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1. INITIAL RESPONSE

Club officials (committee members, wellbeing officers, team managers or authorised volunteers) should:

- stay calm and get a clear sense of what's happening
- prioritise safety and follow duty of care
- involve another club official and seek medical help if needed.

Assess immediate risk

If there is a risk of overdose, someone is at immediate risk of harm, including injury, loss of consciousness or requires urgent medical assistance:

- call emergency services (000)
- if needed, provide first aid/CPR or find someone qualified to help
- stay calm and remove hazards
- ask bystanders to leave the area unless they are assisting
- observe and document details to assist emergency services.

You can consider contacting a family member, friend or other emergency contact if needed.



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2. UNDERSTANDING THE INCIDENT

Once immediate risk has been addressed, gather basic information to help the committee understand what happened.

Where aggression, violence, harassment, property damage or other serious misconduct has occurred, refer the matter to the police if needed and committee for review.

Gather information

- Information gathering should be factual, avoiding assumptions and speculation.
- Prioritise safety – don't search belongings or confiscate substances.
- Document what was seen, heard or reported, including information from any witnesses.
- Record any actions taken and notify the club committee as soon as possible.
- Where there is reasonable belief of supplying or selling, consider contacting the police.

It is important clubs use an Incident Register to document any drug-related incidents. Accurate records support follow-up action, risk management, and compliance with club procedures.

Consider the following when gathering information:

Avoid conversations during heated situations

For people under 18, involve a parent or guardian, if it's safe to do so

Remain respectful and non-judgemental

Ask whether they'd like a support person (e.g. partner, friend or parent) to be present.

Focus on understanding what happened

Where selling or supply of illicit drugs is involved

If possible, have two club officials present

Create a written record

Explain any immediate steps required under the Code of Conduct

Refer the matter to police if needed and to the committee for review.

Have the conversation

If appropriate, speak with the person about the incident. Reinforce that your role is to support their wellbeing and understand what happened. Let them know the incident will be reported to the committee and managed according to club policy.

Helpful conversation prompts:

- Are you OK?
- Do you need any help or support?
- Is there anything you're concerned about?
- What led up to the incident?
- How can we prevent this from happening again on club grounds?
- Can we provide support or information?

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3. TAKING ACTION

The club's response should be appropriate, consistent and focused on safety and wellbeing, and compliance with club policies and legal obligations.

Key considerations

Consider the following when deciding on your response:

- Is anyone still at risk?
- How serious was the incident?
- Were club policies, codes of conduct or laws breached?
- Were police, ambulance or other emergency services involved?
- Was a child or young person involved or exposed to harm?
- Was there violence, threatening behaviour, harassment, assault or property damage?
- Was there drug-driving or an attempt to drive while intoxicated?
- Was this an isolated or repeat incident?
- What is the impact on the person involved, witnesses, volunteers and the wider club community?

Possible actions

The action taken should be guided by the circumstances, the seriousness of the incident, and the club's policies.

Use or possession	Supply or selling
Ask the person to leave the venue, if safe to do so	Ask the person to leave the venue, if safe to do so
Share information about alcohol and other drug support services	Notify the club committee or a club leader
Arrange wellbeing support	Involve the police if criminal activity is suspected
Issue a formal warning	Suspend club membership or participation
Implement a temporary suspension from club activities where necessary to support safety, wellbeing, and appropriate follow-up	Cooperate with police investigations
	Arrange wellbeing support
	Consider longer-term suspension from club activities.

Responses should be fair, reasonable, and based on the facts of the incident.

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4. SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP

The club should take a harm minimisation approach, which means staying connected and supportive. A supportive response can help reduce future harm and reinforce positive club culture.

Consider:

- checking in with the person and other people involved
- encouraging people to access professional support and providing info on where they can go to get help
- reviewing club policies or practices and making improvements as needed.

DISCRETION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All incidents should be handled with care, respect, and discretion. Avoid stigma, assumptions, or judgement, as these can discourage people from seeking help, reporting concerns, or engaging with support services.

Incident information should be recorded accurately, stored securely, and shared only with people who need the information to manage safety, support, reporting, or follow-up action.

FURTHER SUPPORT

The Good Sports team can help clubs in responding to illicit drug-related incidents. For additional resources and support services, visit the [Good Sports website](#) and the [Alcohol and Drug Foundation website](#).

IMPORTANT

Club volunteers and committee members are not expected to investigate suspected drug offences. Their role is to prioritise safety, document concerns, follow club procedures, and seek assistance from police or emergency services when appropriate.

References

1. Australian Government. *Drug information*. [Internet]. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government; 2024. [cited 2026 Jun 17] Available from: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/drug-help/drug-information>.