

Safety in the Workplace and Substance Abuse Program Implementation Guidelines

Croft Workplace Drug Programs
(<http://www.croftworkplacedrugtesting.com>)

A comprehensive drug program benefits the workplace by creating a productive and safe environment free of alcohol and drug abuse.

Seventy-five percent of illicit drug users in America are employed either full or part time. No business, regardless of size or location, is immune to the safety and personnel problems caused by substance abuse. Employee drug abuse endangers co-workers and negatively impacts the work environment. Because drug abuse often leads to occupational safety risks and sub-standard productivity, it undermines a company's profitability. To combat the incidence of substance abuse in the workplace, a company should adopt a comprehensive workplace drug program and testing policy.

As with any personnel policy and practice, it is essential that a workplace drug program be constructed upon the foundation of a written policy which is distributed to all employees. A substance abuse policy is essential for communicating the intent and rules of the program to everyone involved. It should stipulate that illegal drug use, including the misuse of prescription medications, will not be tolerated in the workplace and that policy violations will result in adverse personnel action.

It is important to note that the following only describes the type of testing that is often included in a drug/alcohol policy and that there are many other aspects of a policy that must be considered.

Types of Testing:

Pre-employment-

Pre-employment testing is conducted to prevent hiring individuals who illegally use drugs. This testing typically takes place after a conditional offer of employment has been made. Applicants agree to be tested as a condition of employment and are not hired if they fail to produce a negative test. Pre-employment tests should be administered on all applicant finalists for all positions.

Random-

Random testing is believed to have the greatest deterrent effect on substance abuse in the workplace since no one is sure when s/he will be tested. In California, there are specific legal considerations for random testing which must be carefully considered during policy development. If random testing is implemented, it should be conducted on a periodic and unannounced basis. Employees' names or identifying data are placed in a testing pool from which a scientifically random selection is made. Every employee in the pool has an equal chance of being chosen for testing every time a random selection is drawn. It is best to have the selection be computer generated and managed by an independent agency. This protects the company from any challenge of bias by the employee

and ensures that the employer has no direct input into who is selected for random testing or when an individual or a site is selected for testing.

Post Accident-

Testing following an accident can help determine whether drugs and/or alcohol were a factor. It is important to establish objective and documented criteria that will trigger a post-accident test.

Reasonable Suspicion-

Reasonable suspicion testing is conducted when **trained supervisors** observe signs or symptoms that lead them to believe that an Employee may pose a danger to her/himself, the public, or other employees.

Return-to-Work-

Return-to-work tests are administered to employees who test positive for drugs or alcohol prior to their return to the workplace.

Mandatory Follow-Up

Mandatory follow-up testing occurs upon an employee's return to work. Most company policies written by Croft Consultants establish a minimum of one year for the follow-up period.

Careful planning and development must go into the writing of a drug policy. It must be written to encompass all aspects of a company's workplace drug program in addition to specifying the types of tests we have described here. If your company is in need of a drug/alcohol program, policy or policy revision, Croft Workplace Drug Programs would like to help. You may contact Tom Ellis at: (480) 496-9116 or at: tomellis@qwest.net any time.