



SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug use and alcohol consumption is normally considered personal issues. They only become an employer's concern when they affect safety and worker performance. Drug and alcohol abuse cost employers through high absenteeism and sick pay. Abusers hurt themselves and their families if they lose their job as a result of their actions. If they are fired or cannot function on the job, the company loses the services of an experienced worker. Those under the influence of drugs or alcohol cause friction in the work group, lower morale and work efficiency, use poor judgment that results in bad decisions, and give the company a poor public image.

Certain times of the year individuals should be especially aware of their alcohol and drug consumption. In the winter months when the days are dark and dreary, some people experience a sense of depression or seasonal affected disorder (SAD). They may turn to drugs or alcohol in the mistaken belief it will relieve the symptoms of the disorder.

The holiday season, with increased social gatherings or added financial stress, leads some people to misuse drugs or alcohol, especially during this year of millennium celebration. Those who over-consumed alcohol or drugs yesterday and are hung over today may feel out of sorts, still trying to recover, and may not give all their attention to the safety aspects of their job. Their judgment and safety performance becomes impaired and the likelihood of an accident or injury to themselves or coworkers increases.

Sometimes a personal or health problem persists. In most cases, the problem gets resolved. But if it is not resolved some people turn to alcohol or drugs. Even some prescription drugs can interfere with job performance. The individual cannot think clearly or becomes distracted. This can lead to accidents. Irresponsible consumption of drugs or alcohol not only jeopardizes the safety and health of the worker and coworkers but it can impact the employer's business and affect the future of all families involved.