



Weekly Safety Meeting

Drugs on the Job

Drug abuse is spinning out of control in today's American workplaces. Upwards of ten percent of all employees have problems with chemical dependency. Substance abuse and/or addiction in the workplace is extensive, affecting every industry at all employee levels, and is a situation that will not solve itself. Any person who is impaired while on the job is a clear threat to himself or herself, or to any coworker in the near vicinity. Customers and vendors are also affected when product quality and delivery schedules are not maintained due to worker impairment.

Untreated Chemical Dependency:

Untreated chemical dependency is very expensive to a company and the economy. Government studies estimate the nationwide losses in productivity, profits, and overall performance exceeds \$100 Billion annually. The effect of chemical dependency on peoples' lives is also very costly.

Abusers/addicts will often sacrifice their careers, families, health, and sometimes even their lives to the disease. The suffering also extends to their families, fellow workers, and friends. People caught in the torment of abuse/addiction lose their good judgment, self-control, dignity, and self-respect.

Substance Abuse:

Substance abuse among U.S. workers has been linked to a host of economic, social, and public health problems. Current research indicates that nearly seventy-five percent of illegal drug users are employed in full and part-time jobs. Consequently, when the effects of alcohol abuse are added, the result is a largely impaired portion of the national workforce. For the typical employer, that means unhealthy employees, unsafe working conditions, loss of productivity, smaller profits, more accidents, higher medical claims expenses, and a host of other negative effects.

Though difficult to compute, the costs of drug abuse, both in the workplace and in society at large, are always alarmingly high. Many types of expenses an employer faces are:

- Administrative losses, e.g., absenteeism, tardiness, overtime pay, sick leave abuse, health insurance claims, disability payments, and costs associated with accidents;
- Hidden losses, e.g., diverted supervisory and managerial time, friction among workers, material waste, equipment damage, poor decisions, and damage to public image;
- Losses with legal implications, e.g., workers' compensation, drug trafficking on the job, disciplinary actions, grievances, threat to public safety, and worksite security; and
- Costs of employee health insurance and other health care services.

Efforts to Address Employee Performance Problems:

Employers have long realized an important relationship between the worker and the worker's life, i.e., that drug problems caused serious family quarrels and have an immediate negative effect on work performance.

Drug Free:

As employers began to understand that healthy, happy, and drug free employees turn out the best products, these early efforts evolved into what are known today as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) which, in addition to alcohol and drug abuse, address a variety of other employee problems that can affect performance on the job.

These programs give life to the belief that employees can help themselves by working together to overcome substance abuse problems in the workplace. Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) also recognize the important relationship between worker health and productivity, and many provide EAP benefits in their health coverage.

Summary:

Drug abuse in the workplace is an issue for everyone involved in the company. Not only is it a safety issue for those individuals around someone who is abusing drugs, but also there are other consequences. When production is slowed down and costs go up, less money is available for other areas of the business. Speak up to a supervisor if you see a coworker who may be having issues with drugs.

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE...CHOOSE TO BE DRUG FREE!!

