



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

COMMERCIAL SECURITY NETWORK

SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

The fact that some people use substances such as alcohol or illicit drugs, or that some people misuse prescription drugs is not new. The awareness that the abuse of substances may affect the workplace just as the workplace may affect substance abuse is, however, increasing in acceptance. Many aspects of the workplace today require alertness, and accurate and quick reflexes. An impairment to these qualities can cause serious accidents, and interfere with the accuracy and efficiency of work. Other ways that substance abuse can cause problems at work include:

- After-effects of substance use (hangover, withdrawal) affecting job performance
- Absenteeism, illness, and/or reduced productivity
- Preoccupation with obtaining and using substances while at work, interfering with attention and concentration
- Illegal activities at work including selling illicit drugs to other employees,
- Psychological or stress-related effects due to substance abuse by a family member, friend or co-worker that affects another person's job performance.



CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	GENERAL EFFECTS
Alcohol	Beer—Wine—Spirits	Impaired judgment, slowed reflexes, impaired motor function, sleepiness or drowsiness
Cannabis	Marijuana—Hashish	Distorted sense of time, impaired memory, impaired coordination
Depressants	Sleeping medications— Sedatives— Tranquilizers	Inattention, slowed reflexes, depression, impaired balance, drowsiness
Hallucinogens	LSD—PCP— Mescaline	Inattention, sensory illusions, hallucinations, disorientation, psychosis
Opiates	Heroin—Morphine— Prescription Medications	Loss of interest, “nodding”, overdose can be fatal
Stimulants	Cocaine— Amphetamines	Elevated mood, over activity, tension/ anxiety, rapid heartbeat,

WHAT ARE THE COSTS TO BUSINESS?

The economic impacts of substance abuse to businesses or industry have been traditionally difficult to measure. Many costs are hidden by general absenteeism or illnesses, "unnoticed" lack of productivity, or inability or reluctance to link substance abuse directly with causes of accidents. The largest costs for any business are:

- Productivity losses
- Direct health care
- Injuries/accident rates
- Absenteeism/extra sick leave
- Loss of production
- Tardiness/sleeping on the job
- Theft
- Poor decision making
- Loss of efficiency
- Lower morale of co-workers
- Increased likelihood of having trouble with co-workers/supervisors or tasks
- Higher turnover
- Training of new employees
- Disciplinary procedures
- Drug testing programs
- Medical/rehabilitation/employee assistance programs

POTENTIAL SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE

- **Marijuana:** Glassy, red eyes; loud talking and inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness; a sweet burnt scent; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss.
- **Alcohol:** Clumsiness; difficulty walking; slurred speech; sleepiness; poor judgment; dilated pupils.
- **Cocaine, Crack, Meth, and Other Stimulants:** Hyperactivity; euphoria; irritability; anxiety; excessive talking followed by depression or excessive sleeping at odd times; go long periods of time without eating or sleeping; dilated pupils; weight loss; dry mouth and nose.
- **Heroin:** Needle marks; sleeping at unusual times; sweating; vomiting; coughing and sniffing; twitching; loss of appetite; contracted pupils; no response of pupils to light.
- **Depressants:** (including barbiturates and tranquilizers) Seems drunk as if from alcohol but without the associated odor of alcohol; difficulty concentrating; clumsiness; poor judgment; slurred speech; sleepiness; and contracted pupils.
- **Inhalants:** (Glues, aerosols, and vapors) Watery eyes; impaired vision, memory and thought; secretions from the nose or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; drowsiness; poor muscle control; anxiety; irritability
- **Hallucinogens:** Dilated pupils; bizarre and irrational behavior including paranoia, aggression, hallucinations; mood swings; detachment from people; absorption with self or other objects, slurred speech; confusion.

WHAT ELEMENTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

- Statement of the purpose and objectives of the program
- Definition of substance abuse
- Statement of who is covered by the policy and/or program statement of the employee's rights to confidentiality
- That arrangements have been made for employee education (e.g., a substance-free awareness program)
- That arrangements have been made for training employees, supervisors, and others in identifying impaired behavior and substance abuse.
- Outline of how to deal with impaired workers
- If necessary, statement of under what circumstances drug or alcohol testing will be conducted
- Provisions for disciplinary action