



Commanding General's Policy on Substance Assessment



The frequency with which military careers are ended by alcohol and substance abuse presents a sad reality. Both alcohol and substance abuse are the heart of other troubling issues that plague the Marine Corps: suicides, sexual assaults, domestic violence, accidents, and hazing incidents. Thus, dealing appropriately with alcohol and substance abuse is of paramount importance. This command will not tolerate substance abuse, including the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of legal or prescription drugs, and/or alcohol abuse, particularly that which results in criminal behavior. Alcohol and substance abuse is an obstacle that prevents Marines and sailors from performing their duties, and it puts others at risk.



Commanders must be familiar with MCO 5300.17A, Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program. The legal drinking age in the United States is 21 years old. At no time are Marines or sailors allowed to use controlled or illicit substances if they are not prescribed to them. Just because a state law permits use of certain substances, federal laws and the UCMJ prevail when it comes to uniformed personnel. Marines and sailors are not allowed to share, sell or misuse any prescription medications. Units are directed to conduct urinalyses in accordance with policy, and a positive test will, at minimum, lead to processing for administrative separation.

If a Marine or sailor self-reports an alcohol or substance abuse problem, he or she should receive a referral to the Substance Assessment and Counseling Center (SACC) for Active Component or Psychological Health and Outreach Program (PHOP) for Reserve Component. They will follow the traditional course of evaluation and treatment, and if found to be alcohol or substance dependent, the Marine or sailor will be assigned to the appropriate treatment program.

We must look out for one another. A Marine or sailor who suspects alcohol or substance abuse in the unit, must address it through the chain of command. Eliminating alcohol and substance abuse reduces other problems, leading to a safer, more ready Marine Corps.

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