

INSIGHTS

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Investing In A Drug-Free Workplace

ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR DRUG EDUCATION, SUBSTANCE ABUSERS ARE:

- 10 times more likely to miss work
- 3.6 times more likely to be involved in on-the-job accidents and 5 times more likely to injure themselves or another in the process
- 5 times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim
- 33% less productive
- Responsible for healthcare costs that are 3 times as high as those of nonabusers

How much does substance abuse cost your organization? According to a recent study by Johns Hopkins University, the economic burden of substance abuse to the U.S. economy is estimated at \$414 billion each year. "Anything your organization can do to curtail drug usage in the workplace is a sound investment," comments EMC Senior Engineer Jim Stotser, who offers the following advice to policyholders:

Start With A Drug-Free Workplace Policy

"A written policy is the foundation for a drug-free workplace program," advises Stotser. It should state why it is being implemented, give a clear description of prohibited behaviors, explain when drug tests will be given and by whom, and explain the consequences for violating the policy. Jim suggests employers seek legal counsel to review the policy.

Supervisor Training Is A Must

Supervisors serve as a front line for a drug-free workplace by monitoring and documenting employees' performance. "They should be aware of the drug abuse policy and know what steps to follow," adds Stotser.

Employee Education

All employees must sign a document acknowledging their understanding of the policy and their willingness to abide by the terms of the policy. Employee education sessions can also cover general information about addiction and the types of help available for individuals.

Providing Assistance

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are an employee benefit that can be offered in conjunction with health insurance plans. They offer an alternative to dismissals and minimize an employer's legal vulnerability by demonstrating efforts to support employees.

EMC Can Help Maximize Your Investment In A Drug-Free Workplace

EMC loss control specialists can work with you to develop a written policy, identify testing and EAP resources in your community, and provide support with supervisor and employee training. You can find additional information about drug-free workplace programs in the Loss Control section of EMC's website, www.emcins.com.

NEED TO KNOW

PROPER DISPOSAL OF PESTICIDES

"State and local laws regarding pesticide disposal may be stricter than the federal requirements on the label. Be sure to check with your state or local agencies before disposing of your pesticide containers." This is just one of several tips the Environmental Protection Agency offers for the safe disposal of pesticides. For the entire list of tips, visit www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/disposal.htm.

OCCUPATIONAL LEAD EXPOSURE UPDATE

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has redesigned its web page for easier and faster access to pertinent information on how to prevent hazards associated with lead. Workplace lead exposure can occur in a variety of industries and can result in heart disease, kidney disease and impairment of the brain or nervous system. If you have concerns about lead exposure, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/lead/.

FEMA LAUNCHES MOBILE WEBSITE

With mobile devices becoming a crucial lifeline to provide information to survivors after a disaster, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) launched a mobile website for smart phones. Laid out in a question-and-answer format, the site outlines what to do during and after a disaster, where to find assistance and what can be done to help others. Check it out at <http://m.fema.gov/>.

Supervisors Are The Front Line In Spotting Potential Drug Abuse Problems

Because of their day-to-day contact with employees, supervisors are probably the best source of information regarding potential cases of drug abuse in the workplace. However, supervisors must be trained to identify the signs and symptoms of drug abuse, which may be identical to other medical conditions.

The American Council for Drug Education warns that abusers in the workplace can be difficult to identify, but there are some clues that signal possible drug and alcohol problems. These include:

- Frequent, prolonged and often unexplained absences
- Involvement in accidents both on and off the job
- Erratic work patterns and reduced productivity
- Indifference to personal hygiene
- Overreaction to real or imagined criticism
- Such overt physical signs as exhaustion or hyperactivity, dilated pupils, slurred speech or an unsteady walk



The Partnership for a Drug-Free America provides the following clues for specific drugs:

Signs Of Alcohol Intoxication

Slurred speech or difficulty expressing a thought intelligibly, lack of coordination, poor balance, inability to focus eyes, red eyes, flushed face, morning headaches, nausea, weakness, sweatiness, odor of alcohol on breath or in sweat.

Signs Of Marijuana Use

Bloodshot eyes (or bottles of eye drops to clear up red eyes), smell in hair or on clothing (sweet, pungent odor), lip wetting or excessive thirst, burned or sooty fingers.

Signs Of Cocaine Use

Jumpy or nervous behavior, restlessness, excessive talkativeness, rapid speech, dilated pupils (enlarged) in well-lit room, runny or bloody nose (no cold or other illness associated), periods of high energy followed by long sleep or exhaustion.

Signs Of Amphetamine Use

Unusual elation (manic), restlessness, fast speech (possibly incoherent), poor appetite and/or weight loss, hyperactivity, insomnia, periods of sleeplessness followed by long periods of "catch up" sleep, poor attention span.

Signs Of Inhalant Use

Aggressive or hostile behavior, inability to focus, slow movement, slurred speech, seizures, lack of coordination, vomiting.

In addition to being aware of the signs of drug abuse, supervisors must also be aware of your drug abuse policy and what to do when they suspect an employee has a drug problem.



SCHOOLS

Schools Face Lawsuits And Liability For Bullying

When reported incidents of bullying go unheeded and the targeted children and anguished parents see no progress being made by a school to curtail the problems, the growing response is to pursue litigation. Recent court decisions demonstrate the importance of protecting your district from costly legal settlements.

Teachers: Take Care Of Your Voices

More than 60% of early childhood and primary education teachers experience voice problems, according to research from the University of Malaga in Spain. The Voice Academy offers some helpful tips to prevent such problems.



MUNICIPALITIES

Crew Size Impacts Response To Fires

Four-person firefighter crews were able to effectively handle residential firefighting and rescue operations 30% faster than two-person crews and 25% faster than three-person crews, according to controlled fire experiments conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Bloodborne Pathogens And Paramedics

Results of a survey of paramedics showed that 22% of respondents experienced at least one blood exposure in the previous year. Find out what the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention suggest to prevent such exposures.

INSIGHTS ONLINE



Fire Extinguisher Training Is A Four-Letter Word—**PASS**

Fire extinguishers are only valuable if employees are trained in their proper use and handling. The most important part of this training is to instruct employees that if they are ever unsure of their ability to fight a fire, they should call 911 and evacuate the area immediately. Training should also inform employees of specific fire hazards and the locations of extinguishers in the facility, as well as give the employee hands-on experience with the extinguisher.

Hands-On Training Should Describe The **PASS** System Of Fire Extinguisher Use

1. **PULL**

Pull the pin. This will break the tamper seal.

2. **AIM**

Aim low, pointing the extinguisher nozzle (or its horn or hose) at the base of the fire.

3. **SQUEEZE**

Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.

4. **SWEEP**

Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. Watch the area. If the fire reignites, repeat steps 2-4.



On The Job With Jim Stotser



When can you require employees to take a drug test? “As long as it is noted in your drug-free policy, you can typically test at any time,” says EMC Senior Engineer Jim

Stotser, who gives the following most common circumstances under which an organization may require a drug test:

- **Pre-Employment**—Typically takes place after a conditional offer of employment has been made.
- **Reasonable Suspicion**—Conducted when supervisors document observable signs and symptoms leading them to suspect drug use.
- **Post-Accident**—Used to determine whether alcohol and/or drugs were a factor in property damage or personal injury.
- **Random**—Unannounced and unpredictable testing by randomly selecting individuals from a pool of employees.
- **Periodic**—Scheduled in advance and uniformly administered.
- **Return-To-Duty**—One-time, announced test when an employee who has tested positive has completed the required treatment and is ready to return to the workplace.

Federal and state drug testing laws vary, so consult your legal advisor before beginning any drug testing program.



CONTRACTORS

Work Zone Safety Training

According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, each year, nearly 1,000 people lose their lives in highway-construction-zone-related accidents. The Federal Highway Administration recently released a collection of work zone safety training materials and guides to help reduce this number.

Pickups May Be Considered Commercial Vehicles

Learn whether or not your pickup meets the commercial motor vehicle definition. If it does, whoever drives this vehicle must be completely qualified under Part 391 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.



PETROLEUM MARKETERS

Sleep Apnea And Truckers

Truckers are almost five times more likely than the general population to suffer from sleep apnea, according to officials from the National Transportation Safety Board. However, those suffering from sleep apnea can often be treated and then return to work.

Be On The Watch For Payment-Card Skimming

Card skimming has been on the rise during the past year, with most attackers rigging or replacing merchant card readers with their own sniffer devices or ATM machines.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING FOR THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Employers involved in safety-sensitive transportation play a vital role in ensuring the safety of their employees and the traveling public. As such, they are responsible for developing and implementing successful DOT workplace drug and alcohol programs that comply with 49 CFR Part 40 and applicable DOT agency requirements. Download a PDF of the DOT brochure *What Employers Need To Know About DOT Drug and Alcohol Testing* at www.dot.gov/ost/dapc/documents/employerguidelines20100714.pdf.

For complete industry updates, visit www.emcins.com, click **Loss Control** on the homepage and then  **INSIGHTS ONLINE**.



Updated Safety Video Library Helps You Easily Find Training Resources

Updates to EMC's Safety Video Library on www.emcins.com make finding just the right training video easier than ever. A straightforward format and new tools help commercial policyholders search more effectively, know when a video is available, reserve videos up to 12 months in advance, and view order history, favorite videos and more.

To check out the new library, click **Loss Control** on the EMC homepage, and then select **Loss Prevention Information** in the left-hand menu. Click **safety training videos** in the middle of the page to start browsing for videos by category, industry or keyword. Users can also narrow search results by video type (DVD, VHS) and language (English, Spanish, Portuguese).

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Wanted: Your Insights For Our Loss Control Insights

If you have suggestions for articles to appear in EMC's *Loss Control Insights*, we'd like to hear from you. Tell us about the loss control challenges your organization faces. Share your loss control best practices. Send us a question you've been struggling with. Your insights will help make our *Insights* even better. **Send your ideas, suggestions and questions to losscontrol@emcins.com.**

LOSS CONTROL INSIGHTS

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