



# American Drug Testing

*Drug-Free Workplace Programs*

Volume 1

Issue 62

(843) 747-4111

## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE.

### How do Drugs/Alcohol Actually Affect Your Workplace?

#### How many people use drugs?

The federal government reports nearly 14 million adults currently use illegal drugs ("current" meaning illegal drug use within the past 30 days). That represents an increase of more than 1 million users since the government's 1995 report. However, that's only the tip of the iceberg. Combine that number with the nearly 11 million Americans who admit that they are "heavy" drinkers (5 or more drinks on the same occasion on at least 5 different days in the past month) and the severity of the situation begins to come into focus.

#### How many drug users are employed?

By some estimates nearly three-quarters of current illicit drug users 18 and older are employed... that's more than 10 million U.S. workers and 75 percent admitted to using drugs while at work. And if that was not bad enough, the federal government claimed that if all workers ages 18-40 were administered a drug test on any given day, as many as 25 percent would test positive.

The Gallup Organization reported that in a survey of full-time employed adults more than 30 percent indicated they

*"... can your company afford to lose nearly \$75,000 every year to a problem that you can have some control over?"*

had personal knowledge of co-workers' drug use on the job. In a 1996 survey of employees conducted by the Hazelden Foundation, nearly 61 percent said they know people who have shown up for work drunk or stoned. Gallup reports that nearly 10 percent of employees have been offered drugs to use while on the job. And 44 percent admitted to selling drugs to other employees.

#### Which drugs are they using?

Alcohol is, by far, the leading substance abused by Americans in virtually all categories. Following alcohol, the leading illegal drug abused in the United States is marijuana. In 1997, approximately 5 percent of the U.S. population 12 and older (11 million) were mari-

juana users. Cocaine was second with an estimated 1.5 million current users. Perhaps most disturbing was the fact that there were nearly 700,000 new cocaine users that year, and that first-time cocaine use among 12-17-year olds increased from 4 percent in 1991 to 11.3 percent in 1996. Other highly used illegal drugs include heroin



with an estimated 325,000 current users; up 422 percent in just four years, and also noteworthy is hallucinogen use with 1.1 million users. First-time use of any illicit drug among 12-17-year olds jumped from 11.7 percent in 1991 to nearly 26 percent in 1996... further evidence that drug use trends are steadily increasing.

#### How does substance abuse affect work performance?

The U.S. Post Office discovered that substance abusers are involved in 55 percent more accidents, experience 85 percent more on-the-job injuries, and have a 78 percent higher rate of absenteeism when compared to their non-substance abusing co-workers. Sixty-two percent of callers to 800 COCAINE admitted that drug use adversely affected their job performance. The federal government estimates that substance-abusing employees are one-third less productive than their non-using co-workers.

#### How much does abuse cost employers?

From an economic point of view, the cost to the workplace

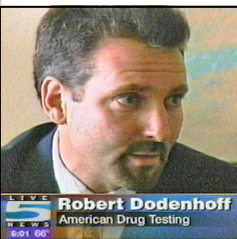
is tremendous. Forty-three percent of CEOs in one survey said they believe problems associated with alcohol and other drugs cost as much as 10 percent of payroll. A Wisconsin study concluded that expenses and losses related to substance abuse

equal 25 percent of the salary of each affected employee. To calculate how

much drug abuse is costing your company follow this formula: Multiply \$6,600 (the average cost per year per substance abusing employee) by 17 percent of the number of your employees (the percentage of the total workforce with a substance abuse problem). For example, if you have 65 employees, 17 percent would be 11 workers. Multiply 11 by the average cost per year, \$6,600, and you get a total of \$72,600 a year. Now ask yourself—can your company afford to lose nearly \$75,000 every year to a problem that you can have some control over?

Source: Compliance Information Systems  
For additional tips, see the "client area" at [www.AmericanDrugTesting.net](http://www.AmericanDrugTesting.net) or call 843-747-4111.

#### The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor is published by



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