



Workplace Substance Abuse Statistics

FACT SHEET

Use of illicit drugs, alcohol abuse, and misuse of prescription drugs can have negative effects on our daily lives. And people with drug and alcohol problems are not likely to leave those problems behind when they come to work.

- ✓ About three fourths of those 18 and older who use illegal drugs also work.¹
- ✓ Nonmedical use of prescription drugs is national problem. According to the 2006 *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, 7 million Americans were current users of psychotherapeutic drugs taken nonmedically.² SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network reported that of the nearly 2 million drug-related emergency department visits in 2004, over 25 percent were related to nonmedical use of prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceuticals.³
- ✓ In a large study of illicit drug use in a highly educated workforce, 42 percent of respondents reported using mood-altering prescription drugs.⁴
- ✓ Most binge drinkers and heavy alcohol users are employed. Of adult binge drinkers, 79.4 percent are employed either full or part time. Of adult heavy drinkers, 79.2 percent are employed.⁵
- ✓ Over 7 percent of American workers drink during the workday, mostly at lunch. Even more—9 percent—have nursed a hangover in the workplace.⁶
- ✓ In a 2002 survey of health-related behaviors among military personnel, over 17 percent reported loss of productivity attributable to alcohol.⁷
- ✓ Drinking does not have to occur on the job to affect the job. Hangovers account for many workplace productivity losses.⁸
- ✓ Workers in construction and mining, wholesale, and retail industries are 25 percent to 45 percent more likely to have a serious alcohol problem than the average U.S. worker.⁹
- ✓ Workplace alcohol use and impairment affect an estimated 15 percent of U.S. workers, or 19.2 million Americans.¹⁰
- ✓ On-the-job drug use can lead to an increased risk of accidents and injuries.^{11, 12} It can also lead to lower levels of productivity and employee morale, not only among those with substance abuse problems but also among those working alongside them.¹³
- ✓ The addictions of coworkers' family members may also affect the workplace. In a national survey of employees, more than one third said that at least one of their coworkers had been distracted, less productive, or absent from work because of alcohol or other drug addiction in their family.¹⁴



References

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- ³ U.S. DHHS, SAMHSA, OAS. 2006. *Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2004: National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits*. DAWN Series D-28, DHHS Publication No. 06-4143. Rockville, Maryland.
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- ⁵ U.S. DHHS, SAMHSA, OAS. 2007. *Results From the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*. Rockville, Maryland, 37.
- ⁶ Michael R. Frone. 2006. "Prevalence and Distribution of Alcohol Use and Impairment in the Workplace: A U.S. National Survey." *Journal of Studies of Alcohol* 76:147-56.
- ⁷ Robert M. Bray, Laurel L. Hourani, Kristine L. Rae, Jill A. Dever, Janice M. Brown, Amy A. Vincus, Michael R. Pemberton, Mary Ellen Marsden, Dorothy L. Faulkner, and Russ Vandermaas-Peeler. 2002. *Highlights: Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel*. Available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/main/news/DoDSurvey.htm#pna/>.
- ⁸ Roland S. Moore. 1998. "The Hangover: An Ambiguous Concept in Workplace Alcohol Policy." *Contemporary Drug Problems* 25(1):49-63.
- ⁹ Jeremy Giller. 2005. *Construction and Mining, Wholesale, Retail Top List of Industries. Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems*. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University Medical Center.
- ¹⁰ Michael R. Frone. 2006. "Prevalence and Distribution of Alcohol Use and Impairment in the Workplace: A U.S. National Survey." *Journal of Studies of Alcohol* 76:147-56.
- ¹¹ M. Bernstein and J.J. Mahoney. 1989. "Management Perspectives on Alcoholism: The Employer's Stake in Alcoholism Treatment." *Occupational Medicine* 4(2):223-32.
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- ¹³ Michael R. Frone. 1999. "Work Stress and Alcohol Use." *Alcohol Research and Health* 23(4):285-91.
- ¹⁴ Hazelden. 2005. "Employees Report Coworkers Are Less Productive Due to Substance." Available at http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/mrab_2005survey.page/.