

Impact of Alcoholism in the Workplace and the Role of the Employers

Kola O. Odeku and Olufunmilayo O. Odeku

Faculty of Management and Law, School of Law, University of Limpopo, South Africa

KEYWORDS Alcohol. Abuse. Disease. Misconduct. Treatment. Precaution. Workplace. Litigation. Damages

ABSTRACT Alcohol misuse and abuse negatively impact its consumers, their performance at the workplace and their behavior in society. Policies that regulate and guide the use of alcohol for employees should be put in place, side by side with statutory obligations by employers. The paper seeks to show that employers need to exercise caution when considering whether or not to dismiss an employee whose alcohol abuse affected his performance in the workplace. If an employee is an alcoholic, the principles have confirmed that this amounts to disease and as such the sick employee should not be dismissed but be treated in order to cure the disease and reintegrate him back into the workplace. It reveals that though there are consequences for alcohol abuse, employers should know what steps to take before exercising their power to dismiss in order not to be held liable for wrongful dismissal.