



Alcohol and the Job: A Safety Issue

OSHA does not have any specific regulations for alcohol and drug abuse at the workplace, but instead relies on other agencies, like the Department of Transportation, Alcohol Abuse Regulation, or the employer, to determine the alcohol policy for each company. The general duty clause of the OSHA act requires that all employers maintain a safe work environment for their employees. This includes the hazards presented by alcohol and drug abuse at the workplace. According to OSHA, 10 - 20% of U.S. workers who die on the job test positive for alcohol or drugs.

Alcohol abuse also costs the workplace socially and economically. Use of excessive alcohol can contribute to social problems as well as affect health and cause weight gain. Poor job performance, accidents, injuries, and disability resulting from alcohol and drug use cost billions of dollars around the world each year. Employers' alcohol policies for the workplace can improve workers' health, safety, and productivity.



Actions to Reduce Drug or Alcohol Abuse at the Workplace:

- Have an alcohol and drug policy in place for your company employees as well as contractors. Implement and conduct a drug and alcohol testing program.
- Encourage employees to be concerned about the safe environment at the workplace. If an employee is seeking help, always support him/her.
- Implement and use an employee assistance program.
- Observe employee work performance and behavior (smell of alcohol, mood change, sleeping on work time, bloodshot eyes).
- Report bad or risky behaviors to a supervisor.
- Document negative changes.
- Take necessary corrective action.
- If there is a violation, take disciplinary actions as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.

Work Site Review: Hazards/Safety Suggestions

Company Name: _____ Work Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employee Signatures: (continue on back of sheet if necessary)

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

Manager/Supervisor's Signature: _____

Disclaimer: The information and suggestions contained in these safety talks are believed to be reliable. However, the authors of the topics and the owners of this web site accept no legal responsibility for the correctness, sufficiency, or completeness of such information or suggestions contained within these topics. These guidelines do not super cede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations



Complacency

Complacency is the feeling of being satisfied with the way everything is at work or home and having no desire to improve. Complacency may also involve being unaware of potential dangers or defects and simply being happy with existing conditions. Usually, a secure job with a good salary and a comfortable workplace puts employees into a state of complacency. It is a false sense of security, which can result in poor training, unfocused work, failure to follow safety guidelines, and all-around inadequate work practices. This can lead to critical errors or accidents and injuries.

Complacency at work can also be the result of performing tasks continually, taking short cuts, or focusing on production without consideration of safety rules. By conducting safety assessments, training, toolbox talks, encouraging employees to inspect equipment before use, reporting unsafe conditions, and educating employees on safety requirements and safe work procedures employers can help eliminate or reduce workplace accidents and increase productivity of the company.



Ways to Avoid Complacency:

- Highlight the risks of becoming complacent.
- Rotate employees who have overly repetitive jobs.
- Always have safety meetings to remind employees of the hazards associated with their tasks.
- Encourage employees to be fully focused on their work.
- Create and implement positive safety habits at the workplace.
- Correct poor performance.
- Do not ignore the problem.
- Reward employees for creative suggestions.
- Match employees to jobs.
 - If the staff is not suitable for a specific task, performance will not reach its fullest potential.
- Ask customers for feedback.
- Manage the workloads of employees.
- Provide training and continuous education for employees.
- Encourage employees to share ideas for improving their jobs.

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Defensive Driving

Everybody shares and uses roads together. It is the responsibility of all road users to be safe drivers and avoid accidents. Defensive driving entails making safe and legal driving decisions to drive safely and avoid accidents that could affect your safety and that of other drivers. Knowing how to drive defensively can save time and money. It involves practicing courtesy and cooperating with others to avoid hazardous driving conditions (i.e. driving slower in bad weather, being patient with other drivers, and not driving above speed limit).



Defensive Driving Practices:

- Obey traffic rules, right-of-way, signaling, stop signs, and yielding.
- Be well rested before driving, especially if you must drive long distances.
- Always use a seat belt.
- Do not take other drivers' actions personally.
- Reduce you stress by planning your route ahead.
- Be patient and courteous towards other drivers.
- Be aware of other drivers on the road.
- Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you.
- Respect other drivers on the road.
- Do not overreact to aggressive drivers.
- Check outside, inside, and under the vehicle to make sure all parts are properly maintained.
- Do not text or talk on the cell phone when driving.
- Reduce your speed in work zones or school zones.
- Know the speed limit, and adjust your speed based on the road conditions.
- Increase speed limit if passing other vehicles – use turn signals.
- Remember, impulsive behavior and careless driving can cause dangerous accidents.

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Emergency Exits

Emergency exit doors depend on the size and number of employees at the workplace. The building code requirement for a workplace is bigger than residential house, so workplaces must have at least two emergency exits. Emergency exits routes should not be close to each other. They must be permanent and large enough to evacuate the people in the building. Exits must lead the people outside or to a street or open space with access to outside. This cannot be blocked, it must have an emergency exit sign, and it must always be open. Workplaces, industrial buildings, and schools must have fire drills to practice using emergency exits. Emergency exit routes must have fire resistance materials according to the size of the building.

OSHA's safety standard requires all workplaces have a written Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and training system. The EAP should include procedures for reporting emergencies, evacuation, alarm system, and names of the employees involved in the evacuation procedure. All employees should be educated and trained for emergency evacuation at the workplace.



Emergency Exits:

Should not be less than 28 inches wide. Must have adequate light.

Must not be blocked or cluttered with materials and equipment.

Must have a visible exit sign.

There must also be a sign along the exit path indicating the direction for discharge.

Must be maintained during constructions, repairs, or renovation.

Doors must be self-closing and made of fire-resistant material.

Routes must be a permanent part of the building.

In Addition:

- Employees with special needs must be identified, as they may need help exiting the building.
- Employees must be trained and educated on emergency evacuation procedures.

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