



6 HARM MINIMISATION IN THE WORK PLACE

A person under the influence of any drug in the workplace, particularly if they are in control of machinery, represents a very real physical threat to:

- themselves;
- colleagues;
- clients; and
- bystanders.

At an economic level, accepted recreational or social use of drugs such as alcohol and marijuana can have significant adverse effects on productivity. These can include:

- reduced productivity and output due to absenteeism and tardiness;
- decreased profitability and economy of the work; and
- an increased requirement for quality control as a drug user's work needs to be checked and rechecked.

Employee Assistance Programmes, which provide on-site medical and personal assistance to drug users, could be considered as one harm minimisation technique. Large companies and government departments should consider the need to establish teams to provide such support. Obviously, they would need to be separate from management so that workers have no fears about visiting and using such a service.

The economy would benefit from such an approach. Accidents would decrease, productivity would rise and relationships in the work place would be more positive. Harm to the economy and the work place would be at least lessened, if not prevented altogether.