



# 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 WORKPLACE.

### What is GHB?

Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid or GHB, is a compound that was initially used by body builders to stimulate muscle growth. In recent years it has become popular as a recreational drug among club kids and partygoers. This "designer" drug is often used in combination with other drugs, such as Ecstasy, and is available in clear liquid, white powder, tablet and capsule form. The Food and Drug Administration banned GHB in 1990 after 57 cases of GHB-induced illnesses



GHB is odorless and nearly tasteless. GHB users risk many negative physical effects including vomiting, liver failure, potentially fatal respiratory problems, and tremors and seizures, which can result in comas.

### The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor



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President

is a resource of American Drug Testing, the Lowcountry's premier drug-free workplace administrator, and testing company. Let us help you maintain a drug-free workplace. Contact us at (843)747-4111.

## Drugs, Alcohol, Work & the Law

The national battle to eliminate substance abuse in the workplace has been raging for more than a decade, and great progress has been made. Unfortunately, smaller employers—particularly those in the construction industry—have been disproportionately lagging behind in these efforts, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Part of this may be because of a perceived lack of resources and administrative staff, or many employers simply do not know how to put a substance-abuse program together. Still others lack information about the true consequences of taking no position on this critical issue and, as a result, they often become employers of last resort for addicts and alcoholics. In effect, they allow their companies to become work-free drug places.

Such a "hands-off" attitude can have serious legal and financial consequences. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), between 10 percent and 20 percent of U.S. workers who die on the job test positive for alcohol or other drugs and 47 percent of industrial injuries are linked to alcohol consumption and alcoholism. Industries with the highest rates of drug use (construction and mining) also

have the highest risks of occupational injuries. In addition to accident costs, substance abuse at work increases absenteeism, judgment errors and medical insurance claims and generally decreases employee morale and productivity. About one-quarter of construction laborers and supervisors between the ages of 18 and 49 admit to illegal drug use within the past year, and 20 percent are current heavy alcohol users. Forty-four percent of current illicit drug users report they



work for companies with one to 24 employees, and only 13 percent work for establishments with more than 500 employees. (These figures are according to DOL and Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.) These figures are striking and warrant employers to consider implementing workplace substance-abuse policies. But multiple laws and federal agencies can make establishing a substance-abuse policy a

little complicated.

### Program development

There should be five basic components of any solid substance-abuse prevention program: a written policy, supervisor training, employee education, employee assistance, and drug and alcohol testing. Before implementing a workplace program, it is necessary to understand some of the federal laws that affect the rights of substance abusers and employer obligations. These laws are designed for fostering substance-abuse prevention while protecting the due process and privacy rights of workers who use or have had



a history of abusing illegal or prescription drugs and alcohol. Because some state and local laws impose additional requirements, you are encouraged to consult counsel before putting any programs into effect.

Source: National Roofing Contractors Assoc.