

BAS Alcohol & Drug Policy

1. Introduction

This notice outlines the BAS policy for managing alcohol and drug issues. It provides a practical approach that reflects:

- BAS terms and conditions of service for staff and conditions of passage for visitors,
- UK law,
- the remote and dangerous environment it operates in,
- BAS's commitment to the health and welfare of its employees.

The policy focuses on BAS's remote research stations and the polar vessel. BAS office staff while in Cambridge are not covered by this specific policy, but still need to ensure that any alcohol consumption during work time or at any work event is at an appropriate level. Failure to do so may result in action being taken under the disciplinary policy.

This notice covers all staff and sets the required standard for all visitors and collaborators who work or travel with the Survey. Aircrew and Mariners additionally have to conform to specific legislation that applies to their duties (as set out in their conditions of service, the Merchant Navy code of Conduct and/or UK legislation).

This BAS policy is linked to the *UKRI Health Promotion Policy* which describes the corporate approach based on matters arising in the UK. For the purpose of clarity, the BAS policy will take precedence in all our remote locations (ship and remote research stations).

This policy is under annual review and the TU sides will be consulted on changes.

2. Aims and Objectives

BAS aims to have a workplace free from the misuse of alcohol and drugs.

The objectives of this policy are:

1. To provide practical and clear rules about alcohol and drugs that support and maintain a safe and effective working environment for all wherever BAS operates.
2. To outline responsibilities for staff and management.
3. To provide guidance on the safe and sensible drinking of alcohol (noting that alcohol consumption may not be permitted in some circumstances).
4. To provide information to help identify individuals at an early stage who may have alcohol/(prescription) drug-related problems and provide guidance on how to deal with these as a medical problem.

3. Legal Background

There are important laws that underpin this policy and form the basis of the approach to managing alcohol and drug issues:

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the *Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) regulations 1997 (as amended)* require UKRI as the employer to take reasonable care for the health and safety of staff and of other personnel affected by BAS activities. This applies particularly where staff are working in high-environments.

The Acts place direct responsibility on individuals to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.

The Railway and Transport Safety Act 2003 as amended by the Merchant Shipping (Alcohol) (Prescribed Limits Amendment) Regulations 2015 applies maximum alcohol levels for aviation and maritime workers.

The BAS Executive Team has decided that the limits in this Act will apply equally to all deployed personnel aboard the SDA and BAS aircraft.

In summary, whilst BAS has a legal duty of care, all staff and visitors are also **individually responsible** for ensuring that their personal behaviour does not jeopardise the safety of BAS operations or the health and safety of people working with the Survey.

4. The Policy

4.1. Alcohol - In the Workplace and in Transit

- 4.1.1. All staff and visitors must comply with the rules for the provision and consumption of alcohol that apply at their work location as agreed by the BAS Executive Team (BET) and by local management e.g. the Station Leader or Master. Rules may vary to reflect the nature of the environment and the size of the community but will have general principles in common regarding safe drinking levels.
- 4.1.2. Whilst on board a vessel, in the field or at a research station all individuals need to be able to perform the duties allocated to them safely, including in an emergency. The individual must be able to muster without assistance. No individual can ever regard themselves as being totally “off duty” when at a research station, on an aircraft, ship or in the field.
- 4.1.3. Staff are reminded that this policy continues to apply during transit to and from the remote stations or vessels, and that their alcohol consumption should remain within appropriate levels of sobriety.
- 4.1.4. It is neither acceptable nor permitted for any staff or visitors to:
 - Work whilst under the influence of alcohol
 - Drive or operate machinery whilst under the influence of alcohol
 - Put others at risk by misusing alcohol
 - Damage the reputation of BAS and UKRI through actions arising from alcohol misuse.
- 4.1.5. The same rules apply when staff are on BAS-organised transit to their work location i.e. travelling on ‘official duty’. It is not acceptable to misuse alcohol in transit, nor present oneself for transit under the influence of/suffering the effects of excess alcohol (for example when flying on a BAS aircraft, a commercial or military airline, or on a stop-over en route South or to the UK). It should be noted that Pilots have the legal right and responsibility to refuse passage to individuals who appear to be drunk.
- 4.1.6. There may be occasions when management wish to permit an increased supply of alcoholic drinks than the norm at a Research Station or Vessel to celebrate a significant event e.g. the visit of a VIP, a retirement, Midwinter celebration or Christmas. This may be permitted provided and assuming:



- Individuals accept and take responsibility for their personal circumstances as to whether it would be appropriate to drink alcohol.
- The supply is limited to a reasonable and proportionate amount.
- Non-alcoholic beverages are also available.
- The events are timed so that wherever possible resumption of formal work is not required.
- The special occasions are exactly that i.e. special and infrequent.
- Emergency arrangements in the Antarctic or at sea are not compromised (this may require some staff not to drink alcohol at all).

4.2. Alcohol Limits

BAS staff are reminded of the alcohol consumption guidance provided by the NHS, that states:

“to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level it is safest not regularly drinking more than 14 units per week – 14 units is equivalent to a bottle and a half of wine or five pints of export-type lager (5% abv) over the course of a week – this applies to both men and women. If you do drink as much as 14 units per week, it is best to spread this evenly over three days or more. If you have one or two heavy drinking sessions, you increase your risks of death from long-term illnesses and from accidents and injuries”

All personnel on board any BAS-operated vessels and at the remote research Stations (“High Risk Personnel”) will be bound by a local alcohol consumption rules/limits. These are set out in *SEA-SD-MISC-ANX-02 – Alcohol onboard the RRS Sir David Attenborough* and [local Antarctic station equivalent]. Individuals should remember that everyone has a different tolerance to alcohol, and that they should ensure that they remain in an appropriate condition to perform their duties and not to endanger the health and safety of themselves or others.

In addition to the local alcohol consumption rules above, all members of staff on board any BAS-operated vessel and any BAS-operated aircraft are bound by the Railways & Transport Safety Act 2003 as amended by The Merchant Shipping (Alcohol) (Prescribed Limits Amendment) Regulations 2015. This also implements the Manila amendments of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, 1978 into UK legislation as follows:

Limit	STCW Regulation VIII/1	Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (as amended)
Blood	0.05%	50 milligrammes in 100 millilitres
Breath	0.25 milligrammes per litre	25 microgrammes in 100 millilitres
Urine	N/A	67 milligrammes in 100 millilitres

This limit also applies to Aircraft Maintenance Engineers.

The limit for Pilots and aircrew and Air Traffic Controllers is 20mg in 100ml of blood or 9 micrograms in 100ml of breath.

The following may be required to agree to a breathalyser screening in order to assess their alcohol levels:

- a) All personnel deployed on board BAS-operated aircraft
- b) Air Traffic Controllers
- c) All personnel deployed on board a BAS-operated vessel
- d) All personnel deployed at an Antarctic station.



If an individual is found to have exceeded the appropriate alcohol limit, then they may face disciplinary action. In serious cases that are considered gross misconduct (in line with the Merchant Navy Code of Conduct and/or the UKRI Managing Performance and Conduct Policy), individuals can expect to be dismissed. Serious cases include but are not limited to those who are found to have exceeded the limit whilst in a safety-critical environment or whilst in a position where they could have caused injury to themselves or others.

Alcohol consumption does not excuse or mitigate any behaviour. Individuals should ensure that their behaviour is appropriate for a work-based environment at all times. In addition to the limits set out above, individuals are responsible for ensuring that they are mindful of their own personal tolerance to alcohol, and that they do not consume alcohol in a manner which significantly impairs their judgment or leads to inappropriate behaviour.

4.3. Drugs – In the Workplace and in Transit

4.3.1. BAS will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs anywhere within its operation at any time. In addition, BAS needs to carefully monitor the use of prescription drugs which could impact on an individual's performance, in order to ensure that appropriate mitigation is put in place.

It is neither acceptable nor permitted for any staff or visitors to:

- Work whilst under the influence of any drugs, whether illegal or illegal, prescribed or non-prescribed, that may have a dangerous effect on performance.
- Drive or operate machinery whilst under the influence of any drugs, whether illegal or illegal, prescribed, or non-prescribed, that may have a dangerous effect on performance.
- Put others at risk by misusing drugs.
- Damage the reputation of BAS and UKRI through actions arising from drug misuse.

4.3.2. Anyone:

- suspected by management of being under the influence of illegal or prescribed, legal, non-prescribed drugs,
- found in the possession of illegal or prescribed, legal or non-prescribed drugs,
- suspected of supplying illegal or prescribed, legal or non-prescribed drugs; or
- abusing prescription or legal non-prescription drugs,

will be suspended immediately and may be subject to disciplinary and legal procedures.

Staff working overseas who are taking prescription medicines that may affect performance are expected to inform their line manager/manager on location who may seek advice from BASMU, as appropriate.

4.4. Enforcement

4.4.1. We reserve the right to conduct searches for alcohol or drugs on our premises, including, but not limited to, searches of luggage, lockers, private rooms & cabins.

4.4.2. Any alcohol or drugs found as a result of a search will be confiscated, and disciplinary action may be taken. Where appropriate, local authorities will be notified.

4.4.3. When engaged on a vessel, the Merchant Code of Conduct applies whilst when ashore the UKRI Policy on Managing Performance and Conduct will be followed.

4.4.4. In serious cases that are considered gross misconduct (in line with the Merchant Navy Code of Conduct and/or the UKRI Managing Performance and Conduct Policy), individuals can expect to be dismissed.



4.4.5. BAS reserves the right to accelerate the process or repatriate any member of staff before the above process is complete when to do otherwise could jeopardise the safety and or well-being of the individual involved, or unduly affect BAS operations.

4.4.6. For further details about disciplinary processes and appeal procedures, staff are advised to consult their specific terms and conditions of service and or speak to BAS Human Resources.

5. Medical Problems with Alcohol and Prescribed Drugs

- 5.1. Addiction or dependency on alcohol or prescribed drugs is a recognised medical problem. Where individuals advise BAS of their condition (or it becomes clear through performance or discussion with management) BAS will aim to manage it in line with the UKRI Health Promotion Policy, offering counselling and, where available, medical support.
- 5.2. During service at sea and in the Antarctic it may not be appropriate for safety reasons to make unqualified use of the guidelines in the UKRI Health Promotion Policy. Lack of facilities, access to senior management and the safety requirements of Antarctic operations may require procedures to be suspended until they can be conducted in the UK.
- 5.3. When counselling and medical treatment for addiction fails or where the individual refuses to co-operate with management, disciplinary action may be taken. If the problem occurs overseas, repatriation to the UK will normally be required if this has not already taken place.
- 5.4. Staff who seek treatment and rehabilitation for alcohol or prescribed drug problems, will retain normal job security and development opportunities unless they are considered unfit for a given job for performance reasons, safety reasons, or by the BAS Medical Unit (BASMU) or another UKRI appointed health professional.

6. Summary of Responsibilities

6.1. Individuals

6.1.1. Every person working on a BAS operated ship or research station or in transit or any other BAS location must take personal responsibility for their own alcohol consumption. They are required do this to safeguard not only their own health and safety but also that of their colleagues and of BAS operations. They must:

- Comply with the BAS Policy on Alcohol and Drugs.
- In addition to the BAS policy, comply with the local policy on alcohol and drugs when at a remote facility (ship or station) of another nation or organization.
- Limit their intake of alcohol taking into account both stated limits & NHS guidelines (see 4.2).
- Co-operate with management on the implementation of this policy.
- Not take any alcohol on board BAS ships or research stations
- Inform the Master/Station Leader and/or Doctor of any prescription medicine they need to use

6.2. Management

6.2.1. Managers must:

- Comply with and implement the BAS Policy on Alcohol and Drugs.
- Offer support to individuals who advise that they have a dependency or addiction problem.
- Consider taking appropriate disciplinary action against individuals who breach the provisions this policy.
- Consider alcohol or drug use as possible contributory factors in any accidents, incidents or near misses and include this in reports.