



How to Use This Workplace Kit

This Workplace Kit can help workplaces throughout the United States become drug-free, as well as safe, healthy, and productive.¹

The Kit was developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). SAMHSA and DHHS developed the Kit so that it would be evidence based, state of the art, flexible, and practical. The Kit, therefore, relies on the most reputable and current studies, and on the knowledge and experience of experts. It includes a range of options from which employers in small, medium, and large businesses in many different fields and industries can choose. And it provides guidance and materials that are practical.



Figure out what the needs of the workplace are.



Every workplace is different. But the fact sheets, brochures, and other materials in the Kit have been designed so that they can be used in different ways to meet the varying needs of different workplaces.

Most of these materials are self-explanatory. It should be fairly easy for employers and others in workplaces to decide how they can best use the materials to assist in developing and implementing drug-free workplace policies and programs. The following general suggestions are also offered, so that users may get the most out of the Kit.

✓ **Take Time**

Take the time to understand the issues and apply your program appropriately. The issues are complex, the problems are challenging, and the behaviors may be difficult to change. Thus it is worth taking the time to figure out what the needs of a workplace are and how they can best be addressed.

✓ **Involve the Right People**

Enlist the understanding and support of key people in the workplace. These include human resources supervisors, key managers, and line employees. If there is a union, work with it. Even if there is no union, talk with the workers. If there already is an employee assistance program (EAP), but it needs to be strengthened, talk with EAP specialists about how to strengthen it. If there already is drug testing in place, but it can be improved, talk with a drug testing contractor. If your organization has a health clinic or a health promotion and wellness program, involve the specialists in charge of these services. It is essential to have legal counsel to help develop and finalize your drug-free workplace policy and program. Finally, sharing the approach with similar organizations can be a useful way of learning from others' experiences and expertise, of pooling resources, and of building partnerships focused on drug-free workplaces within an industry.

✓ **Address Drug Abuse in the Context of Health, Safety, and Productivity**

Consider addressing drug use and abuse in the broader context of health, safety, and productivity. Almost everyone wants to feel healthy, safe, and productive. Viewing the issue of alcohol and other drug use as part of the bigger picture of overall health and safety can be an effective way of meaningfully reaching nearly all employees. After all, drug use may affect what happens in the workplace, whether it takes place right there or outside of work.² In addition, drug use often goes hand-in-hand with other health and mental health issues. People who are depressed may turn to stimulants. People who are anxious may turn to depressants. People under tremendous stress may misuse tranquilizers or alcohol. Addressing drug use in the broader context of other health and mental health issues may increase the likelihood that employees will become committed to a drug-free workplace as a component of a broader approach to improving their own health and well-being.



✓ **Understand How a Drug-Free Workplace Can Help Everyone**

A drug-free workplace can reduce drug abuse and other problems as well. And it can help all employees, from top to bottom. A drug-free workplace would be a workplace that is free of the use of illicit drugs. But a drug-free workplace policy and program can also increase morale, boost productivity, and reduce workplace stress, creating a positive, dynamic community that is safer, happier, and healthier for everyone.

✓ **Ensure That Workplaces Meet Legal Requirements**

A workplace must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act³ or other laws, if those laws apply to the workplace. But an employer may choose to go beyond the basic legal requirements and have more than a minimal drug-free policy, awareness program, or drug testing program. Such an employer may wish to put into place a more comprehensive drug-free workplace policy and program that addresses drug use in the context of promoting overall health and improving safety and productivity.

✓ **Ensure That Workplaces Are Safe, Healthy, and Drug-Free, Even if There Are No Legal Requirements**

If the drug-free workplace laws and regulations do not apply to your workplace, a drug-free workplace policy and program may still be helpful. Drug abuse is unhealthy. It can diminish workers' ability to cooperate and work well. It can reduce long-term productivity and profits. It can reduce quality of life, both in the workplace and elsewhere, for those who are using illicit drugs or using alcohol in an unhealthy manner. So, whether the laws and regulations apply to your workplace or not, a drug-free workplace policy and program may be a way to make your organization drug-free, and also safe, healthy, and productive.

References

¹ Throughout the Kit we refer to a *drug-free workplace*, which was originally created in the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Program (see U.S. DHHS, SAMHSA, Division of Workplace Programs; n.d.; "Federal Agency Drug-Free Workplace Programs"; Rockville, Maryland; available at http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov/FedPgms/Pages/Fed_Agency_Programs.aspx). Many workplaces that have drug-free workplace policies have also addressed within their policies the use and misuse of alcohol, including prevention, early identification, early intervention, treatment, and relapse prevention.

² Often when people refer to a drug-free workplace they consider only the use of drugs and alcohol at the job site or when workers are officially on the job. But in prevention programs the intent is to prevent the inappropriate use of alcohol, the illegal use of drugs, and the misuse of prescription drugs in all phases of employee and family lives. Prevention also aims to change the attitudes of individuals and their families and the culture of communities and workplaces—creating healthier, safer, more dynamic communities for everyone.

³ U.S. House of Representatives. 1988. *Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988* U.S.C. 701–707. and U.S. House of Representatives. 1998. *Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1998* U.S.C. 105–584.

All URLs (Web site addresses) in this Kit were accessed June 29, 2007.