

Information sheet for the alcohol abstinence programme using hair samples

1. General

Proof of abstinence for six or twelve months may be required as a precondition for the Mental and Physical Examination (MPU). The requirements for an acceptable abstinence document are set out in the CTU criteria in the assessment criteria for fitness to drive valid since 1 May 2014 (1).

In your own interest, please take note of the following information, so that you can complete the abstinence control programme successfully in accordance with these criteria. Moreover, we recommend that you get in contact with an appropriate advice centre when preparing for the MPU.

2. Abstinence control programme

2.1. Registration

You can contact our institute regarding the abstinence control programme via the telephone number +49 961 309-270 or by e-mail at forensik@synlab.com and make an appointment for an introductory talk and contract signing. Please bring a valid official identification document with photo (identity card, passport) so that we can verify your personal data.

We can also send you the contract after you register by telephone. Following receipt of the signed contract, the abstinence control programme begins. The personal data in your contract will be checked against your ID on the day of your first sampling appointment.

2.2. Contract

The type of abstinence control programme desired, the control period and the number of examinations required are set out in the contract with reference to the CTU1 criteria. Along with the contract, you will receive this information sheet describing the general conditions for the control programme. The information sheet is a constituent part of the contract. Sampling must be carried out at a certified sampling centre (see 3.3).

2.3. Costs

Service	Price incl. VAT	Comments
Ethyl glucuronide in the hair	€139.90	per analysis
Sampling	€25.00	per sample

The costs due must be paid on-site on the day of sampling, in cash or by EC card (depending on the sampling centre). In some sampling centres, payment can only be made by invoice.

3. Conditions of implementation

3.1. General conditions for hair analysis

According to the CTU1 criteria, it is also possible to prove abstinence from alcohol by means of the alcohol indicator ethyl glucuronide (ETG) in the hair. To do this, the three-centimetre section of hair near the scalp is tested. By this means it is possible to check a period of three months retrospectively. The requirements for accessibility at short notice and permanent availability do not apply in the case of hair analysis.

However, in order for the hair analysis to be usable, certain special aspects need to be taken into account.

- For the following reasons, in certain circumstances the alcohol indicator ethyl glucuronide can still be identified in a 3 cm-long section of hair near the skull after alcohol abstinence for three months:
 - The growth of 10 to 20% of the hairs at the back of the head has come to a standstill. They last for around 6 months before they finally fall out. They can indicate consumption from more than three months ago, depending on the intensity of the earlier consumption..
 - The growth rates of the hairs vary, both between individuals and in the same individual.
- According to the assessment criteria (1) , only the three-centimetre section near the scalp may be used to test for ETG. Therefore, in order to prove one year's abstinence you need four hair examinations.
- Bleached or coloured (dyed/tinted) hairs are not suitable for the examination. If you have carried out cosmetic treatment, you must inform us of this when your sample is taken.
- Suitability of other body hairs
Other body hairs (e.g. pubic hair) can be used as proof of abstinence only in exceptional cases. Underarm hair is not suitable
- Because the hair sample must be taken near the scalp (normally from the occipital protuberance), cosmetic consequences (bald patch in the sample area) are unavoidable. Any claims for damages arising from possible cosmetic consequences are expressly excluded.
- Please come to your sampling appointment with freshly washed hair.
- We recommend that you do not go to the hairdresser until you have received your findings or test result.

3.2. Avoiding influence on the test results

In certain circumstances the laboratory results can be influenced by various factors.

Since you have to provide proof of abstinence, every positive result, even if it was caused by the factors given below, will initially be interpreted to your disadvantage.

Therefore, in your own interest, you should unconditionally observe certain rules of behaviour.

- Cosmetic hair treatments (tinting, dyeing, bleaching, permanent waves, chemical smoothing) reduce the ETG content in the hair. If you do not disclose a hair treatment, or it is not noticed when the sample is taken but only during the laboratory analysis, then a negative result cannot be used as proof of abstinence.

- Natural hair cosmetics (ethanol-based hair tonics/care products) may contain ETG, which if used externally might be transferred to the hair and then lead to positive results. Hair tonics and care products, particularly non-synthetic ones, must be avoided.
- As a precautionary measure, the consumption of 'alcohol-free' beer etc. should be avoided. According to foodstuffs regulations, drinks with an alcohol content of less than 0.5% ABV may use the description 'alcohol-free'.
- Please inform your doctor of the alcohol abstinence programme if you are being treated with medicines containing alcohol. They will find alternative medication for you. If this is not possible, please ask your doctor to confirm it.

3.3. Conduct after receiving an appointment and during sampling

To confirm your identity, you must bring a valid official ID document with photo. The fees for the examination must be settled before the examination.

In accordance with the CTU 2 criteria, sampling may only be carried out at a certified sampling centre. You can ask us about these, or view them on our website. For a transitional period, documented samples from a non-certified doctor will still be accepted.

3.4. Cancellation criteria

The abstinence programme will be cancelled in the event of the following:

- Bleaching or colouring of hair
- Underarm hair
- Positive test result for ethyl glucuronide
- Failure to disclose hair treatment

Cancellation of the abstinence control programme on your part must be performed via notification in writing. If you cancel the programme before the first sampling appointment, an administrative fee of 30 euros is payable.

3.5. Notification of results

No individual results are issued. If you have successfully completed the abstinence control programme, you will receive these all together along with a concluding report on the findings in accordance with the CTU4 criteria. For data protection reasons, our staff cannot give you any information about your test results by telephone.

References: (1) Schubert, W., Dittmann, V. and Brenner-Hartmann, J. (ed.): Urteilsbildung in der Fahreignungsbegutachtung, Beurteilungskriterien [Forming judgements when assessing fitness to drive: assessment criteria], Bonn, Kirschbaum Verlag, 3rd Edition, 2013