



P O L I C Y

Department Administration	Policy No. AD(35)	Page 1 of 12
Policy Title SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM	Date: September 10, 2026	Resolution No. C/402/26

Policy Statement:

As a responsible employer, Lacombe County has a compelling interest in establishing programs to promote and enhance health and safety in the workplace. The Substance Abuse Prevention Program is directed at protecting the health and safety of employees, co-workers, the general public and the environment. The Substance Abuse Prevention Program combines drug and alcohol testing with education, training and access to assistance.

Guidelines/Procedures:

1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Lacombe County. Testing provisions of this policy only apply to individuals in identified safety sensitive positions. While this policy refers specifically to alcohol and drugs, it is intended to apply to all other forms of substance abuse.

Lacombe County shall comply with all applicable Federal and Provincial related drug and alcohol laws and regulations, including, but not limited to the Alberta Human Rights Act.

2. Definitions

- (a) Accredited Laboratory – Meets guidelines and standards of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration which is the certifying agency for forensic urine drug testing laboratories in Canada and the United States.

Collection and testing processes follow the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.

- (b) Alcohol – The intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol or other low molecular weight alcohols including methyl or isopropyl alcohol.
- (c) Alcohol Concentration – The alcohol in a volume of breath expressed in terms of grams of alcohol per 210 litres of breath.
- (d) Breath Alcohol Technician – An individual trained and certified to conduct breath alcohol testing utilizing an Evidential Breath Tester.
- (e) Chain of Custody – The process of documenting the handling of a specimen from the time a donor gives the specimen to the collector, during the testing at the laboratory, and until the results are reported by the laboratory.
- (f) Collector – Non medical and medical personnel contracted by an agency who have received training in collecting urine samples in accordance with guidelines that would be acceptable to the applicable regulatory agencies.

- (g) Designated Employer Representative (DER) – An employee authorized by the employer to take immediate action(s) to remove employees from safety sensitive duties, or cause employees to be removed from these covered duties, and to make required decisions in the testing and evaluation processes, in consultation with the County Manager or their designate. The DER also receives test results and other communications for the employer. The DER shares information with the County Manager, or designate, as required.
- (h) Drug – Any substance other than food which is taken to change the way the body or mind functions. Drug testing refers to cannabis, cocaine, opioids, phencyclidine and amphetamines with cut-off levels as per the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services which is the certifying agency for forensic urine drug testing laboratories in Canada and the United States.

Initial test analyte	Initial test cutoff concentration	Confirmatory test analyte	Confirmatory test cut-off concentration
Marijuana Metabolites	50 ng/ml	THCA	15 ng/ml
Cocaine Metabolites	150 ng/ml	Benzoylecgonine	100 ng/ml
Codeine / Morphine	2000 ng/ml	Codeine Morphine	2000 ng/ml 2000 ng/ml
Hydrocodone / Hydromorphone	300 ng/ml	Hydrocodone Hydromorphone	100 ng/ml 100 ng/ml
Oxycodone Oxymorphone	100 ng/ml	Oxycodone Oxymorphone	100 ng/ml 100 ng/ml
6-Acetylmorphine	10 ng/ml	6-Acetylmorphine	10 ng/ml
Phencyclidine	25 ng/ml	Phencyclidine	25 ng/ml
Amphetamine / Methamphetamine	500 ng/ml	Amphetamine Methamphetamine	250 ng/ml 250 ng/ml
MDMA / MDA	500 ng/ml	MDMA¹ MDA²	250 ng/ml 250 ng/ml

¹ **Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA).**

² **Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA).**

The laboratory will use the cutoff concentration levels of the above chart for initial and confirmation drug tests. All cutoff concentrations are expressed in nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml).

- (i) Evidential Breath Testing Device – Capable of measuring the alcohol content of deep lung breath samples with sufficient accuracy for evidential purposes. The Evidential Breath Tester must be on the conforming products list as per the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- (j) Fitness (Fit) for Duty – Being capable of performing work related duties in a safe, efficient and productive manner with no drugs and / or alcohol present in the body at / or above established standards.
- (k) Medical Review Officer (MRO) – The MRO is a licensed physician (Medical Doctor or Doctor of Osteopathy) responsible for receiving laboratory results generated by an employer's drug testing

program who has knowledge of substance abuse disorders and has appropriate medical training to interpret and evaluate an individual's confirmed positive test result together with his or her medical history and any other relevant bio medical information.

- (l) **Safety Sensitive Position / Function** – A position or function where an individual has a key and direct role in an operation where safety is a bona fide occupational requirement of the job, in that safety is necessary to assure the efficient and economical performance of the job without endangering the employee, their fellow employees or the general public. This includes employees where there is no direct or limited supervision available to provide frequent operational checks.
- (m) **Significant Incident** – Incidents involving a fatality, disabling injury, significant property damage, spill or abnormal discharge that may cause long term health effects to employees and / or the public, public evacuation or serious environmental damage or an event or near miss that could have amounted to an incident as outlined above.
- (n) **Substance Abuse Professional (SAP)** – A licensed Physician (Medical Doctor or Doctor of Osteopathy), or a licensed or certified psychologist, social worker, employee assistance professional or an addictions counselor. All must have knowledge of and clinical experience in the diagnosis and treatment of alcohol, drugs and related disorders.
- (o) **Supervisor Training** – Shall include the physical, behavioral, speech and performance indicators of probable alcohol or drug misuse and appropriate intervention strategies.

3. Employee Responsibilities

Employees of Lacombe County shall:

- (a) Arrive fit for work and remain fit for work during their period of duty.
- (b) Consult with their doctor or pharmacist regarding the proper use of medication they are using to determine if the medication may have a negative effect on their performance.
- (c) Where the employee is in a safety sensitive position or function, advise their direct Supervisor, Manager, Director or Human Resources if they are using a prescribed drug / substance (including cannabis) that their licensed medical practitioner or pharmacist has advised would interfere with their Fitness for Duty.
- (d) Seek advice on appropriate counseling or treatment if they suspect they have a dependency or an emerging substance abuse issue.
- (e) Take appropriate actions to ensure a co-worker does not remain in an unfit condition at work that may endanger the employee, co-workers or others. This may include contacting a Supervisor, Manager, Director or Human Resources for confidential advice on what action to take.

4. County Manager, Directors, Managers and Supervisors Responsibilities

The County Manager, Directors, Managers and Supervisors shall:

- (a) Monitor and evaluate work performance with an objective of early identification and handling of all performance issues.

- (b) Advise Human Resources when an employee discloses use of a prescribed drug and / or substance that their licensed medical practitioner or pharmacist has advised would interfere with their ability to work in a safety sensitive position.
- (c) Ensure that investigations of work-related accidents are carried out in accordance with Lacombe County's Accident and Incident Investigation policy.
- (d) Refer an employee for a drug and / or alcohol test when required to do so under this policy.
- (e) Monitor program compliance and take appropriate action as required under this policy.
- (f) Confer with Human Resources on substance abuse issues as appropriate.
- (g) Arrange for safe transportation of an employee to their residence or nearest public transportation when appropriate under this policy.
- (h) The County Manager shall assume the role of the Designated Employer Representative and communicate with the Medical Review Officer and Substance Abuse Professionals as required in the absence of the Manager of HR & Legislative Services and the Human Resources Specialist.

5. Human Resources Responsibilities

The Manager of HR & Legislative Services and the Human Resources Specialist shall:

- (a) Act as a confidential and objective resource on matters related to the Substance Abuse Prevention Program.
- (b) Assume the role of the Designated Employer Representative and communicate with the Medical Review Officer and Substance Abuse Professionals as required.
- (c) Advise the employee's Supervisor, Manager or Director, where appropriate, of work limitations, suspension or termination considerations.
- (d) Provide confidential service to all employees regarding substance abuse information and referral to the Employee Assistance Program, but not to provide any counseling.
- (e) Undertake periodic reviews and revisions of the Substance Abuse Prevention Program.
- (f) Maintain confidential records of all test results, including refusals to test, correspondence from the Medical Review Officer and / or Substance Abuse Professional.
- (g) Maintain records of all training / education of Supervisors, Managers, Directors and employees.

6. Health & Safety Coordinator Responsibilities

The Health & Safety Coordinator shall:

- (a) Educate employees about standard work practices, standard operating guidelines, standard operating procedures and promote a safe workplace.
- (b) Educate employees on this policy as deemed appropriate.

- (c) Assist the County Manager, Directors, Managers and Supervisors in investigating post-accident situations.

7. Training

Lacombe County recognizes that employee education on substance abuse and the Substance Abuse Prevention Program is a critical step in achieving the objectives of the program.

(a) Employee Training

Employees will receive training including: the risks of drug and alcohol use and their potential impact on safety in the workplace, consequences of program violation, available resources for employee assistance services, explanation of the testing procedures and situations when testing will occur.

(b) County Manager, Directors, Managers and Supervisors Training

The County Manager, Directors, Managers and Supervisors will be given the above training as well as more specific training on how to recognize signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use in the workplace and appropriate responses.

8. Drug and Alcohol Testing Options

(a) Pre-Employment

Successful applicants for safety sensitive positions will be required to attend drug testing after receiving a conditional offer of employment. Employment is conditional on the successful completion of the pre-employment drug test for safety sensitive positions.

(b) Post-Incident

An employee may be drug and alcohol tested after a significant incident.

The Supervisor / Manager / Director is required to conduct an immediate preliminary investigation.

- i. Testing will never delay necessary medical attention for the injured employee following an incident.
- ii. Testing is not required when the act or omission of the employee was not a contributing factor in the incident (e.g. structural, mechanical failure or act of God).
- iii. Testing is required when the actions of an employee was a contributing factor leading to the incident.
- iv. Drug testing should occur within 2 hours of the incident with any follow-up tests to be conducted no more than 32 hours after the incident. Alcohol testing should occur within 2 hours of the incident with any follow-up tests to be conducted no more than 8 hours after the incident.
- v. Reasons are to be documented if testing is required, not required or if testing is unable to be conducted.

(c) Reasonable Cause Testing

An employee will be tested for alcohol and / or drug use where a Lacombe County Supervisor, Manager, Director or County Manager makes observations which form a reasonable basis for suspecting that the employee is in breach of this policy. Such observations must be documented, specific, clearly stated observations concerning the appearance, speech or body odors of the employee.

Observations which may lead to reasonable cause testing include, but are not limited to: odor of alcoholic beverage or cannabis on the employee, slurred speech, glassy eyes, unsteadiness in walking or standing, flushed face, disoriented and / or drowsy, accidents or injuries, repeated errors in job performance, and credible complaints of drug and / or alcohol use at work.

(d) Return to Duty

An employee who has engaged in prohibited conduct under this or any other County policy, is in a safety sensitive position, and is returning to work after an assessment by a Substance Abuse Professional may be required to undergo drug and / or alcohol testing prior to returning to their position.

(e) Follow Up

After an employee returns to work, as outlined above, and who is returning to a safety sensitive position, they may be required to undergo drug and / or alcohol testing on an unannounced basis for at least one year after their return to duty. Frequency and duration of testing will be determined by the Substance Abuse Professional in consultation with the Manager of HR & Legislative Services or designate.

9. Prohibitions

(a) Alcohol Use

- i. Alcohol concentration: No employee shall report for duty or remain on duty while having a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.020 or greater.
- ii. On duty consumption: No employee shall consume alcohol while on duty.
- iii. Pre-duty consumption: No employee shall perform Safety Sensitive Functions within four hours after consuming alcohol.
- iv. Consumption following an accident: No employee required to take a post-accident alcohol test shall use alcohol for eight hours following the accident, or until he / she undergoes a post-accident alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

(b) Drug Use

- i. No employee shall report for duty or remain on duty when the employee uses any drug, except when the use is pursuant to the instructions of a licensed medical practitioner who has advised the employee that the substance will not adversely affect the employee's ability to work safely at the job site. If a licensed medical practitioner and / or pharmacist advises the employee that the substance will affect the employee's ability to work safely,

the employee will notify his / her immediate Supervisor / Manager / Director. The Supervisor / Manager shall advise his / her applicable Manager / Director of the circumstances.

- ii. The employee's Supervisor, Manager or Director shall ensure that the employee is removed from duty and accommodated to meet safety concerns. Accommodation may include work restrictions, modified duties, sick or disability leave.
- iii. No employee will intentionally misuse prescription or over the counter medications in such a manner as to render themselves unfit to safely perform their duties.
- iv. Employees must notify their direct Supervisor / Manager / Director if they are taking any prescription or over the counter medication that may impair their ability to work safely.

(c) Possession

- i. Possession, use or offering for sale of alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia on County work sites or in County vehicles is prohibited.
- ii. Possession of devices or products designed to compromise drug and / or alcohol testing are prohibited.
- iii. Employees who violate this provision may be subject to immediate termination for cause and referral to law enforcement agencies when applicable.
- iv. Consumption of alcohol at social functions or when it relates to Lacombe County business is permitted when approved by the County Manager, or designate, who will ensure that the consumption does not contravene the intent of this policy and any applicable laws or regulations.

(d) Cannabis Use

- i. An employee in a non-safety sensitive position must be capable of performing work related duties in a safe, efficient, productive manner.
- ii. An employee in a safety sensitive position must be fit for duty.
- iii. On duty use: No employee (safety sensitive and non-safety sensitive) shall use or possess cannabis and / or a cannabis product while on duty. Medical cannabis can only be possessed and used on County property with prior written consent from Human Resources, in consultation with the County Manager.

10. Maintaining a Valid Operator's License

All individuals that operate a motor vehicle on behalf of Lacombe County are required to maintain a valid operator's license. Any loss of driving privileges (license) due to a drug and / or alcohol related conviction or suspension must be reported to the Supervisor / Manager / Director immediately and the individual will no longer be allowed to drive on behalf of the County. The individual may be accommodated where it is feasible to do so. Loss of driving privileges may include temporary suspensions, etc.

11. Collection of Specimens and Analysis

- (a) A designated drug testing company will collect and process urine specimens for drug testing as required. Drug testing will be conducted according to the Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace standards in laboratories accredited by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The accredited laboratory will perform required testing with test results forwarded to a Medical Review Officer. Drug testing refers to cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines, opioids and phencyclidine.
 - i. Where an initial urine drug test produces a non-negative result, Lacombe County may require the employee to provide an oral fluid specimen for laboratory analysis.
 - ii. Oral fluid testing shall be conducted by an accredited laboratory.
 - iii. The purpose of oral fluid testing is to assist in determining the presence of recent drug use and to provide additional information to support the Medical Review Officer's evaluation.
 - iv. Oral fluid laboratory results shall be reviewed by a Medical Review Officer and reported to the Designated Employer Representative in accordance with this policy.
 - v. Oral fluid testing does not replace any other testing requirements under this policy.
- (b) Alcohol screen testing will be with an approved saliva tester or breath test. All alcohol screening tests at 0.020 or higher will be confirmed with an approved Evidential Breath Alcohol Testing Device.

12. Positive Test Procedures

(a) Positive Pre-Employment Test

- i. Potential employees who are positive on pre-employment drug tests will have their offer of employment rescinded.
- ii. Potential employees who are positive on the pre-employment drug test will be encouraged to seek assistance from a Substance Abuse Professional and to reapply for available positions when they can meet the County's standards.
- iii. When pre-employment tests are non-negative for a prescribed drug / substance the Medical Review Officer Issued Safety Advisory guideline will be followed. Where appropriate, and in keeping with Alberta Human Rights legislation, the potential employee will be encouraged to reapply for available positions when the prescribed drug / substance is no longer required.

(b) Positive Alcohol Test Procedures

- i. Employees with a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.020 to 0.039 will be removed from duty immediately and will not be allowed to return to work until the following shift. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Lacombe County Policy AD(17).

- ii. Employees having a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.040 or greater will be removed from duty and disciplined in accordance with Lacombe County Policy AD(17).

(c) Positive Drug Test Procedures

- i. Employees who are positive on drug tests as verified by the Medical Review Officer will be removed from duty and disciplined in accordance with Lacombe County Policy AD(17).

(d) Refusal to Test

- i. No employee shall refuse to submit to a drug and / or alcohol test required under this policy.
- ii. No Supervisor / Manager / Director shall permit an employee who refuses to submit for required testing to remain on duty.
- iii. An employee who refuses to submit to a required test, tampers or attempts to tamper with a test sample or obstructs the testing process will be considered to have violated this policy. Positive test procedures will apply.

(e) Removal from Duty

- i. Employees removed from duty having a positive drug test verified by a Medical Review Officer and / or a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.040 or greater will be required to attend a meeting with their applicable Manager / Director who will review each case and provide written correspondence of the resources available in evaluating and resolving problems associated with the misuse of alcohol and / or drugs, including the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Substance Abuse Professionals. Where practical, the Manager / Director will endeavor to meet or contact the employee the next working day and direction will be provided regarding the suspension and return to work choices.
- ii. Any employee who was removed from duty having a positive drug test result verified by a Medical Review Officer and / or a confirmed alcohol concentration of 0.040 or greater shall be evaluated by a Substance Abuse Professional who shall determine what assistance, if any, the employee needs in resolving the substance abuse issues such as they are able to return to work.
- iii. In order for this policy to be effective in ensuring that Lacombe County employees will perform their duties unimpaired by alcohol or drugs, the provisions of this policy must be enforced. Accordingly, where an employee violates any provision of this policy, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Lacombe County Policy AD(17).

(f) Medical Review Officer Issued Safety Advisory

- i. In the event of a reported positive drug test the MRO may determine that the donor has a legitimate drug / substance prescription; the positive result may be changed to a negative. If the MRO determines that the use of that particular prescribed drug / substance may compromise safety in the performance of a safety sensitive function the MRO will issue a "Safety Advisory" to the DER (employer).

- ii. Within this policy the term *prescribed substance* refers to medical marihuana and / or medical cannabis as it is not recognized by Health Canada as a therapeutic drug.
- iii. The employee will be removed from safety sensitive duties pending the receipt of a clearance letter from the employee's prescribing physician. The employee will be provided instructions from his / her physician along with a physical demands analysis / job description of their safely sensitive position.
- iv. Return to work is conditional on the physician advising that he / she is aware of the safety sensitive nature of the employee's position and that the prescribed drug / substance will not interfere with the employee's ability to perform their duties in a safe manner and, where applicable, that the Alberta College of Physicians & Surgeons Guidelines for Medical Cannabis were followed.
- v. Referral and / or review by a County approved physician for appropriate medical guidance may be considered at the discretion of the Manager of HR & Legislative Services, or designate, in consultation with the County Manager.

(g) Self-Disclosure

- i. Lacombe County understands that an alcohol or drug dependency is a preventable and treatable condition and recognizes that an individual may want assistance. Employees are encouraged to voluntarily come forward or seek assistance on their own, without fear of reprisal. Lacombe County will do its utmost to assist the employee, including requiring that the employee undergo a medical assessment by a Substance Abuse Professional. Once an assessment has been completed, a return to work plan can be formulated.

13. Return to Work after a Positive Test

- (a) An employee cannot return to duty until he / she has been evaluated by a Substance Abuse Professional, complied with recommendations, and has received a negative result on a return to duty test and / or a breath alcohol concentration less than 0.020. The employee must provide a written report from the Substance Abuse Professional verifying the evaluation and any required treatment or provide a release document for the required information. The Substance Abuse Professional will only release relevant information which will assist in returning the worker to their duties.
- (b) Follow up testing will be conducted to monitor the returning employee for no less than one year. The frequency of testing will be determined by the Substance Abuse Professional in consultation with the Manager of HR & Legislative Services, or designate, and will be designed to assist the employee in remaining alcohol and / or drug free at the workplace.

14. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- (a) All drug test results are confidential and are only released by the Medical Review Officer or designate to the Designated Employer Representative or alternate. Alcohol test results are confidential and only released by the testing company to the DER or alternate. The DER or alternate may release relevant information to Lacombe County decision makers as required. Confidential information from a Substance Abuse Professional will be handled in a similar manner.

- (b) All records will be maintained in a locked and secure manner. Negative test results will be maintained for no less than one year with positive test results and Substance Abuse Professional assessments maintained for a five year period.

15. Standards

- (a) A designated TPA (Third Party Administrator) will provide drug and alcohol testing services:
- i. At a minimum drug tests will be five panel for Cannabis, Cocaine, Opioids, Amphetamines and Phencyclidine utilizing a urine specimen and / or oral fluid specimen, collected by trained staff using chain of custody procedures. Collectors are trained in procedures by a Certified Collector Trainer. A five part chain of custody form with a split specimen collection will be utilized. Collection procedures follow the Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace.

Alcohol testing procedures will follow the guidelines and standards of the Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace. Evidential Breath Alcohol Testing Devices will be utilized when testing for the presence of alcohol. Instruments being utilized must be on the US DOT Conforming Products List. The TPA must follow the manufacturer Quality Assurance Program and all Breath Alcohol Technicians must be trained by a certified instructor.
 - ii. Laboratory - The TPA will use a laboratory certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
 - iii. Medical Review Officer (MRO) – The MRO must be a licensed physician who has knowledge of substance abuse disorders and has appropriate medical training and certification to interpret and evaluate positive drug test results.
The MRO's single most important function is the review of laboratory positive test results and the determination of an alternate medical explanation for the positive result.

Safety Sensitive Position Identification

The County Manager is responsible for determining which positions are deemed to be safety sensitive.

Employee Resources

As of the date of passing this policy, the identified resources in Appendix A may be modified by the County Manager, or his designate, as required from time to time.

APPENDIX A – RESOURCES**Employee Assistance Program**

Lacombe County provides employees enrolled in the County's group benefits plan with access to ALAViDA, a confidential substance use support program.

ALAViDA is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and offers evidence-based substance use care, educational resources, coaching and counselling services. All services are confidential.

Employees covered under the County's group benefits plan can access ALAViDA by:

- Visiting **try.alavida.com/gsc** and following the on-screen registration and sign-up instructions.

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction**CCSA**

The **Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction** changes lives by bringing people and knowledge together to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs on society. <http://www.ccsa.ca>

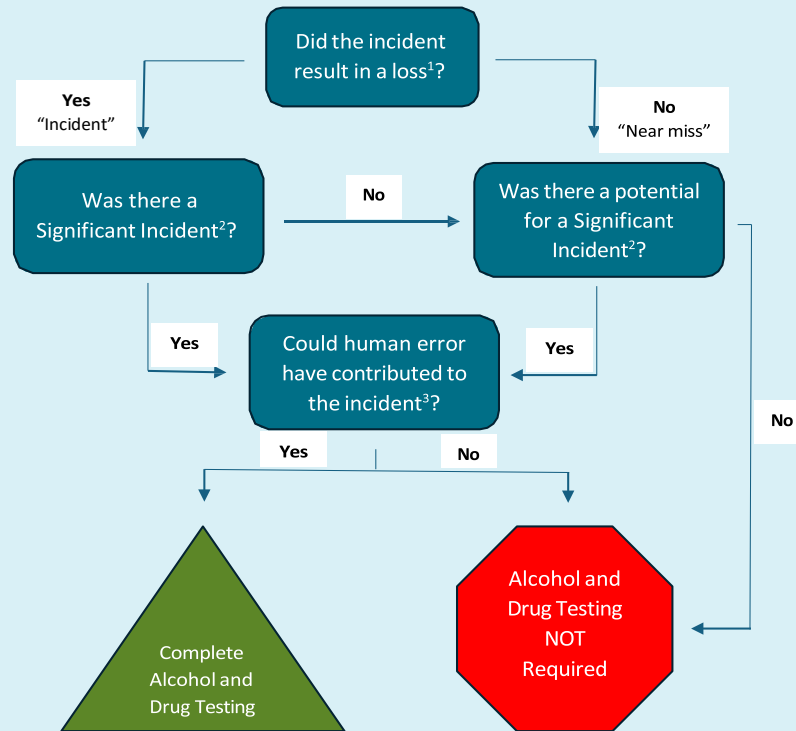
Canada.ca

Access the Government of Canada website for information on prescription drugs and / or substances.

Revised: September 10, 2026
August 9, 2018

Approved: November 13, 2014

**APPENDIX B
LACOMBE COUNTY
POST INCIDENT DECISION TREE
SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM**



¹ Loss is defined as injury to person(s), damage to corporate assets, public or private property (i.e. vehicles, equipment, structures, environment, etc.).

² Significant Incident is defined as incidents involving a fatality, disabling injury, significant property damage, spill or abnormal discharge that may cause long term health effects to employees and / or the public, public evacuation or serious environmental damage or an event or near miss that could have amounted to an incident as outlined above.

³ Post incident testing is not required if there is clear evidence that an Employee's actions could not have contributed to the incident in any way (i.e. structural, mechanical failure or act of God). Testing may be required if the incident raises the question of whether reasonable judgement was used by the employee.

If in doubt or if there is no clear evidence without further investigation, the Employee should be tested in accordance with the Post-Incident Testing Procedures.