



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-

General Workplace Impact of Substance Abuse, Part I

Substance Use and Abuse in America. In 2007, an estimated 19.9 million Americans were current illicit drug users. The rate of current illicit drug use among Americans has remained stable since 2002, hovering around 8 percent.

- Nearly 58 million people, or more than one-fifth (23.3 percent) of the population age 12 and over, participated in binge drinking (having five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the past 30 days). About 17 million people or 6.9 percent of the population age 12 and over, reported heavy drinking (defined as binge drinking on at least 5 of the past 30 days).
- Among adults ages 50-59, current illicit drug use increased from 2.7 percent to 5.0 percent between 2002 and 2007, as the baby boom cohort continued to enter this age bracket.
- An estimated 22.3 million persons (9.0 percent of the population age 12 and

over) were classified with substance dependence or abuse in the past year. Of these, 15.5 million abused or were dependent on alcohol, 3.7 million abused or were dependent

“... Most drug users, binge and heavy drinkers, and people with substance use disorders are employed.”

on illicit drugs, and 3.2 million abused or were dependent on both alcohol and illicit drugs.

Substance use and abuse is a concern for employers. Most drug users, binge and heavy drinkers, and people with substance use disorders are employed.

- In 2007, of the 17.4 million current illicit drug users age 18 and over, 13.1 million (75.3 percent) were employed.
- Similarly, among 55.3 million adult binge drinkers, 44.0 million (79.4 percent) were employed, and among 16.4 million persons reporting heavy alcohol use, 13.1 million (79.6 percent) were employed. Of the 20.4 mil-

lion adults classified with substance dependence or abuse, 12.3 million (60.4 percent) were employed full-time.

- 8.4 percent of those employed full-time were current illicit drug users, and 8.8 percent reported heavy alcohol use.

Substance Use Disorder - Worker Age May be a Factor

According to 2002-2004 data, among full-time employed persons diagnosed with a substance use disorder, those ages 18-25 had the highest rates of substance use disorder relative to those in other age categories.

- Illicit drug use for the ages 18-25 group (not accounting for employment) has remained relatively stable from 2004 (19.4 million) to 2007 (19.7 million) Declining rates of use for methamphetamine and cocaine have been noted in the workplace, with drug test positives for methamphetamine declining 50% since 2005.

At the same time that these positive indicators are noted among the age 18-25 group, the rate of nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers rose 12% to 4.6% in 2007. In the ages 50-59 group (not accounting for employment), illicit drug use has grown substantially from 2004 (3.8 percent) to 2007 (5.0 percent).

Source: US Department of Labor
Part II: Substance Abuse in Various Industries. For additional information, see the “client area” at www.AmericanDrugTesting.net or call 843-747-4111.

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