

## ALCOHOL USE AND THE ALBERTA WORKPLACE 1992 - 2002

September, 2003

*Substance Use and Gambling in the Alberta Workplace, 2002: A Replication Study* (AADAC, 2003) provided current information and trend data on substance use and gambling in the Alberta workplace as a follow-up to similar research done in 1992. Employees (2,836), employers (755) and union representatives (88) provided information about the prevalence and patterns of substance use and gambling among Alberta workers. Specifically, 1890 employees aged 18+ were asked about alcohol use.

### Prevalence and Patterns of Alcohol Use by Workers

Prevalence and patterns of alcohol use among Alberta workers remained relatively unchanged between 2002 and 1992. Regarding overall use, the number of Alberta employees who reported that they had consumed alcohol within the last 12 months was virtually unchanged (81% in 2002; 80% in 1992). This is similar to prevalence rates in the Alberta population.

While the overall numbers stayed the same, reports about frequency and consumption levels showed that drinking profiles changed. More workers were *infrequent* drinkers and fewer workers were *occasional* drinkers. The rates for non-drinkers and heavy drinkers did not change over time.

**TABLE 1: ALCOHOL USE AMONG ALBERTA EMPLOYEES: 2002 AND 1992**

YEAR	ALCOHOL USE IN PAST YEAR	FREQUENCY AND CONSUMPTION LEVELS					
		Non-drinker	Infrequent	Occasional	Regular/Light	Regular/Moderate to Heavy	Very Heavy
2002	81%	19%	27%	26%	15%	9%	5%
1992	80%	20%	19%	34%	14%	8%	5%

Infrequent = drinks monthly or less with no heavy drinking (5 or more drinks in a single occasion)

Occasional = Drinks 2-4 times/ month with no heavy drinking

Regular Light = drinks at least once a week with 3-6 drinks per week

Regular Moderate to Heavy = drinks at least once a week with 7-13 drinks per week

Very Heavy = drinks at least once a week with 14+ drinks per week

Responses to the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) showed that most Alberta workers did not report signs of harmful drinking (70% reported low risk drinking). About one in 10 (10%) reported signs of at-risk drinking (medium to very high risk drinking), which can include high levels of drinking each day, repeated drinking to intoxication, drinking that causes physical or mental harm, or drinking that causes the person to become dependent.

**TABLE 2: ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS IDENTIFICATION TEST (AUDIT): 2002**

NON-DRINKERS	AUDIT PROFILES			
	Low Risk Drinkers	Medium Risk Drinkers	High Risk Drinkers	Very High Risk Drinkers
20%	70%	9%	1%	0.1%

...over

### Alcohol Use in the Workplace

One in 10 Alberta workers (11%) reported using alcohol while at work and 4% reported using alcohol four hours prior to coming to work during the previous 12 months. It is estimated that 184,118 Alberta workers had consumed alcohol at work during the previous 12 months.

**TABLE 3: ALCOHOL USE AT WORK: 2002**

USE AT WORK IN PAST YEAR	YES	LESS THAN 1 TIME PER MONTH	1-3 TIMES PER MONTH	ONCE A WEEK	2-3 TIMES A WEEK	4+ TIMES A WEEK
While at work	11%	8%	1%	1%	1%	0.3%
Within 4 hours of coming to work	4%	3%	1%	1%	0.2%	0.1%

### Alcohol Prevalence by Industry

Industries with the lowest reported rate of alcohol use during the past year include agriculture and social services. Industries with the highest reported rate of alcohol use include utilities, forestry/mining and public administration.

**FIGURE 4: ALCOHOL USE BY INDUSTRY: 2002 (% REPORTING ALCOHOL USE IN PAST YEAR)**

