REASONABLE SUSPICION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

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Disclaimer

This presentation is intended to be informative only; Please contact your Human Resources/Personnel Department for information on your agencies drug/alcohol policy/program. This training DOES NOT constitute legal advice and does not provide any assurance of compliance with the many facets of applicable law.
Goals

• Identify signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol abuse
• Recognize reasonable cause situations
• Understand proper documentation
• Develop procedures for testing
What is Reasonable Suspicion?

“Reasonable suspicion means that the employer has a legitimate reason, based on logic and facts, to believe that the employee has been taking drugs [or consuming alcohol], and isn't just guessing, speculating, listening to hearsay or discriminating against them. [However] it’s not that simple either, Reasonable suspicion can be different in different circumstances.”

Facts about Alcohol

• Alcoholism causes 500 million lost work days a year

• Workers with alcohol problems were 2.7 times more likely than workers without drinking problems to have injury-related absences

• A hospital emergency department study showed that 35 percent of patients with an occupational injury were at-risk drinkers

http://www.about-alcohol-abuse.com/Alcohol_Abuse_Statistics.html
Facts

• Large federal surveys show that 24% of workers report drinking during the workday at least once in the past year

• One-fifth of workers and managers across a wide range of industries and company sizes report that a coworker’s on- or off-the-job drinking jeopardized their own productivity and safety

Facts

• Breathalyzer tests detected alcohol in 16% of emergency room patients injured at work

• Analyses of workplace fatalities showed that at least 11% of the victims had been drinking

Alcohol

Ethanol (Ethyl- Alcohol)

Methods of consumption

• Consumption of liquid
• Inhalation through vaporizing

Alcohol

Affects the central nervous system and brain. This can lead to:

- Loss of inhibitions
- Feeling more relaxed
- Aggressive behavior
Alcohol Indicators

- Hangovers
- Drinking on lunch or breaks
- Unexcused absences
- Tardiness
- Increased procrastination
- Inconsistant dress habits
- Personality changes
- Paranoia
- Argumentative
Alcohol Indicators

- Coworker complaints
- Change in weight
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Slow reaction time
- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Odor of alcohol on breath
Alcohol: Long Term Effects

Alcohol use can lead to:

- Cirrhosis of the liver, some forms of cancer, pancreatitis
- Depression - Alcohol abuse can make someone 4 times more likely to suffer from depression


“Reasonable Suspicion” presentation by RETTEW, 8/26/16
Hazards of Alcohol Use in the Workplace

• Alcohol impairs thinking, judgement and coordination; it can render employee unable to perform job duties.
• Alcohol can increase the likelihood of accidents including falls, breaking equipment, motor vehicle accidents and cuts.
• Abuse can lead to additional hazards to other employees from irrational and reckless behavior.
Workplace Drug Abuser Statistics

Individuals who abuse drugs are:

• 5 times more likely to quit without notice
• 5 times more likely to be involved in a job accident
• 6.6 times more likely to file a workers’ comp claim
• 7 times more likely to be involved in a job death
• 10 times more likely to be involved in employee theft

“Reasonable Suspicion” presentation by RETTEW, 8/26/16
Drug Abuse Facts

• 42% of American’s entering the work force between ages 20 - 40 have used illicit drugs in the past year.

• 33% of employed Americans aged 20 – 40 have used illicit drugs within the last year. 20% in the last month.

• Drug abuse costs $165 billion a year in lost productivity

“Reasonable Suspicion” presentation by RETTEW, 8/26/16
Drug Abuse Indicators

- Pattern of decreased efficiency
- Unexcused absences
- Tardiness
- Increased procrastination
- Judgement errors
- Daydreaming
- Avoidance of supervisors/ employees
- Failure to take safety precautions
- Personality changes
- Paranoia
- Illogical mistakes
- Blaming others
MARIJUANA

Methods of consumption:

- Inhalation through smoking
- Consumed through baked goods
- Brewed in tea

- Spice/K2: synthetic marijuana
  - Side effects include: convulsions, kidney injury, toxicity to the heart, strokes

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Signs of Marijuana use:

- Red Eyes
- Drowsiness
- “Goofiness”
- Increased Appetite
- Time distortion
- Balance, coordination and reflex impairment
Stimulants

- Amphetamines: Speed, Pep Pills
- Methamphetamine: Meth, Crystal Meth
- Cocaine
- Crack Cocaine
- Ecstasy

Methods of consumption:
- Inhaling through nose
- Smoking
- Injecting
- Swallowing
Effects of Stimulants

- Induce feelings of euphoria by increasing dopamine in the brain
- Increase blood pressure, constrict blood vessels, increase blood glucose, and open up breathing passages

Note: Stimulants historically were used to treat asthma and other respiratory problems, obesity, neurological disorders, and a variety of other ailments
Stimulant Indicators

• Sweating
• Blurred vision
• Anxiety
• Tremors
• Paranoia
• Messy appearance
• Weight loss
• Loss of coordination
• Runny nose
• Physical collapse
• Rapid/Irregular heartbeat
• Aggressive behavior
• Headache
• Dizziness
OPIATES

Opiates (Narcotics)

• Opium
• Codeine
• Morphine
• Heroin
• Propoxyphene
• Methadone
• Fentanyl
• Carfentanil

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/05/02/fentanyl-carfentanil_n_16397030.html
Opiates

- Fentanyl – 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine
- Carfentanil – 10,000 times stronger than morphine

Governor Hogan has declared a state of emergency in response to Maryland’s opioid addiction crisis

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/hogan-declares-opioid-state-of-emergency/2017/03/01/5c22fcfa-fe2f-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html
https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/fentanyl
Effects of Opiates

• Depress the central nervous system, slow down body functioning, and reduce physical and psychological pain

• Leave the user prone to addiction/withdrawal

• Effect the body faster when injected or snorted than when ingested

Note: Opiates are created from the flower of the opium poppy
Opiate Indicators

- Mood swings
- Depression
- Impaired alertness
- Fatigue/Drowsiness
- Constricted pupils
- Flu-like symptoms
- Difficulty breathing
- Decreased pain sensitivity
Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Gather information on employee behavior and job performance deviation to assess reasonable suspicion

- Pay attention to warning signs in safety and performance
- Enforce standards
- Hold employees accountable for their actions
- Do not ignore signs of substance abuse
- Document job performance issues
- Document violations of company written drug/alcohol policy
- Document if drug/alcohol abuse is suspected in an accident
Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Get the Facts:

- Deal with employee problems from a factual standpoint
- Communicate honestly and directly
- Do not respond emotionally
- Never accuse someone of drug or alcohol abuse
- Stick to the facts
Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Know your company policy:

• Be aware of company policies on drug and alcohol use
• Be prepared to follow through with any consequences of violations of those policies
• Understand your Employee Assistance Benefits program
Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Confidentiality:

• Breach of confidentiality may lead to litigation against the company and you

• Do not talk to anyone other than those authorized by company policy regarding an employee who is abusing drugs or alcohol
Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Be part of the solution!

• Know how to act effectively
• Focus on workplace issues of safety and performance
• Understand that we are not medical professionals
Documentation

- Tardiness
- Absenteeism
- Incidents
- Accidents
- Arguments
- Mood swings
- Violations of company policies
- Long breaks
Procedures for testing

- Isolate and inform employee
- Review findings
- Transport employee
- Document the events
- Return employee to job
QUESTIONS
Contact Us for Assistance

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Also visit our Safety University for free safety, health and wellness information, www.ceiwc.com/safetyuniversity.