

## **ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION SHEET<sup>1</sup>**

### **DID YOU KNOW:**

- The estimated expense to society of opioid addiction nears \$20 billion annually, yet the cost of treating an addicted individual is only \$4000 a year. If every opioid-dependent person in the United States received treatment, \$16 billion would be saved each year.
- More than 70 percent of substance abusers hold jobs; one worker in four, ages 18 to 34, used drugs in the past year; and one worker in three knows of drug sales in the workplace.
- Americans consume 60 percent of the world's production of illegal drugs: 23 million use marijuana at least four times a week; 18 million abuse alcohol; 6 million regularly use cocaine; and 2 million use heroin.
- Substance abusers don't have to indulge on the job to have a negative impact on the workplace. Compared to their non-abusing coworkers, they are:
  - ten times more likely to miss work
  - 3.6 times more likely to be involved in on-the-job accidents
  - five times more likely to file a worker's compensation claim
  - 33 percent less productive
  - responsible for health care costs that are three times as high

### **SEVEN POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

The seven points listed below are steps that should be followed when implementing and maintaining a drug- and alcohol-free workplace program.

1. Keep written records that objectively document suspect employee performance. These can be used as a basis for referral for testing.
2. Know your employees. Become familiar with each one's skills, abilities, and normal performance and personality.
3. Become familiar with common symptoms of drug use.
4. Document job performance regularly, objectively, and consistently for all employees.
5. Take action whenever job performance fails, regardless of whether drug or alcohol use is suspected.
6. Know the exact steps to be taken when an employee has a problem and is ready to go for help.
7. Communicate immediately with your supervisor when you suspect a problem, and have a witness to your action when confronting an employee.

### **ELEVEN MISTAKES TO AVOID:**

Here are some things to avoid when implementing and maintaining a drug- and alcohol-free workplace program:

1. Don't misuse the drug prevention program to discipline employees for problems not related to the program.
2. Don't single out any employee or group of employees for scrutiny under the company's policy. Too much attention to any one group could leave the company/organization liable for charges of discrimination. Be consistent with all employee groups or classes.
3. Don't confront a suspected drug dealer alone. Always have a witness to your actions. Consult local law enforcement for advice or assistance in these cases.
4. Don't assume anyone in your organization is immune to the problem of drug and alcohol abuse.
5. Don't implement a verbal policy. An effective policy must be written, circulated, and acknowledged (in writing) by employees.
6. Don't treat employees who test positive differently. All employees who test positive must be treated consistently to maintain the integrity of the program.
7. Don't take action against employees based on the positive results of a drug screen only. Always obtain the results of a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) confirmation before taking action.
8. Don't offer rehabilitation selectively.
9. Don't address drug abuse without including alcohol abuse in the policy.
10. Don't implement a policy and program unilaterally if you have a unionized workforce. The National Labor Relations Act requires that working terms and conditions be included in your bargaining agreement, and a drug program falls into that requirement.
11. Don't forget that the majority of the nation's workforce is drug-free and does not abuse alcohol. They support you in your efforts to rid your company, neighborhood, and ultimately your nation of the menace of drug and alcohol abuse.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dea.gov/demand/dfmanual/>