



5 Minute Safety Talk

Cannabis

Don't let Cannabis compromise safety at your worksite

Cannabis, or marijuana, is the most frequently used illicit drug in the United States. It can have a major impact on the safety of your workers because it affects things like depth perception, reaction time and short term memory, as well as motor skills and increased risk-taking. This can be especially hazardous for anyone driving or operating machinery.

- Car crashes involving cannabis **went up 300%** between 2010 and 2013
- Cannabis is **10 to 40 times stronger** today than the marijuana of the 1960s and '70s
- Cannabis is an **addictive drug**

LEGALIZATION IS CREATING NEW CHALLENGES

Cannabis is still illegal federally. But as some states legalize cannabis, it makes things more complicated for employers. Although cannabis is sometimes used for medical or recreational purposes, it can be very harmful in the workplace. Employees who tested positive for marijuana use were involved in 55% more industrial accidents, 85% more injuries and 75% greater absenteeism compared to those who tested negative.

This can impact your bottom line due to decreased productivity, as well as increased worker compensation and unemployment compensation claims. Employers can expect to spend about \$7,000 per year on an employee who misuses drugs.

WHAT POLICIES SHOULD YOU HAVE IN PLACE?

In 2014, workplace drug testing showed that over 20 million workers used cannabis. That's why having a solid workplace drug policy is so important.

References

National Institute on Drug Abuse, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana>

National Safety Council, <https://www.nsc.org/membership/training-tools/best-practicess/marijuana-at-work>

Quest Diagnostics, <http://newsroom.questdiagnostics.com>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), <https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/toolkit>



Suggested components of a drug-free workplace program include:

- A written policy that clearly defines restrictions on use and possession
- Training for supervisors and management to help them enforce the policy
- Clear communication of the consequences of violating the policy
- Drug testing – this can include Pre-Employment Drug Tests, Random Drug Tests, Reasonable Suspicion Tests and Post-Accident Drug Tests
- Counseling and support for employees who may be dealing with substance misuse or a substance use disorder

By implementing a solid, well-thought-out workplace program, you will be benefiting both your employees and your business. It will help ensure the safety of your workers and your worksite, while it helps protect your bottom line.

CANNABIS CHALLENGES: BE READY FOR THEM.

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