



Many Illegal Drug Users Are Working

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Did you know that 75 percent of the nation's illegal drug users are employed, and more than 3 percent have actually admitted using drugs before or during work hours? Plus, 79 percent of the nation's heaviest alcohol users are employed, and more than 7 percent say they have consumed alcohol during the workday. If you do not have a program in your workplace that includes drug testing and drug abuse prevention, consider implementing one and ensuring the safety and health of your employees.

There are many projects, big and small, that an employer can undertake to spread the message. Here are a few ideas that the Department of Labor and others suggest:

- Set up private computers and allow employees to access online health screening tools. Additionally, professionals can be brought into the workplace, and private meetings can be set up to assess employees' health needs and issues.
- Insert a payroll stuffer with employees' paychecks that includes information about national toll-free help lines and Web sites.
- Organize a community service project that gets employees involved. Consider helping at a rehabilitation center or other organization dealing with drug and alcohol abuse issues.
- Create a drug-free workplace display. Make sure employees know that the firm takes the issue seriously and will listen and attempt to help them where possible. The display should include information about substance abuse, risks of such abuse, and where one can go to receive help if needed.
- Distribute literature. Although many employees may not feel comfortable asking questions and asking for more information, all employees should be able to receive and privately review literature about drug and alcohol abuse, prevention and treatment. If you have an Employee Assistance Program, remind employees of this program and how it works.
- Issue a press release to the local community highlighting the activities your company is doing during the week and stressing the importance of these issues to your workplace and the broader community.

In enacting drug and alcohol prevention policies and EAPs, employers must observe federal laws. The myriad of such laws makes the waters a bit murky but not unmanageable.

Drug tests can be used during pre-employment, after an accident occurs at the workplace, for cause, at random, periodically, or before an employee returns to duty (e.g., after rehabilitation or other treatment). Keep in mind, however, that Oregon state laws place restrictions on workplace drug testing, so be sure to do your homework before enacting any policies or testing procedures.

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