

Example 2-2: Strong Alcohol Policy (Letter)



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Your Unit Address
City, State Zip Code

Date

POLICY LETTER

From: Commanding Officer

To: Your Unit

Subj: ALCOHOL MISUSE POLICY

Ref: (a) MCO 5300.17
(b) MCO P1900.16F
(c) NAVMC 2931

1. Purpose. To establish policy and procedures for ending alcohol misuse and treating alcohol-related incidents in accordance with the references.

2. Background.

a. Alcohol misuse brings discredit upon the Marine Corps, undermines our core values, degrades combat readiness, and can result in needless loss of life. As such, alcohol misuse is unacceptable, and Marines of all ranks have a responsibility to exercise leadership in curtailing it whenever and wherever they see it.

b. This policy letter is an initial step to eradicate alcohol misuse and its dire consequences from our unit. It underscores my determination to hold all Marines and sailors accountable for this form of misconduct. Equally important, it underscores my commitment to help Marines and sailors with alcohol misuse problems receive the counseling and rehabilitation they need.

c. I personally believe that curbing alcohol misuse is the single greatest contribution we can make to our Battalion Safety Program. In many cases, alcohol misuse fuels off-duty accidents, mishaps, and incidents. Promoting abstinence or low-risk drinking is essential to an effective safety program.

d. All drinking is associated with increased risk of harm. The only way to have zero risk is to refrain from drinking. Risk of harm increases as the amount of alcohol consumed increases. Low risk drinking involves consuming only limited amounts of alcohol over an extended period of time. As a guideline, males should have no more than 4 drinks per day, and no more than 14 drinks per week. Females should have no more than 3 drinks per day, and no more than 7 drinks per week.

3. Policy. Alcohol misuse within this unit will not be tolerated. All alcohol-related incidents will be dealt with swiftly and sternly through administrative, punitive, and rehabilitative measures. However, those seeking treatment for alcohol misuse prior to an alcohol-related incident will not be penalized in any way. These

Marines and sailors will receive the treatment they need and will be able to continue with their career as desired.

4. Action.

- a. I expect every Marine and sailor to take personal responsibility for his or her conduct.
- b. I expect all noncommissioned officers, staff noncommissioned officers, and officers to set the example by not misusing alcohol.
- c. I expect leaders at all levels to be vigilant and have the moral courage to take action against alcohol misuse when they see it.
- d. I expect every Marine and sailor to take appropriate action when they observe a fellow Marine or sailor who has had too much to drink. This involves making sure the Marine is safe and not a danger to himself/herself or to others.
- e. I expect every Marine and sailor to report fellow Marines and sailors with potential alcohol problems to their chain of command for screening and possible treatment.
- f. I expect every Marine and sailor under the age of 21 to refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages.
- g. I expect every Marine and sailor to refrain from providing underage personnel alcohol or encouraging them to drink.
- h. I expect every Marine and sailor to refrain from operating a motorized vehicle after drinking alcohol.
- i. I expect all Marines and sailors of legal age who choose to drink to do so in a low-risk manner.
- j. Any use of alcohol increases risk of harm to self and others. Therefore, all individuals who choose to drink alcohol should take steps to manage these increased risks. These include:
 - 1. Never driving after drinking.
 - 2. Never riding with a driver who has been drinking.
 - 3. Arranging for a safe ride home.
 - a. Identifying a designated driver who will not drink.
 - b. Setting aside the money and calling a taxi.
 - c. Calling a friend who has not been drinking.
- k. All alcohol-related incidents will be investigated and reported to the commander. Marines and sailors with substantiated cases of alcohol misuse will be referred to the Substance Abuse Counseling Center for screening and, if needed, treatment and rehabilitation.
 - 1. All personnel checking in to this unit will read this policy letter and sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) as part of check-in. This signed MOU will be kept on file.
 - m. Company Commanders will read this policy letter and explain its intent to their companies before every extended liberty period (i.e., before every "72" or "96," etc.). All company members will sign MOUs prior to extended liberty periods. These MOUs will be kept on file.

Memorandum of Understanding

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the Policy Letter # titled *Alcohol Misuse Policy*.

As a member of Your Unit, I will not:

- Consume alcohol if under the age of 21.
- Provide alcohol to or encourage the consumption of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21.
- Encourage others to engage in high-risk drinking.
- Ride as a passenger with someone who has been drinking.

As a member of Your Unit, I will:

- Take personal responsibility for my conduct.
- Take action to prevent high-risk alcohol use by my fellow Marines.
- Take action to ensure the safety of Marines who have been drinking.
- Encourage my fellow Marines and sailors with possible alcohol problems to seek care and treatment.

As a member of Your Unit, if I choose to drink, I will:

- Moderate my intake to lower my risk of negative outcomes.
 - I am aware that guidelines for males specify no more than 4 drinks in a day and no more than 14 drinks in a week.
 - I am aware that guidelines for females specify no more than 3 drinks in a day and no more than 7 drinks in a week.
- Refrain from driving, operating heavy machinery, or engaging in other potentially risky or unsafe behavior after drinking.
- Plan ahead for a ride using one of the following methods:
 - Identifying a designated driver who will not drink.
 - Setting aside funds for a taxi.
 - Calling a friend for a ride.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Name - please print)