

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-

Top 12 Reasons a Drug-Free Workplace Program Goes Bad, I

1. The drug-free workplace program isn't tied into the organization's safety plan since it's not required by OSHA regulations.

Although not required under OSHA regulations, drug-free workplace programs add value to workplace safety and health plans, and, in fact, OSHA has come out in support of them, especially in high-hazard industries. Incorporating your drug-free workplace program into your overall safety plan makes good safety sense and sends a clear signal to workers that you're serious. It is important to note that because programs are often overseen by an organization's Human Resources function, effectively integrating them into safety plans may require connecting the right people and ensuring they understand the program's impact on each other's areas of responsibilities.

2. There is a policy on paper, but no one knows what it says.

If no one knows what the policy says, the reality is that there is no drug-free workplace program. To change this, decision makers need to get the company back on track—by pulling the policy out of the draw, reviewing it to ensure its still timely, updating it if necessary,

and distributing and explaining it to all employees and supervisors. Also discussed should be the impact of drug use on business and respective roles in complying with and enforcing the policy. Employees should have the opportunity to ask

“... Policies should be reviewed periodically to consider what is working and what is not”

questions and be required to sign “acknowledgement of receipt forms.” Once the revised policy is implemented, it should be reviewed once a year.

3. There is a belief that once a policy is implemented, it's too late to change it.

It's important to implement and enforce policies in a consistent manner; however, they're not written in stone. Like organizations themselves, programs will likely need to change over time to meet evolving needs. Enforcement must be consistent but can still afford employers flexibility in dealing with specific situations. Policies should be reviewed periodically to consider what is working and what is not, and when appropriate, changes should be made. For example, a policy may originally include a “one strike and you're out” provision without any avenues for workers to seek help and return to work, but when a senior employee with hard-to-

replace skills tests positive on a drug test and you're tempted to make an exception, it's time to revisit whether your policy meets your needs.

4. Workers feel drug testing is invasive and won't go for it.

While drug testing may seem invasive, it actually protects the company and contributes to every individual's job security and personal safety. Education and employee involvement from the beginning is key to a successful program, and in fact, many unions support drug testing when implemented in a fair manner that includes procedures that ensure the integrity, accuracy and confidentiality of test results and provide opportunities for workers to get help and retain their jobs.

But it takes more than a brochure or a poster on a bulletin board to help workers understand and appreciate that drug testing protects worker safety.

5. There is a belief that if applicants are drug tested, no one will ever be hired.

If the level of drug use at your organization is that high, you're already at risk for higher absenteeism and medical costs and lower productivity, in addition to serious liability. It's a ticking time bomb if not properly addressed. What's your exposure once the word gets out that “users” can get away with their behavior at your business? No company has ever gone out of business because it could not find drug-free applicants. Take a few minutes to understand how drug use costs businesses. Then, consider that most people do not use drugs and that all these people do not want to work next to someone who does. Promote that you are a drug-free workplace and drug testing is a con-

dition of employment. Non-users will find you and appreciate the safety and security

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- How to identify illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia
- The linkage between drug and alcohol problems and performance problems
- How to identify and investigate crisis situations
- How to recognize workplace problems related to employee use of alcohol and drugs
- How to avoid enabling and common supervisor traps



Exceeds requirements for supervisor training as outlined by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

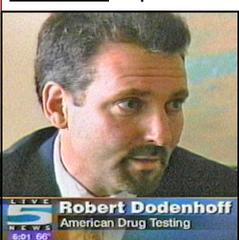
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The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor



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