



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 4 – January 25 - January 29, 2021

### *Substance Abuse in the Workplace*

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#### **Introduction**

Substance abuse can have a devastating impact on a person's life including in their workplace. Misuse of drugs or alcohol among US workers create costly medical, social and other problems that affect both employees and employers. Substance abuse by employees threatens not only the safety of the employee but the safety of their colleagues as well. This week we are going to dive into the issues that arise due to substance abuse, contributing factors to substance abuse and lastly prevention methods for deterring substance abuse issues in your workplace.

#### **Monday- Problems in the Workplace**

An untreated substance abuse problem can have devastating effects not only in a person's personal life, but it can also have far reaching affects in a person's workplace performance and safety. Today we will look at some of the issues that can arise in the workplace as a result of substance abuse.

- Tardiness or sleeping on the job
- Hangovers/aftereffects adversely affecting job performance
- Poor decision making
- Lower morale in the workplace
- Higher likelihood of disciplinary issues
- Higher turnover
- Increased safety risks

#### **Tuesday – Measuring the Costs**

Today we will look at some of the costs associated with substance abuse in the workplace. When we discuss costs today, we are not only speaking of monetary costs but also emotional and mental costs as well. Here are a few of the "costs" associated with substance abuse.

- Higher absenteeism resulting in lower productivity
- Increased injury rate and increased severity of injuries
- Higher number of health insurance claims
- Lower employee moral

#### **Wednesday – Contributing Factors**

Now that we've looked at some of the problems and costs associated with substance abuse, let's look at what factors can contribute to increased substance abuse affecting the workplace.

- Workplace culture and acceptance of substance abuse
- Workplace alienation, not feeling included
- Availability of drugs and alcohol
- Lack of existence or enforcement of workplace substance abuse policies

#### **Thursday – Prevention**

So far this week, we've covered a general overview of the negative aspects of substance abuse in the workplace. Now let's look forward at ways employers and employees can promote a healthy work environment by implementing preventative measures to substance abuse.

- First and foremost establish, communicate and enforce a clear policy in the workplace that discourages substance abuse.



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- Train leaders and employees to recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in their teams and provide guidance on next steps.
- Provide information on resources available to aid those that are battling with substance abuse so they can get the appropriate help needed.

#### **Friday – Open Discussion**

This week we've discussed the effects, costs, contributing factors and preventative measures associated with substance abuse in the workplace. Now let's open it up to the group to discuss your experiences.

- Have you ever experienced a substance abuse related issue in your workplace?
- What happened and how was it resolved? Was it resolved?
- Does your company have a substance abuse policy? Are you aware of what the policies are?