

For an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace

Drug-free workplace programs generally include all or some of the five components described below. Although programs can be effective without all five components, it is recommended that all be explored when developing a drug-free workplace program. Employers and employees should work together to examine each component and design a balanced, fair program suited to the unique needs and challenges of their workplaces.

1. Written Policy – Serves as the foundation for a drug-free workplace. Effective policies clearly state why the policy is being implemented, describe prohibited behaviors and explain the consequences of violations. It is essential that the policy be shared and understood by all and consistently applied.

2. Employee Education – Provides employees with information they need to adhere to and benefit from the drug-free workplace program. Effective education informs employees about the nature of addiction; its effect on work performance, health and personal life; and help available for those with problems.

3. Supervisor Training – Teaches supervisors, managers and foremen to enforce the policy and helps them recognize and deal with employees who have performance problems stemming from substance abuse. Supervisors must not, however, be expected to diagnose or provide counseling.

4. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Offers free confidential services to help all employees—including supervisors, managers and foremen—resolve personal and workplace problems—such as alcohol and drug abuse—that can interfere with job performance. EAPs provide workers, and often their family members, with assessment, short-term counseling and referrals to treatment or other community resources. They may also provide training, education and consultation on a variety of topics, such as how to handle difficult co-workers/employees.

5. Drug Testing – Provides concrete evidence for intervention and/or disciplinary action. Drug testing policies must clearly stipulate who will be tested, when tests will be conducted, which drugs will be tested for, how tests will be conducted and the consequences of a positive test. Legal counsel should be sought before starting a drug testing program. Local, state and federal laws, as well as collective bargaining agreements, may impact when, where and how testing is performed.

For more information about implementing the steps a drug-free workplace program, use the Drug-Free Workplace Advisor available at www.dol.gov/workingpartners

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