

*Southern California Trade Contractors Association, Inc.*

# SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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## DRUG TESTING



## Southern California Trade Contractors Association, Inc

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According to OSHA, the vast majority of drug users are employed and when they arrive for work, they do not leave their problems at home. Of the 17.2 million illicit drug users aged 18 or older in 2005, 12.9 million (74%) were employed either full or part time. Research indicates that between 10 and 20 percent of the nation's workers who die on the job test positive for alcohol or other drugs. Industries with the highest rates of drug use are the same as those at a high risk for occupational injuries, such as construction.

Impairment by drug or alcohol use can constitute an avoidable workplace hazard. Drug-free workplace programs can help improve employee safety and health and add value to American businesses.

A comprehensive drug-free workforce approach includes 5 components- a policy, supervisor training, employee education, employee assistance and drug testing. Such programs, especially when drug testing is included, must be reasonable and take into consideration employee rights to privacy.

### Reasons to Drug Test

A typical "recreational drug user" in today's workforce is:

- 2.2 times more likely to request early dismissal or time off
- 2.5 times more likely to have absences of 8 days or more

- 3 times more likely to be late for work
- 3.6 times more likely to be involved in an accident off the job (affects job attendance & performance)
- 5 times more likely to file a Workers' Compensation claim
- 7 times more likely to have wage garnishments
- One third less productive

employers care about the safety and health of their employees.

For more information on drug-testing programs and drug testing contact Mark Hebson (800) 530-0081.

The additional costs of substance abuse in the workplace include:

- Lower morale
- Decreased quality of products or service
- Destruction or theft of company property
- Higher insurance rates
- Impaired judgment regarding everyday decisions affecting the company

When it comes to workplace substance abuse, small businesses have big disadvantages. They are less likely than large companies to have programs in place to combat the problem, yet they are more likely to be the "employer-of-choice" for illicit drug users. Individuals who can't adhere to a drug-free workplace policy seek employment at firms that do not have one, and the cost of just one accident caused by an impaired employee can be devastating to a small business.

The good news is that businesses have the power to improve the safety and health of their workplaces and employees by implementing drug-free workplace programs that educate workers about the dangers of drug abuse and encourage individuals with related problems to seek help. Such programs reduce occupational injuries and illnesses and send a clear signal that