

Description

Although most employers agree that it makes sense to set up a drug- and alcohol-free workplace program, determining the right approach to take is challenging. Some organizations follow a strong law enforcement model and focus on detection, apprehension, and discharge. Other organizations focus on performance and emphasize deterrence and assistance. Since every organization has unique situations, the policy and program need to be designed to match the workforce and the organization's needs.

This training program introduces employees to the hazards of substance abuse, substance abuse policies, sources of help for employees, and employee drug testing programs.

Objectives

After your training program, the trainees should be able to:

- Discuss the harmful effects of substance abuse.
- Explain the organization's substance abuse policy.
- Describe how employees can get help for substance abuse problems.

Audience

Employees should be aware of how substance abuse can interfere with a safe and productive workplace. The abusing employee is not the only person affected — all employees and all job operations suffer when substance abuse is part of the workplace climate. Employees should be aware of the hazards of substance abuse, the organization's substance abuse policies, and how drug- and alcohol-free workplace programs help all workers recognize and address substance abuse problems.

Requirements

The Drug-Free Workplace Act, effective since March 18, 1989, requires contractors and grantees of federal agencies to certify that they will provide a drug-free workplace. Each federal contractor will be required to make such a certification as a precondition for receiving a contract or grant from a federal agency. Once a certification is made, the employer must develop a policy that complies with the Act.

The Act only requires that a policy be developed for violations that occur at the company's workplace. The Act further limits this by defining workplace as the portions of the employer's premises where the contract is being performed. And, there are several types of contracts that do not fall under the act.

In general, you must comply with the Act if you or your organization:

- Receive a federal grant of any dollar amount.
- Receive a federal contract of \$25,000 or more.
- Provide goods or services to the federal government or federal agencies.

- Receive federal grants and/or contracts for a school district, vocational technical school, college, or university.
- Receive any blockgrants.
- Are a non-profit organization or agency receiving funds from federal government departments.
- Are a county, city, borough, municipality, or township.
- Are an individual, teacher, or employee receiving federal funding for programs or research.

To comply with the Act's certification requirements for contractors and grantees, publish a statement notifying employees that they are prohibited from engaging in unlawful drug-related activities at the workplace and specifying disciplinary actions that will be taken if employees violate the prohibitions. And, establish an awareness program for employees.

Many states also have drug-free workplace acts and/or provisions that are part of other regulations such as workers' compensation or unemployment compensation.

Even if your organization does not need to comply with federal or state requirements, having a substance abuse program and providing employee awareness training are good practices for maintaining a safe and productive workplace.