

Training Module: Substance Abuse and Accidents

Objective: To know the effects of alcohol and drugs on the body and be aware of the on-the-job problems substance abuse can cause.

Trainer's Note: Review the case studies or create others. Divide the workers into two groups to discuss scenarios. Identify the primary ways substance abuse can affect performance.

Background

Drugs and alcohol have many detrimental effects on the body, and increases the possibility of accidents in the workplace.

Alcohol:

Alcohol, a drug, is a central nervous system depressant. With moderate drinking a person may experience:

- dizziness
- dulling of senses
- impairment of coordination
- impairment of reflexes
- impairment of memory
- impairment of judgement.

When alcohol is consumed in larger quantities over a long period of time, death may occur due to depression of the parts of the brain that control breathing and heart rate. Alcohol in large amounts, or over a long period of time, may cause damage to the:

- liver
- heart
- pancreas

Drugs:

Drugs, which include Marijuana, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Heroin, LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), PCP (Phencyclidine), and many others, can last for several months in the body. They can cause:

- decreased long and short term memory
- decreased concentration
- distorted senses
- impaired perception of time and space
- slowed reaction time
- temporary blindness
- hallucinations

Substance Abuse and Job Performance:

- Alcohol can affect job performance for up to 14 hours.
- The combination of alcohol and drugs multiplies their effects and increases the risk of injury and death.
- Drug and alcohol use increases the possibility of an on-the-job accident.

Case Study 1

Joe drank beer and wine in high school and started using other drugs as a young adult. While working on the Miller farm, he started taking speed (amphetamines) to get going in the morning. The drugs interfered with Joe's ability to make safe judgments and caused a series of on-the-job injuries to himself and others.

Case Study 2

Molly, a forklift operator, drank alcohol during her lunch hour. During a 16 hour shift, she drank on two occasions and then went back to work. Molly knew she was "high," but felt that she could work. Before the shift ended, Molly struck a barrier with the forklift and was thrown from the vehicle. She lost work as a result of the injury.

After each case study, discuss the following points:

- The immediate cause of the incident and/or series of incidents.
- Contributing factors that led to the incident and/or series of incidents.
- Similar situation(s) that could result in illness or injury.
- How these situations could be prevented.

Review The Following Points

- Alcohol is a drug.
- Even with moderate drinking a person experiences impairments.
- Drugs can last several months in the body.
- Working under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol can cause a serious accident.
- The effects of alcohol can last up to 14 hours.
- Using both alcohol and drugs increases the problem and can lead to a serious accident.
- If you have a problem, tell someone who can help.

True or False Answer Key

1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. F, 5. T

Substance Abuse and Accidents Quiz

True or False

Name _____

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Drinking alcohol will affect job performance. | T | F |
| 2. Job performance may be impaired up to 14 hours after drinking alcohol. | T | F |
| 3. The combination of drugs and alcohol has little to no effect on working. | T | F |
| 4. If a co-worker is affected by drugs/alcohol, it is not a problem. | T | F |
| 5. With moderate drinking a person may experience impairments in coordination, reflexes, judgement, and memory. | T | F |