



Part B

Guidelines



Section 9

Drug-related issues

Guideline 24: Drug-related harm

Background

- Some patrons attending events have required hospitalisation, and some have even died due to their alcohol and other drug use. Patrons' health and safety can be optimised by implementing pre, during, and post-event mitigation strategies to prevent and reduce harm.
- National and international findings are consistent in that music festival attendees report considerably higher levels of illicit drug use compared with the general population.
- It should be noted that research has indicated that those who commonly use illicit drugs at music and other entertainment events, will often combine 2 or more drugs, including (but not limited to) alcohol, MDMA (ecstasy), cannabis, cocaine, and dexamphetamine. This can make the effects of the combined drug more unpredictable and increase the risk of harm
- The legislation that relates to illicit drugs in Western Australia is the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1981*.
- It is an offence under Section 5(1) of the Misuse of Drugs Act to knowingly permit a premises to be utilised for the use of a prohibited drug or plant:
 - being the owner or lessee of any premises, knowingly permits those premises to be used for using a prohibited drug or prohibited plant
 - is knowingly concerned in the management of any premises used for any of the purposes referred to in paragraph (a) and (b), commits a simple offence.

For events where the use of illicit drugs is expected or likely, crowd controllers must be briefed on potential hazards. Medical staff should be aware of the current illicit drug scene.

Reducing drug-related harm strategies:

- Harm reduction initiatives are recommended to be implemented at music festivals and other entertainment events as a practical response to the acknowledgment that drug use occurs in this context (without condoning or encouraging drug use) and to reduce the harms associated with its use.
- Some illicit drugs can disrupt normal thermoregulation, making users susceptible to overheating. The effects are amplified by high ambient temperatures, sustained physical activity and inadequate fluid replacement. Music festivals and other entertainment events and venues are conducive to hours of dancing, physical closeness to others, inadequate hydration, increasing the potential for toxicity and related harm.
- The following recommendations are made for preventing and reducing drug-related harm within night venues, festivals and other entertainment events:



Water

- Dehydration, over-hydration and heat exhaustion may contribute to medical presentations, and worsen alcohol and other drug-related harms.
- There should be free, cold water at multiple stations throughout the event; considerations include:
 - provision of water at or near locations where alcohol is available for sale
 - near to main events or acts (to ensure patrons do not choose to fore-go water consumption due to fear of missing out) or any situation where heat stress may occur
 - signage to location of water should be provided
 - placement away from the stimulus of the events such as shaded areas, chill out areas and nearby camping grounds
 - messaging regarding hydration safety (i.e. the potential to [over-hydrate](#) when taking MDMA) should be considered.

Shade and chill-out spaces

- High temperature and humidity can lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion. High ambient temperatures and humidity, close physical proximity, and physical exertion, such as dancing for long periods, can increase the risk of drug-related harms.
- Provide a chill-out room or space where patrons can get away from crowded and loud areas.
- Easy access to seating, food and cool water should be provided.
- These areas should be well ventilated, adequately signposted and located away from stages and separate from alcohol service areas.
- Provide alternative activities to encourage chill-out (particularly for longer festivals exceeding eight hours).

Ventilation

- A continuous supply of cool air will reduce the risk of heat-related conditions, particularly in the context of high-energy music events.
- Ensure adequate ventilation in venues using air-conditioners or industrial fans and, where possible, access to outdoor spaces.
- Ensure chill out spaces are well ventilated and ambient temperatures are regularly checked.
- On-going monitoring of these areas for people experiencing ill-health is recommended.

Peer-support

- Peer-based harm reduction programs can make an important contribution to keeping people safe by effectively engaging with patrons, delivering information on alcohol and other drug harms and harm reduction, identify patrons in need of assistance, and promote access to appropriate care and support. Peer-based services can also help to ensure that festival goers in need of medical care receive attention sooner.
- Promote peer support and integrate this into venues where appropriate.

Harm reduction messaging

- Music festival organisers should ensure the incorporation of alcohol and other drug harm reduction messaging wherever possible before, during and after their events to provide information about harm reduction strategies, encourage safer behaviour and promote help seeking.
- Inform patrons about the importance of issues such as:
 - hydrating safely (over hydration / dehydration)
 - not mixing different kinds of drugs, including with alcohol
 - chilling out and taking regular breaks
 - knowing the signs that you or your friends need help
 - remember: first aid officers are here to help, not call the police
 - it's important to get medical help promptly
 - potentially involve artists in harm reduction messages.
- Utilise the events website, social media platforms, apps, emails, ticket and wristband messaging as an opportunity to deliver messages to patrons.
- Contact the Mental Health Commission (campaigns@mhc.wa.gov.au) for resources and messaging or visit www.drugaware.com.au to see the programs most recent [safer events](#) campaign and materials.

Key contacts

- Advice about preventing drug-related harm at events and in venues can be accessed via the Mental Health Commission (campaigns@mhc.wa.gov.au).
- Publications and posters addressing the issues outlined above can be ordered from the Mental Health Commission (campaigns@mhc.wa.gov.au).

Guideline 25: Needles and syringes

Background

- The risks of blood borne virus transmission from needles and syringes that have been disposed of inappropriately is regarded as being low.
- To date, there are no reported cases in Australia of Hepatitis C or HIV that have been confirmed to be caused by being injured by an inappropriately disposed needle and syringe in a community setting.
- Tetanus spores live in the soil and may also cause infections if they are transported into the body through broken skin. A discarded needle may cause this.

Safe sharps handling

- Do not be alarmed.
- Obtain a rigid walled, puncture-resistant plastic container with a well-secured lid, preferably screw top (milk or orange juice bottles are suitable), or any container retailed by medical suppliers and waste management companies specifically for the disposal of sharps.
- Avoid using glass which can be shattered, aluminium which can be crushed or frosted plastic which may not be puncture proof.
- Bring the container to the needle and place it on the ground next to the needle and syringe. Do not hold the container as you are putting the syringe in it.
- Pick up the used needle and syringe by the barrel end, away from the needle/sharp point.
- Do not touch the sharp point and do not try to recap the needle with its protective cover if it has fallen off. Avoid touching the needle with your fingers or hands.
- Put the needle and syringe, point first into the container. More than one needle can be placed in a container but do not overfill.
- Make sure the container is tightly sealed.
- Dispose of the sealed container in a domestic rubbish bin (mobile green bin). Do not dispose of needle and syringes in the recycle bin or down toilets and drains.

What to do in the event of an needle stick injury:

- Wash the area gently with soap and running tap water as soon as possible.
- Apply an antiseptic, if available, and a sterile dressing.
- Obtain prompt medical advice from a doctor or the accident and emergency department of your local hospital, preferably within 24 hours.
- Tests may be done to assess if the person injured is already protected from hepatitis B. If not, a course of vaccinations may be given. This will be the most effective if begun within 24 hours following the injury.
- If the person injured is not vaccinated against tetanus this should also be done immediately.
- Prescribed antibiotics may be given as a protection against other infections.
- Baseline testing for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C infection is usually recommended, and medical advice should be given regarding the need for post exposure prophylaxis.
- The needle and syringe should be disposed of safely (see guidelines for the 'Safe Collection and Disposal of Used Needle and Syringes').



Key contacts

- Your local government environmental Health Officer
- The Communicable Disease Control Directorate on (08) 9222 4222
- [Alcohol and Drug Information Service](#) (ADIS) 24 hours (08) 9442 5000 Toll free 1800 198 024
- The WAAC (08) 9482 0000 or (08) 9482 0044
- [Peer-Based Harm Reduction WA](#) (08) 9325 8387
- [Hepatitis WA](#) (08) 9328 8538

References

Day, N., Criss, J., Grittiths, B., Gujral, S., John-Leader, F., Johnston, J., & Pit, S. (2018). Music festival attendees' illicit drug use, knowledge and practices regarding drug content and purity: a cross sectional survey. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 15(1). doi: 10.1186/s12954-017-0205-7

Munn, M., Lund, A., Golby, R., & Turriss, S. (2016). Observed benefits to on-site medical services during an annual 5-day electronic dance music event with harm reduction services. *Prehospital Disaster Medicine*, 31(2), 228-234.

Guideline 26: Tobacco and smoking

Background

- In Western Australia, there are strict legal controls on the sale and promotion of tobacco products. The *Tobacco Products Control Act 2006* and regulations provide requirements for smoking in outdoor eating areas and enclosed public places. These laws are designed to protect the health and wellbeing of all Western Australians.
- The *Tobacco Products Control Regulations 2006* ban smoking in enclosed public places. An enclosed public place is a 'place' or a 'vehicle' that:
 - the public, or a section of the public, is entitled to use
 - is open to, or is being used by, the public, or a section of the public, whether on payment of money, by membership or a club or other body, by invitation, or otherwise.
- A public place is an 'enclosed public place' if it has a ceiling or roof and is greater than 50 per cent enclosed by walls, or other vertical structures or coverings.
- However, liquor licenced premises that are not the subject of a restaurant licence may allocate a smoking zone of up to 50 per cent of all outdoor eating areas, provided that the area is not already an enclosed public place.
- Tobacco regulations were introduced in response to growing community concern over the health effects of passive smoking and overwhelming community support for smoking restrictions in outdoor and enclosed public places.
- Organisers or promoters have important responsibilities under these laws and must ensure compliance at events where tobacco will be smoked. Failure to do so may result in infringement and/or prosecution.
- The Department of Health investigators monitor events to ensure compliance with WA tobacco control laws. Police and local government officers may also monitor compliance with smoking bans and restrictions in outdoor eating areas and in enclosed public places.
- It is an offence for anyone to sell tobacco products without a licence. A licence will not be issued to allow the sale of tobacco products from temporary premises situated at sporting, cultural or any other event.

Note

This information is intended to alert you to your legal responsibilities and that you will need to consider if tobacco is being sold or consumed at your event. You may also wish to seek your own independent legal advice to ensure you fully understand your legal obligations.

Penalties

For offences under the Act the maximum penalties are for:

- individuals, a fine of \$10,000 for a first offence and \$20,000 for a subsequent offence
- a body corporate, a fine of \$40,000 for a first offence and \$80,000 for a subsequent offence.

For offences under the Regulations the penalties are up to \$2000 and infringement notices for certain offences may be issued on the spot.

Guidelines

- The sale of tobacco products at any temporary event is prohibited.
- Events at which smoking is not permitted may be advertised as smoke-free.
- The Tobacco Products Control Act and associated regulations should be taken into consideration when allowing smoking at the event.
- The Tobacco Products Control Regulations 2006 require all enclosed public places to be non-smoking (other than a conditional exemption applying to the International Room at Burswood Casino).

Further information:

Information on the Act and Regulations, information booklets and brochures and no-smoking stickers are available from: [Laws on smoking \(health.wa.gov.au\)](http://health.wa.gov.au)

Key contacts

Phone: Tobacco Control Branch 1300 784 892

Email TobaccoControlBranch@health.wa.gov.au

Postal address:

PO Box 8172

Perth Business Centre WA 6849

References

Tobacco Products Control Act 2006, Government of Western Australia

Tobacco Products Control Regulations 2006, Government of Western Australia

Official versions of the Act and regulations can be obtained from State Law Publisher.

Misuse of Drugs Act 1981, Government of Western Australia

Department of Racing Gaming and Liquor 2008, Director's Policy. Retrieved June 11, 2008,

from https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_609_homepage.html