

The Effects of Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace

As a staff member who drives a Penn commercial motor vehicle (CMV), you must comply with Human Resources Policy 717: Policy for Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle (see attached policy). The policy can also be found in the Human Resource Policy Manual at: www.hr.upenn.edu/Policy/Policies/717.aspx

In compliance with this policy, the University is providing you with the following information on the effects of alcohol and drugs on general health and workplace performance.

Substance Abuse in the Workplace

- The annual cost to society of drug abuse is estimated to be \$160 billion.
- Of the \$160 billion cost, a loss of \$100 billion is believed to result from unrealized productivity due to substance abuse.
- Two out of three illicit drug users are fully employed.
- 71% of all illicit substance users are between the ages of 18 and 34.
- 8% of workers drink alcohol daily*
- 70% of employees who are referred to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for alcoholism are able to return to work and perform satisfactorily.

Impact of Substance Abuse in the Workplace

Research has shown that alcohol and drug abuse by employees place considerable burden on employers. According to a 1999 Drug Free Workplace Study drug abuse costs employers \$100 billion a year in these areas:

- Decreased Productivity and Efficiency
- Accidents and Safety Hazards
- Medical Claims
- Absenteeism, Turnover
- Employee Theft
- Among employed drug users:
 - absenteeism is 66% higher**
 - health benefit utilization is 84% greater in dollar terms**
 - disciplinary actions are 90% higher**

Impact of Substance Abuse on General Health

Medical research also supports that substance abuse has an adverse impact on the general health of the user. Some examples of the effects of substance abuse on health include but are not limited to:

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, heart attack,
- Convulsions, seizures, tremors, strokes
- Anxiety, paranoia, depression, confusion, blackouts, violent behavior, hallucinations
- Problems with perception, motor skills
- Difficulty with concentrating and information processing, lapses in judgment
- Coma, Death

For more information on substance abuse, you can consult the following Penn resources:

Penn's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - access to free, confidential counseling and referral services for eligible Penn faculty and staff and their immediate family members. EAP services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone at 1-888-321-4433 or online at www.pennbehavioralhealth.org.

Worklife Resources Website - www.hr.upenn.edu/Quality/Wellness/EAP.aspx

You will need your PennKey and password to access the online information and materials.

Employee Signature – My signature acknowledges that I received this document.

Date

Resources:

**National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 2002*

***National Drug Control Strategy, 2003*

"Substance Abuse and Addiction" – American Psychiatric Association

Penn Behavioral Health