

Are Alcohol and Drugs a Drain on Your Bottom Line?

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that 68 percent of illicit drug users are employed. Job applicants who know they can't pass a drug or alcohol test apply to companies that don't test or have a policy in place. Workplace drug and alcohol abuse clearly compromises the safety of the workforce and the public. When workers abuse alcohol and other drugs, many other aspects of a company's operation, including its bottom line, bear the burden.

These costs include:

- Increased absences
- Accidents and errors
- Low morale
- Turnover (both low and high performing workers)
- Increased theft
- High rates of illness

Employers have the resources and power to improve the safety and health of their workplaces by implementing drug-free workplace programs. An effective program not only addresses the above costs but also creates a healthier environment for workers and decreases use of medical benefits. In addition, some organizations with drug-free workplace programs qualify for incentives such as decreased premium costs for Worker's Compensation. A comprehensive drug-free workplace program generally includes five elements:

- A written policy
- Supervisor training
- Worker education
- Access to assistance
- Drug testing

Before considering each element, employers should examine the needs of their workforce and business to ensure the program they design will fit. A careful assessment will determine which elements are the most feasible and beneficial. Many companies find it helpful to seek worker input during this process.

Drug-Free Workplace Tools and Resources

For a comprehensive review of Drug-Free Workplace issues, check out the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website at <http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov/DrugFreeWP/DefNPurpose.html>

First Sun consultants are available to help you reduce the bottom line impact from addictive disease and chemical abuse by assessing the organization, working with you to create effective policies and training the workforce to uphold policies. Give us a call toll-free at **800-968-8143** or **803-376-2668** in Greater Columbia or find helpful information on our website at www.firstsuneap.com.