



Why do employers have a drug free workplace policy?

COSTS of Substance Abusers:

1. They file three to five times as many workers' compensation claims.
2. They incur 300% higher medical costs than others.
3. They're 2.5 times more likely to be absent 8 or more days per year.
4. They're one third less productive.
5. They're late for work three times as often as non users.

In 2000, it was estimated that 14 million Americans currently used illicit drugs, within the month prior to the interviews being conducted. That's about 6.3 percent of the population 12 years and older.

In 2000, 15.4 percent of 18 year and older, unemployed adults were drug users. 6.3 percent of the full time working population and 7.8% of part time employed adults were illicit drug users.

Marijuana is the most commonly used drug, used by 76% of current illicit drug users.

Rates for alcohol use were 57.3% for full time employed persons over 18.

Almost 7% of full time employed Americans drink 5 or more drinks per occasion on 5 or more days in the past 30. NIDA

Workplace alcohol, tobacco and other drug related problems cost U.S. companies more than 102 billion each year in lost productivity, accidents, employee turnover, increased healthcare costs, absenteeism and workers' compensation claims. Nat'l. Mental Health Assoc.

A study of rehabilitating substance abusers revealed:

1. 75% USED DRUGS ON THE JOB.
2. 64% ADMITTED DRUGS ADVERSELY AFFECTED THEIR PERFORMANCE.
3. 44% SOLD DRUGS TO OTHER EMPLOYEES
4. 18% STOLE FROM CO-WORKERS TO SUPPORT THEIR HABIT.

Is it time for you to implement a drug free workplace policy?

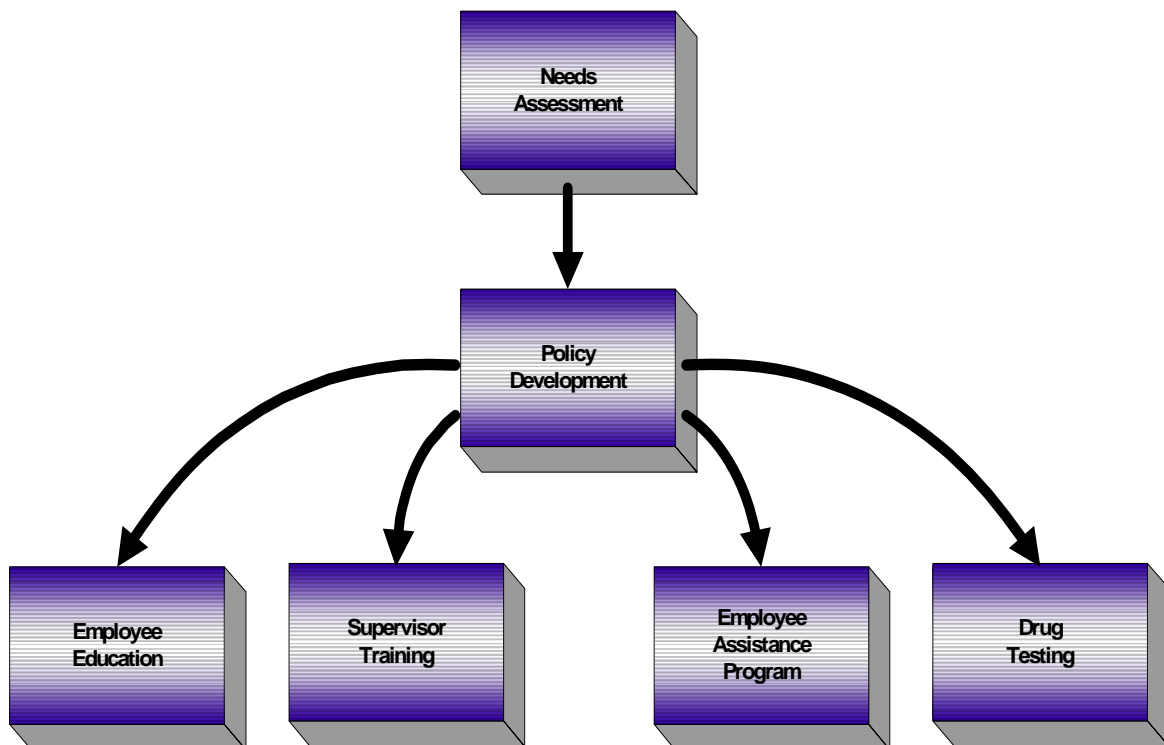
THE 5 STEPS TO A DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

To protect against the negative impact of workplace drug and alcohol abuse, many businesses implement drug-free workplace programs. A comprehensive program generally includes five components:

1. Drug-Free Workplace Policy
2. Supervisor Training
3. Employee Education
4. Employee Assistance
5. Drug Testing

Although employers may choose not to include all five components, it is recommended that all be explored and considered when developing a drug-free workplace program. Research does show a positive relationship between the number of components included and a program's overall effectiveness.

Each of the 5 components is explained in greater detail in the following sections of this substance abuse testing solution. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive approach to developing a drug-free workplace program.



Needs Assessment

As with any change, assessment is the first step. A careful needs assessment can lead to early program success by clearly identifying the objectives a substance abuse testing program will meet. The needs of an employer with 200 employees, 75 of whom drive company vehicles, will be very different from the needs of an employer with 3000 employees performing a variety of job duties.

Policy Development

A written policy tells everyone the organization's position on alcohol and other drug abuse and explains what will happen if the policy is violated. This is the central component of all programs. Employers often ask if they can "borrow" another employer's policy and tailor it to their workplace. While this may be possible, it is best to draft a policy that meets your own organization's specific objectives taking into account specific state and federal regulations. Many employers find it helpful to involve supervisors and employee and union representatives in drafting a policy. These people can offer practical ideas and help to write a well-rounded policy.

Employee Education

A plan for introducing the drug-free workplace program to employees and for informing them about alcohol and other drug-related issues will be important to the program's overall success. The educational components in this solution provide the basic facts about alcohol and other drug abuse and guidelines for informing and educating employees.

Supervisor Training

If your organization has managers or supervisors, they can provide valuable support in introducing and carrying out a drug-free workplace program. They cannot do it alone, however; they will need guidance, direction, and support. Federal regulations as well as many states require that supervisor be trained in spotting the "signs and symptoms or drug and/or alcohol abuse.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

An EAP is one way for an organization to offer help to employees with personal problems, including problems with alcohol and other drugs. This component can be a sign of employer support and a source of improved productivity. Although not every employer will want or be able to afford an EAP, it is worth considering. Low-cost options for offering an EAP are available, making this component within reach even for companies with limited resources. Many health plans allow employee assistance counseling. Please consult your corporate health plan.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Some employers believe that a drug-free workplace program and drug testing are the same. In fact, drug testing is only one essential component of a drug-free workplace program but should include at a minimum testing of applicants and employees at Pre-employment, Reasonable Suspicion, Post Accident and Return to Work. Random testing should also be included as the only real deterrent of a drug-testing program.

Drug Testing

Drug testing has become an increasingly standard component of many workplace programs. However, before deciding whether or not to include testing as part of their organization's program, each employer should consider a number of factors:

1. Who will be tested? Possibilities include all employees, job applicants and/or employees in safety-sensitive positions.

2. When will tests be conducted? Possibilities include pre-employment, upon reasonable suspicion or for-cause, post-accident, randomly, periodically and post-rehabilitation.

3. Which drugs will be tested for? Possibilities include the five drugs required for testing by many Federal government agencies (marijuana, opiates, amphetamines, cocaine and PCP) or a broader range of substances, including alcohol or prescription drugs.

4. How will tests be conducted? A number of testing modes are available, including urinalysis, saliva tests, hair tests, breath-alcohol tests, sweat patches and blood tests. Many states have laws that dictate the types of testing modes that may and may not be used. All Federal drug-testing programs must conduct tests in accordance with the Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs published by the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration.

5. State and Federal laws. It is essential that employers familiarize themselves with existing local, state and Federal laws that may impact when, where and how drug and alcohol testing is performed. It is strongly recommended that legal counsel be sought prior to implementing any testing program.

Background Bureau offers consistent program management, data capture and quality control through standardized procedures that eliminate worries about compliance and legal challenges. For more information as to how we can help you.

QUESTIONS?

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CALL: (800) 854-3990

Fax(859)781-9540

Email bbi@one.net

OR VISIT US:www.backgroundbureau.com

This article was produced by Sam Paris, C.E.O. of Background Bureau, Inc., with the assistance of Lee Himes, a recognized expert in the drug testing field for over 20 years.