

American Drug Testing

Drug-Free Workplace Programs

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DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORK-

Just How Important is Workplace Drug Testing?

Fifteen percent of manufacturing personnel, from CEOs to line workers, admitted to using illicit drugs in the past year.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, drug abuse costs American industry over \$140 billion annually. Employee drug abuse causes as much as 50% of all on-the-job accidents and up to 40% of employee theft. In addition, drug-abusing employees are absent ten times more frequently than non-users, and the turnover rate for drug-abusing employees is 30% higher than clean employees.

These rather shocking statistics do not include alcohol, but rather illegal drugs --such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and ecstasy -- as well as the non-medical use of prescription drugs. **With 10% of employed Americans between the ages of 18 and 49 admitting to illicit drug use, clearly drug abuse in the workforce is an issue that has remained persistent and present in American companies across the board.**

While the construction sector generally has higher-than-average rates of on-the-job illicit drug use, manufacturing, surprisingly, also posts disturbingly high rates. According to the U.S. Department of

“... employee drug abuse causes as much as 50% of all on-the-job accidents.”

Health and Human Services, 15% of manufacturing personnel, from CEO to line worker, admitted to using illicit drugs in the past year. With such high incidence rates, more manufacturing firms are involved in accelerated random drug testing.

A few years ago, a \$40 billion international Fortune 500 company initiated a comprehensive drug-free workplace program. The core of the program included corporate-wide random drug testing, as well as employee education and assistance programs. At the start of the program, the corporation demonstrated a 7% positive rate for drug abuse. After the third year of successful random drug testing, the company reduced the positive rate to just 0.7%. Drug testing in-

creased the bottom line by adding approximately \$17 million of annual savings to the company. In addition, employees recognized personal benefits such as a safer and better work environment across the board. In order to fully benefit from a drug testing program, compa-

to everyone in the company, with participants selected by computer software programs. Completed in this manner, all employees -- from the corporate boardroom on down -- have an equal chance of being selected, reducing the risk of singling out any one employee. Needless to say, the drug testing process should be as confidential as possible, with results shared only with parties that have a "need to know."

In addition, organized labor may pose obstacles to effective drug testing programs by opposing the practice in general. Despite rough patches, according to a 2005 Gallup Survey on Construction Risk Report, 71% of union members are in favor of drug testing.

Furthermore, a recent Gallup poll shows that over 90% of employees are in favor of drug testing. Administered fairly, effectively, and randomly, drug testing, in combination with education and employee assistance programs, provides a solution to workplace drug abuse.

For additional tips, see the "client area" at www.AmericanDrugTesting.net or call 843-747-4111.

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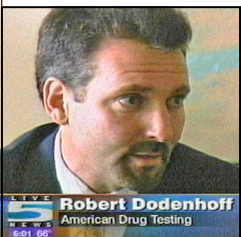
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