

An Ounce of Prevention...



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Drug Abuse in the Workplace

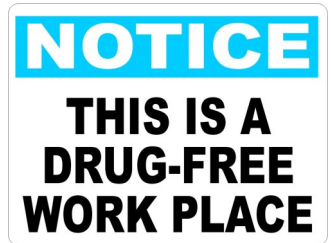
The issue of drug abuse affects the workplace in a myriad of ways including risks to workers, damage to morale, harm to public image, decrease in productivity, and even loss of profits. According to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Tennessee businesses lost an estimated \$155.2 million to absenteeism and diminished work productivity due to prescription drug abuse in 2013.¹

Of even greater concern is that drug abuse in the workplace is not an isolated issue, relegated to a small group of unfortunate souls. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that “68.9% of estimated 22.4 million illicit drug users, ages 18 or older are employed full or part time.”² In addition, “the same survey found that most binge drinkers and heavy alcohol users are also employed. Of adult binge drinkers, 79.3% (41.2 million) are employed either full or part time. Of adult heavy drinkers 76.1% (12.4 million people) are employed.”³

Employees with substance abuse issues may have difficulty with absenteeism and loss of productivity because they are unable to control or mitigate their drug use. In addition, they may suffer from extreme mood swings, paranoia, noticeable exhaustion, or erratic behavior.

According to the website drugabuse.com, “if you suspect someone in your workplace is using illegal substance [or legal substances excessively], you need to tell a supervisor as soon as possible. This can either be a manager, a member of the security team or human resources officer.”⁴ Withholding information can be a deadly mistake. You may think that you are protecting a co-worker’s job but you may also inadvertently put other co-workers at risk of injury. Reporting suspicions can also be a way of prompting an addict to seek treatment.

1. Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Prescription For Success-Statewide Strategies to Prevent and Treat The Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic in Tennessee. 2014.
- 2.3 Substance Use and Mental Health Estimates from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Overview of Findings. SAMSHA.gov <http://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/toolkit/assess-Workplace>
- 4 What to Do if You Suspect Someone is Using Illegal Substances. <http://drugabuse.com/library/workplace-drug-abuse/#how-to-know-if-someone-is-abusing-drugs>.



It Only Makes Sense.

Tennessee REDLINE
 Help for Substance Abuse
1-800-889-9789



Drop Box Locations: Smith County Sheriff’s Office & Carthage City Police Department

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