

Hooch, Highs, Horse: Cultural Impacts on Your Safety Culture

An Overview of Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs

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Hello!

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Disclaimer: For Educational Purposes Only

Who We Are:

- Drug & Alcohol Testing Provider
- Third Party Administrator
- Drug Testing Industry Training & Consulting
- Community Partner in Safety and Substance Abuse Prevention

Who We Are Not:

- Attorney
- Laboratory
- Medical Provider
- Clinical Scientist



Session Overview

How evolving legal and illicit substance use affects workplace safety culture

Current trends: marijuana, synthetic drugs, alcohol, opioids, and polysubstance use

Myths vs. realities in employee impairment and testing

Employer strategies to protect people, productivity, and compliance



– Why This Matters in 2026

Expanded legalization and normalization of marijuana create policy complexity

Opioids, stimulants, and synthetic substances continue to impact workforce safety

Remote work, stress, and mental health trends may increase substance misuse risks

Safety-sensitive industries face heightened liability, regulatory, and operational exposure



Discussion Questions

What emerging substances concern your industry most?

How current is your testing policy?

Are supervisors prepared to recognize and respond to impairment?

What steps can strengthen your safety culture today?

America's Workplace is in Jeopardy

- What are the top 3 substances of concern in your geographic area and/or workplace?



Business Risks to Safety Culture

Increased accidents, injuries, and near misses

Reduced productivity, morale, and employee retention

Higher insurance costs and workers' compensation claims

Regulatory penalties and legal exposure

Damage to organizational trust and reputation

Drug & alcohol testing is a safety program just like any other safety program at work.





– Substance Use Trends: What's Changing?

Marijuana potency, product variety, and off-duty use continue rising

Synthetic cannabinoids and designer drugs remain unpredictable threats

Alcohol misuse remains a major contributor to incidents and absenteeism

Prescription misuse and illicit opioids continue affecting worker performance

Myth: Legal means safe for work

Reality: Impairment can still jeopardize safety and compliance

Hooch



Workplace Impact

- Most widely used substance
- One in five workers report they have had to work harder, redo work, cover for a co-worker, been put in danger, or have been injured as a result of alcohol abuse in the workplace
- Surveys indicate 7-34% of U.S. workers admit to drinking alcohol while at work



One mixed drink
with **1.5 fl oz** of
80-proof liquor

5 fl oz of wine

12 fl oz of
beer or wine
cooler



Accumulation and Dissipation

For an **average male** of 170 lbs, each drink consumed within an hour will increase his blood alcohol concentration by an average of .01-.02



Accumulation and Dissipation

- Evaporation (perspiration), excretion (urination), metabolism
- Rule of Thumb—one drink/one hour
- Time is the only proven method of eliminating alcohol



Highs





Safety Concerns for Employers from Marijuana Use

- Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome – daily users
- Impaired Depth Perception
- Marijuana Use Disorder – CDC estimates 3 in 10
- Lower Inhibitions
- Problems With Memory and Cognitive Function

Some concerns from: <https://summitmalibu.com/blog/10-negative-weed-side-effects-of-marijuana-use/> ;

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/marijuana-addictive> ; <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/marijuana-use-and-its-effects#1>



Cannabis: Inhaling vs Ingesting

Ingesting

- THC to stomach, then liver, then blood, then brain
- Effects within 30 minutes to 2 hours
- Full effects can peak within 4 hours
- Effects can last up to 12 hours with residual up to 24 hours





Synthesized THC

COMPARED TO DELTA-9 THC:

- **DELTA-8 THC** – 50-65% as potent – tiny amount in cannabis
- **DELTA-10 THC** – 50% as potent - lab created
- **THCA - Tetrahydrocannabinolic acid** – precursor to THC – can be heated to convert to THC
- **THCm** - Tetrahydrocannabinol Monomethylether



– Marijuana Trends for Employers

Employers are facing several challenges:

- Lack of clear direction from government authorities on recent regulatory changes (recreational and medicinal)
- Growing public use and acceptance of marijuana impacts availability of “clean” employees
- Growing fear of being able to maintain a safe workplace while also attracting / retaining required staff
- Ambiguity between CBD and THC

Horse





Opiates & Opioids

Opiates

Codeine, morphine, heroin

Opioids

Hydrocodone, oxycodone,
hydromorphone, oxymorphone





Effects of Opioid Use

- Decrease in critical thinking skills
- Drowsiness followed by sleep
- Depression and apathy
- Decreased physical activity
- Drug craving



Signs & Symptoms of Opioid Use

- Reduced productivity
- Pinpoint pupils
- Slow reactions
- Loss of sense of time and space
- Convulsions
- Poppy Seed Products?





Prescription Drugs

- Make yourself aware of RX drugs of abuse
- Company's reporting policy for RX i.e. fitness for duty statement from employee's doctor
- See RX section of your company's policy





Kratom

- Herbal extract that comes from the leaves of an evergreen tree (*Mitragyna speciosa*) grown in Southeast Asia
- Known side effects include weight loss, dry mouth, chills, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, constipation, liver damage, muscle tremors, hallucinations





Building a Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy

Define organizational goals and safety priorities

Establish clear prohibited behaviors and impairment expectations

Include pre-employment, random, post-incident, and reasonable suspicion testing

Ensure confidentiality and fair enforcement

Review policy with legal counsel for state/federal compliance

Communicate consistently to all employees



– Testing Methodology Options

Urine testing: common, broad detection window

Oral fluid testing: recent use, less invasive

Hair testing: longer-term patterns

Breath alcohol testing: immediate alcohol impairment

Consider accuracy, cost, privacy, and legal defensibility

Align methodology with job risk profiles



Compliance Responsibilities

- Follow applicable federal standards (e.g., DOT, OSHA, ADA)
- Monitor evolving state marijuana and employment laws
- Maintain proper documentation and chain-of-custody procedures
- Apply policies consistently to reduce discrimination risk
- Update programs regularly as laws and technologies change



Training Requirements

Supervisor training on recognizing impairment indicators

Employee education on policy, resources, and consequences

Reasonable suspicion documentation protocols

Access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Regular refreshers to sustain awareness and culture

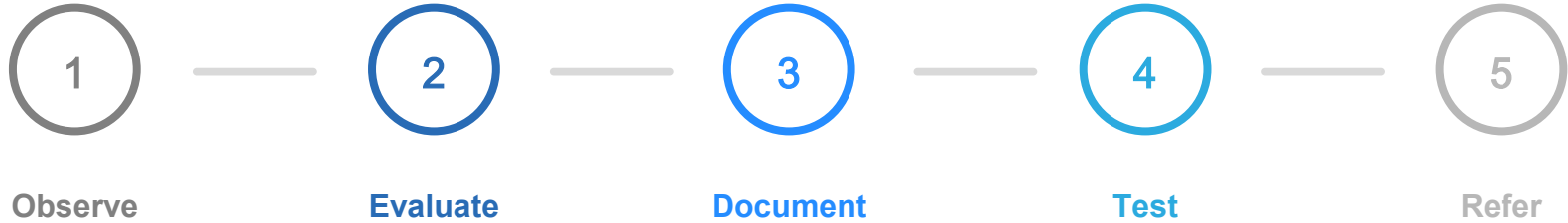


WHAT IS REASONABLE SUSPICION?

If an employer has reason to believe, through **observation**, an employee's **appearance**, **behavior** and/or **conduct** indicates the **possible use of alcohol or drugs**, then the employer should proceed with a Reasonable Suspicion Drug and/or Alcohol Test.



Reasonable Suspicion: Step-By-Step



* Refer to your Reasonable Suspicion Checklist handouts



Alcohol **Testing** Criteria



Specific



Contemporaneous



Articulate



– **Benefits of a Drug-Free Workplace**

Safer operations and reduced incident rates

Improved productivity and workforce reliability

Lower liability and insurance costs

Stronger employee wellbeing and support systems

Enhanced public trust and organizational resilience



Key Takeaways

Substance use trends are evolving rapidly and require proactive leadership
Effective policy combines prevention, testing, training, and compliance
Safety culture depends on clarity, fairness, and accountability
Protecting your workforce protects your business



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SPEAK UP for **Safety**

Speak up when you have questions or concerns

Pay attention to your surroundings

Educate yourself on drug and alcohol use and misuse

Ask, there are no stupid questions

Know your company policy

Use your rights to a safe workplace, report safety violations

Participate in all decisions that affect employee safety

Questions?



For further information about Tomo training or testing services, please contact us at the following:

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