



Weekly Safety Meeting

Substance Abuse Prevention

Substance abuse directly impacts workplace safety, reaction times, and overall team performance. Whether on a construction site, in an office, or operating heavy machinery, being fully fit for duty is a requirement for every employee. Substance use doesn't just affect the individual—it jeopardizes the safety of everyone on the team. This newsletter covers critical risks and highlights resources available to keep our workplace safe.

The Hidden Danger: Alcohol and Hangovers

Many employees believe that if they are not drinking on the day they work, they are safe to perform work duties. However, hangovers pose a significant threat to workplace safety.

- **Impaired Functions:** Hangovers cause fatigue, headaches, nausea, and decreased cognitive function;
- **Delayed Reaction Times:** Sluggish reflexes and a lack of focus can lead to critical errors, dropped tools, or misjudged distances; and
- **Residual Alcohol:** Depending on the amount consumed the night before, an individual may still have measurable amounts of alcohol in their system during their shift.

Cannabis in the Workplace: Medical and Recreational Realities

While laws surrounding medical and recreational marijuana have changed, **safety rules and impairment policies remain strictly in place**. Cannabis affects everyone differently, and its after-effects can linger long after the initial high wears off.

- **Delayed Effects:** Residual effects like distorted spatial perception, slowed thinking, and poor coordination can persist for 24 hours or more;
- **Cognitive Lag:** Workers experiencing a "cannabis hangover" often suffer from reduced short-term memory and a decreased ability to handle complex tasks; y
- **The Bottom Line:** Regardless of legality, being under the influence or experiencing the lingering effects of cannabis while at work is a direct safety violation.

The Long-Term Toll of Drug and Alcohol Use

Chronic substance abuse causes deep, lasting damage that extends far beyond a single shift. Over time, consistent drug and alcohol misuse leads to severe personal and professional consequences:

- Physical Health Decline: Long-term use damages vital organs, weakens the immune system, and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, liver failure, and strokes;
- Mental Health Erosion: Substance dependence frequently worsens or triggers anxiety, depression, and severe sleep disturbances; and
- Professional Fallout: Chronic absenteeism, poor job performance, strained coworker relationships, and a higher frequency of workplace accidents often lead to job loss.

Protect Your Health

Your safety and well-being should be your and your employer's highest priority. All employees should take proactive steps to maintain their health and protect their livelihoods. Follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of drugs and alcohol impacting your life:

- Stay Fit Physically and Mentally: Prioritize regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep to manage daily stress naturally;
- Look Out for One Another: If you notice changes in a coworker's behavior, performance, or safety habits, report it to a supervisor immediately; and
- Seek Help Early: If you or a loved one are struggling with drugs or alcohol, please reach out for support. If your employer has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), it provides free, confidential counseling and resources to help you get back on track. If no EAP is available, you can search for state-funded facilities or seek help from nonprofit and/or sliding-scale programs.

DON'T WORK UNDER THE INFLUENCE...SEEK HELP FOR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

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