



UTENRIKSDEPARTEMENTET

# AKAN in the Foreign Service

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**GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL  
ABUSE, GAMBLING AND OTHER DEPENDENCY PROBLEMS  
AT THE WORKPLACE**

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**Applicable from 1 January 2017**

## Introduction

The Foreign Service seeks to prevent dependency problems and uses the AKAN model<sup>1</sup> in its work relating to drug and alcohol abuse and other dependency problems.<sup>2</sup> The objective of these guidelines is to promote a consistent response to dependency problems that have negative consequences both for the individual employee and for the working environment as a whole, and to ensure that any employees with a dependency problem are offered help. The best way to help is to *actively assist* them in dealing with their dependency problem. The issue of dependency is addressed by the Working Environment Committee once or twice a year.

These guidelines cover all dependency problems that affect employees' work or physical and/or mental health, financial situation, safety, or the working environment, for example:

- alcohol and drugs (habit-forming medications or narcotic substances)
- compulsive gaming (online gaming, gambling, etc.)
- compulsive internet use (e.g. Facebook, dating websites, pornography, etc.).

The guidelines are divided into two parts. The first part contains the Ministry's policy on dependency problems and the guidelines themselves; the second part contains further information. In the introduction, you can read about what dependency is and what an AKAN agreement is.

These guidelines are reviewed at regular intervals to bring them into line with developments in the Foreign Service and in society. They have been agreed upon by the management and the employee representatives, and are applicable from 1 January 2017.

### Dependency

*According to the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems, symptoms of 'dependency syndrome' include:*

- *a strong desire or overwhelming compulsion to take the substance ('substance' should be understood in a broad sense);*
- *difficulties in controlling substance-taking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or levels of use;*
- *a physiological withdrawal state when substance use has ceased or been reduced (abstinence);*
- *evidence of tolerance of the substance;*
- *neglect of alternative pleasures or interests because of substance use, time necessary to obtain or take the substance or to recover from its effects;*
- *persisting with substance use despite clear evidence of harmful physical/psychological consequences.*

### What is an AKAN agreement?

An individual AKAN agreement is a way for an employer to provide support to an employee who has substance abuse or gambling problems. An AKAN agreement is not a treatment programme, but should be seen as a tool to ensure predictability and structure in the workplace during a difficult period. Treatment may certainly be included as part of the agreement if appropriate, but only under the auspices of a suitable treatment programme.

In order for the agreement to be as useful as possible for both the employee and the workplace, a number of factors should be taken into consideration and agreed on in advance. The first part of the agreement is standardised; the second part is individually customised. It is important that the employee takes part in designing and planning the agreement, and his or her regular general practitioner should also be involved. Initially, the focus should be on the situation that has arisen. Adjustments should be made to the agreement as appropriate during the course of the process.

<sup>1</sup> AKAN – the workplace advisory centre for issues relating to alcohol, drugs and addictive gambling – was established by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry and joined by the Norwegian state. Its objective is to prevent drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace and to provide help to employees with alcohol, drug or gambling problems. The guidelines for the Foreign Service are based on the AKAN model.

<sup>2</sup> This means that the Ministry has an alternative to dismissing employees who develop a dependency problem, by offering them help.

An individual AKAN agreement is normally discontinued when there have been no further warnings for two years. If the agreement has not been effective and needs to be discontinued for that reason, the matter becomes a personnel or disciplinary case. When an employee enters into an AKAN agreement, this is seen as an intention on the part of the employee to deal with the problem and re-establish a relationship of trust with the employer. It is not therefore a hindrance to career development.

# Part 1 Guidelines

## The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy on dependency:

The Foreign Service should be a workplace that is free of alcohol and drug abuse. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the workplace is not acceptable.<sup>3</sup> When entertaining, on official travel, taking part in courses and conferences and other work-related events, employees are representatives of the Foreign Service. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects all employees to show restraint and behave in a way that does not reflect badly on or undermine others' confidence in the Foreign Service or themselves.<sup>4</sup> The line manager is obliged to raise the issue of undesirable behaviour with the employee concerned, and to follow up any concerns or misconduct.

The same principles apply when an employee uses medication that can have an intoxicating effect. The employee's line manager should be informed, so that any work-related concerns can be addressed.

Alcohol may, however, be enjoyed in connection with entertaining or internal events where the serving of alcohol has been approved. The same applies to official travel. Non-alcoholic drinks should also always be provided at internal events and in connection with entertaining.

## The manager's responsibilities and obligations

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It is your duty as a manager to address *concerns* and *misconduct* involving employees for whom you are responsible, and to follow up individual cases (for definitions, see Part 2: Further information). Managers can and should contact the HSE adviser at an early stage for guidance and with a view to entering into a dialogue. The occupational health service may be involved if necessary. The HSE adviser has a coordinating role on behalf of the employer, particularly with regard to providing information (see Part 2).

The manager:

- is responsible for addressing and following up concerns and misconduct (including an initial meeting to express concern);
- is responsible for looking into incidents of misconduct (for instance in an initial meeting to express concern) and must document having done so (see the section on the right to privacy in Part 2 of these guidelines);
- is responsible for following up individual cases, in cooperation with the HSE adviser and the occupational health service;
- is responsible for addressing the topic of AKAN at least once a year in his or her section or unit;
- is to provide information about initial meetings that have been held to express concern about dependency when giving a reference in connection with internal recruitment processes.

If an employee has used alcohol or drugs at work or arrived at work under the influence of such substances or with a hangover, he or she should be sent home by the line manager. The manager should have a follow-up meeting with the employee at the first available opportunity, preferably the following working day. See also the section on authorisation.

## The employee's responsibilities and obligations

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All employees have a responsibility for ensuring a good working environment that is free of alcohol and drug abuse. This also means that all employees are obliged to report any unacceptable circumstances in the working environment, including any perceived dependency problems. These matters may be reported to the line manager, the local HSE representative, an employee representative, or the HSE adviser, or they may be reported anonymously through the Foreign Service's external reporting channel, by sending an email to [integrity@bdo.no](mailto:integrity@bdo.no). Concerns about heads of mission/managers are to be reported to the head of the

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<sup>3</sup> This includes having a hangover.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, drink driving.

Human and Financial Resources Department, the HSE adviser or the HSE service. The external reporting channel may also be used.

### **The HSE representative's responsibilities and obligations**

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Possible alcohol or drug abuse may be reported to the HSE representative. The HSE representative must then pass on this information to the relevant line manager. The line manager should always be informed as quickly as possible, so that the matter can be addressed. Incidents of misconduct must be reported immediately. The line manager has a duty to implement follow-up measures and to hold an initial meeting with the employee.

### **Authorisation**

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In the event of concern that an employee has a problem with drugs or alcohol, the person responsible for authorisation must be contacted, so that this can be taken into account when assessing security. If the question of suitability with respect to security arises, the person responsible for authorisation and the Section for Security and Emergency Preparedness must be contacted.

### **Concern about capacity to provide parental care**

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If there is concern about whether an employee posted abroad has the capacity to provide adequate parental care due to substance abuse, a specific assessment must be made in each case of whether the employee should be called back to the Ministry for a meeting. Under the Child Welfare Act, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, like all other public bodies, has a duty to notify the municipal child welfare services of any cause for concern. The duty to provide information on your own initiative applies to situations covered by sections 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 of the Child Welfare Act.

The threshold for notifying the child welfare services of any causes for concern should be low. The child welfare services assess each case to determine whether there are grounds for initiating an investigation.

## **MISCONDUCT**

### **First written warning (first incident)**

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In response to the first incident, the line manager gives a first written warning to the employee concerned, in consultation with the Section for Recruitment and Personnel and the main AKAN contact person. At the same time, the employee should be offered individual follow-up in the form of an AKAN agreement, but he or she is under no obligation to accept. The warning expires after two years, and the agreement is then to be destroyed unless there has been an additional incident.

### **Second written warning (second incident)**

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In response to a second incident, the line manager gives a second written warning to the employee concerned, in consultation with the Section for Recruitment and Personnel and the main AKAN contact person. If the employee already has an AKAN agreement, the question of altering the conditions of the agreement should be considered. If the employee does not have an AKAN agreement, he or she should once again be offered one. If the employee does not wish to enter into an AKAN agreement, the incident will be treated as a breach of his or her duties. The case will then be referred to the Section for Recruitment Personnel and dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Act.

### **Third written warning (third incident)**

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In the event of a third incident, a new written warning will be issued, and the question of whether it is appropriate to initiate or continue an individual AKAN agreement must be considered. The AKAN group, with the exception of the employee concerned, is to determine whether the AKAN agreement should continue for

the rest of the agreement period, or if it should be extended for a new two-year period with adjustments as appropriate.

### Entering into an AKAN agreement

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An AKAN agreement can be entered into on the employee's own initiative, or on the basis of concerns that have been raised or misconduct. The agreement is between the employer and the employee. When an employee has decided to accept the offer of an AKAN agreement, an AKAN group is established, consisting of:

- the employee
- the employee's line manager
- the HSE adviser (who is the main AKAN contact person)
- a representative of the occupational health service
- a representative from an employee organisation (at the request of the employee).

If a manager with personnel responsibility enters into an AKAN agreement due to his or her own dependency problems, he or she will not be able to continue in that position during the period of the AKAN agreement, and will be reassigned to an appropriate position. When the AKAN agreement period is over, he or she can apply for a new position.

A copy of the AKAN agreement is to be sent to the employee's regular general practitioner.

AKAN agreements are primarily for employees in the Ministry.<sup>5</sup> For both locally employed staff and employees who are posted abroad, the situation will be reviewed to see if an AKAN agreement can be offered at the mission concerned. For employees who are posted abroad, a transfer back to Oslo must be considered if an AKAN agreement cannot be offered at the mission concerned. Cases relating to locally employed staff are to be dealt with in accordance with legislation in the country concerned.

### Breaches of an AKAN agreement

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If an employee fails to comply with the terms of the AKAN agreement, an assessment must be made of whether it is appropriate to continue. The AKAN group (as defined above) will meet to review the situation and carry out an overall assessment.

If the group reaches the conclusion that it is appropriate to continue, the agreement may be extended for a further two-year period. Any changes to the terms of the agreement must be made in writing.

If it is decided that the AKAN agreement should be discontinued, the case must then be dealt with as a normal personnel or disciplinary matter, in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Act.

## RECRUITMENT

### Recruitment for positions at home or abroad

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Employees with an active AKAN agreement will not be considered for positions abroad. The same applies to employees who have been issued a warning within the last two years.

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<sup>5</sup> An AKAN agreement may be entered into at a mission abroad, if the local conditions are considered suitable on consultation between the Human and Financial Resources Development and the head of mission.

It may not be advisable to station an employee abroad or recruit an employee to a management position if there is a concern about substance abuse or dependency. This will need to be considered in each individual case.

### Concerns

The question of substance abuse and dependency should be raised in interviews and when checking references. If a manager expresses concern to the Section for Recruitment and Personnel about an employee from his or her unit when asked to give a reference for that employee in connection with a recruitment process, but has not held an initial meeting with the employee in question raise these concerns, the manager should be instructed to do so. Employees must always be informed if the line manager has raised issues of dependency when giving a reference. This underscores the importance of having a written record of what has been discussed in appraisal interviews, meetings to raise concerns, or in other contexts.

In cases where it is not advisable to post an employee abroad, the Section for Recruitment and Personnel should invite the employee to a meeting to inform him or her of the reason for this decision. The specific circumstances should be discussed at this meeting. Minutes from this meeting are to be kept in the employee's personnel file.

When it is considered appropriate to post an employee abroad, or allow him or her to continue a posting abroad, despite concerns about substance abuse and dependency having been raised, the head of mission will be contacted by the Section for Recruitment and Personnel. The Section for Recruitment and Personnel should also consider whether the head of mission should be informed if concerns other than substance abuse and dependency have been raised. The employee must be informed accordingly. The employer will weigh up the risk implicit in the concerns raised against other considerations in connection with postings and job rotation.

When an employee applies for promotion or for a posting abroad, the HSE adviser informs the Section for Recruitment and Personnel as a matter of course of any concerns relating to dependency problems that he or she is aware of, as well as of the existence of any AKAN agreements.

## **Part 2: Further Information**

This section contains supplementary information. *You can and should always contact the HSE adviser for further advice and guidance regarding concerns linked to dependency problems or misconduct.* In order to achieve a positive outcome in this kind of case, it is essential that there is cooperation between the manager at the local level and the Human and Financial Resources Department.

### **Concerns**

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It may take many years before an employee's problem with alcohol, drugs, compulsive gaming or other dependency problem is detected. The ability of managers and colleagues to notice behaviour that gives cause for concern and their willingness to address any worrying behaviour at as early a stage as possible is often the key to ensuring that the employee is given help to deal with a dependency problem. Concerns may be based on specific incidents or observations, or they may relate to an employee's sickness absence, performance, behaviour, appearance or other factors. The line manager must hold an initial meeting if he or she has observed problems, or if colleagues or the HSE representative have reported concerns.

The same issues are often involved (for example, sickness absence, work performance, behaviour, personal appearance) regardless of the type of dependency in question. The line manager is required to raise any concerns in a meeting with the employee in question. This is part of the manager's duty of care, and it is essential in order to be able to adjust the work situation and make appropriate demands of the employee. Minutes of meetings of this kind must always be written, so that there is a record of the issues that have been raised. The parties may not necessarily agree on the conclusion, but the employee must be shown the minutes and be allowed to respond.

There may be many reasons for behaviour that gives rise to concerns, and there may not be any dependency problem involved. Nevertheless, an initial meeting should be held to raise the concerns, in accordance with the manager's duty of care.

If there are concerns about a head of mission abroad, the Human and Financial Resources Department will hold a meeting with the head of mission concerned in consultation with the relevant department. If there are concerns about a director general, the secretary general of the Ministry will hold the meeting, with the support of the Human and Financial Resources Department.

## Misconduct

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Concerns and misconduct are two different things. Misconduct means that there has been a breach of rules or regulations. A breach of the Ministry's guidelines for dealing with drug and alcohol abuse, gambling and other dependency problems at the workplace should be regarded as misconduct. Misconduct related to drug and alcohol abuse and other dependency problems includes:

- the use of alcohol or drugs during working hours, including showing up at work under the influence of alcohol or drugs (i.e. with a hangover, reduced work capacity, smelling of alcohol or other substances, etc.)<sup>6</sup>
- absence from work due to the use of alcohol or drugs, or due to compulsive gaming or any other dependency problem
- unacceptable behaviour linked to a dependency problem that may reflect badly on the person concerned or the Foreign Service, including unacceptable intoxication in a work context, e.g. on official travel, in connection with entertaining, at events hosted by the Ministry, etc.
- other breaches of the Ministry's policy or guidelines on dependency problems
- illegal use or an unacceptable level of use of electronic services that are not work-related during working hours, or undesirable behaviour as a result of such use (irritability, lack of energy, etc.).

In the event of misconduct, the employee's line manager should call the employee in to a meeting as soon as possible, if appropriate with representatives of the Human and Financial Resources Department present. The employee should be given the opportunity to bring an employee representative or other representative to the meeting. If the misconduct involves drug or alcohol abuse or other dependency problems, the line manager must offer the employee an individual AKAN agreement.

## The HSE adviser

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### The HSE adviser

- is the main AKAN contact person
- assists in training managers and employees in the AKAN model
- gives advice and guidance to managers and employees regarding any concerns and questions they may have relating to drug and alcohol abuse and other dependency problems
- puts managers and employees in contact with the occupational health service as needed
- together with the employee's line manager, is responsible for ensuring that an AKAN agreement is drawn up together with the occupational health service and the employee concerned
- has a coordinating role in AKAN cases
- is to receive reports from line managers of any cases of alcohol or drug abuse that have been registered and any warnings issued, as well as minutes from assessment meetings, etc.

## The occupational health service

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The occupational health service is responsible for the medical follow-up of employees with alcohol- and drug-related problems and other dependency problems, and will be involved in individual cases as needed. The occupational health service:

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<sup>6</sup> Beyond what is acceptable in connection with entertaining or internal events that have been approved at the appropriate level (see page 1).



- participates in drawing up AKAN agreements and in forming the related AKAN groups
- has responsibility for the medical or psychological follow-up in individual cases, including:
  - contact with specialists
  - counselling
- plays an advisory role.

### **Duty of secrecy**

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Employee representatives, HSE representatives, the HSE adviser and line managers all have a duty of secrecy regarding personal information that they may become acquainted with in connection with AKAN work. Nevertheless, these persons are to report to the line manager if the employee concerned fails to comply with his or her AKAN agreement. Health personnel involved in the case, including the employee's own doctor and the occupational health service, also have a duty of secrecy in accordance with the Health Personnel Act.

Section 13 b (3) of the Public Administration Act sets out that the duty of secrecy shall not prevent information from being accessible to other officials within the administrative agency or service if this is necessary for the functioning of that agency or service. This means that the personnel adviser or another representative of the employer in personnel matters may inform the person responsible in the Unit for Recruitment and Relocation, the line manager, and the Section for Security and Emergency Preparedness, when this is necessary for the functioning of the Foreign Service. The need for discretion is to be taken into account.

### **Right to privacy**

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All the documentation that is necessary and relevant for following up the case is kept in the employee's personnel file with restricted access.<sup>7</sup> Employees have access at all times to documents in their own file.

An AKAN agreement is also kept in the employee's personnel file with restricted access. After two years, the agreement will be destroyed if there have not been any more incidents.

You can find more information about AKAN (guidelines, warnings, dialogue workshop) on UDintra (Norwegian only):

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<sup>7</sup> This applies also to the minutes of initial meetings to raise concerns, including both the manager's and the employee's points of view.

Land og regioner	Meg som ansatt	Meg som leder	Administrasjon og støtte		
Fagområder	Aktuelt Arbeidsmiljø og HMS Arbeidstid, fleksitid og overtid Fagforeninger Familie og barn	Ferie og annet fravær Forsikringer Kurs / opplæring (UKS) Locally employed staff Lønn	Mitt kontor Ny i UD Pensjon Permisjoner Personvern	Reiser Sykefravær Særavtalen	Uttetjeneste Velferd
Aktuelt					
Administrativt					
Verktøy og tjenester					
Mitt intra					

Søk  Søk

## Arbeidsmiljø og HMS

Arbeidsmiljøkartlegging

AKAN

Helsetjenester

Utløst adferd

Fysisk arbeidsmiljø

Vernetjenesten

HMS-aktiviteter på stasjonene

Inkluderende arbeidsliv (IA)

Health, security, environment - documents in English

★ Favoritt ⚙ Tips 📌 Følg med

## AKAN

Råd til deg som er på siden

Retningslinjer

Test enheten din - AKANs dialogverksted

Av-og-til-prat

Test deg selv

Balance - english version

Reguler stress- eller alkoholvaner - Balance

AKAN-utvalget

### Råd til deg som er på siden

Utenriks departementet arbeider med rus- og avhengighetsproblematikk etter AKAN-modellen (les mer om AKAN i lenke til høyre på siden). Departementet har nedsatt et eget utvalg som arbeider som pådriver i det forebyggende og holdningsskapende arbeidet (AKAN-utvalget).

Litt informasjon til deg som er på siden:

- Som leder bør du jevnlig ta opp bruk av alkohol med du har personalansvar for. Systemet for "Av-og-til-prat" er et godt verktøy for deg som leder når du skal ta opp temaet alkohol og rus i egen enhet. Verktøyet leder deg skritt for skritt gjennom dialogen i gruppa med gode, tematiserende videosnutter, og kan være en fin innledning til å teste alkoholkulturen i egen enhet.
- Test din enhet! Hva slags drikkekultur har dere i egen enhet? Dialogverkstedet er en måte å gjennomføre en diskusjon om enhetens alkoholkultur på, hvor kulturen vurderes i et helse-, miljø-, sikkerhet- og omdømmeperspektiv. Dere foretar her en risikovurdering av enhetens forbruk.
- Dersom du som medarbeider eller leder ønsker å sjekke egne alkoholvaner, kan du bruke både Audit og Balance.
- Audit (Test deg selv) er en meget kort test, som tar et par minutter å gjennomføre. Testen forteller deg om du befinner deg i faresonen mht. alkoholbruk.
- Dersom du ønsker å justere dine alkoholvaner - og også å justere stress forbundet med dette - kan du velge Balance.

### Hvem jobber med dette

👤 Lisbet Egeberg

### Førende dokumenter

- Akan-utvalgets medlemmer.docx  
23.02.2012
- AKAN-retningslinjer.pdf  
23.02.2012
- Guidelines for dealing with alcohol and drug abuse in the work place  
23.03.2012
- Belyrningsamtale  
23.02.2012
- 1. skriftlige advarsel.docx  
23.02.2012
- 2. skriftlige advarsel.doc  
23.02.2012
- 3. skriftlige advarsel.doc  
23.02.2012
- Mal individuell avtale.docx  
23.02.2012

### Aktuelle lenker

📁 AKAN

### Referat fra møter i AKAN-utvalget

- Referat 12.06.12  
26.06.2012
- Referat 28.11.2011.doc  
23.02.2012
- Referat 13.10.2011.doc  
23.02.2012
- Handlingsplan 2012-2013  
26.06.2012