

# How To Ensure Your Workers are Sober and Safe



Are you aware of how many of your workers could be using substances on the job? Over 60% of people who have substance abuse problems are employed full time in the United States. Drug use on the job can threaten the safety of the employee and whoever that employee work affects. This poses a risk to employers and the company as a whole.

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When your employees are on the job, you want to make sure that they are able to do their job to the best of their ability. In order for that to happen, they can't be under the influence of illicit drugs, especially when that worker is working alone. When a Lone Worker is intoxicated, the risk related to their job is exacerbated by their altered state of mind, and that can lead to dire consequences.

Here to speak to SafetyLine about the issue of drug use in the workplace is harm reduction advocate Gareth Crawford from the Vancouver organization Karmik. Karmik is a Harm Reduction Organization that focuses on educating people on the risks of drug use so they can reduce the harm that it may cause to their lives and society.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR EMPLOYERS TO BE AWARE OF DRUG ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE AS IT APPLIES TO THEIR LONE WORKERS? CAN THERE BE A HEIGHTENED RISK FOR LONE WORKERS WHEN IT COMES TO DRUG ABUSE?

An intoxicated employee is dangerous to the work environment. For employers, it doesn't matter the legality of the drug, what matters is that the employee is not impaired while on the job. When an employee is working alone and under the influence of mind altering substances, the risks that already exist are amplified because there is no one around to help them if they hurt

themselves.

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### HOW CAN EMPLOYERS HELP MITIGATE THE RISK IF THERE IS ONE?

A zero tolerance drug policy for lone workers is a must have, especially with industries that are high risk. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Employers with successful drug-free workplace programs report improvements in morale and productivity, and decreases in absenteeism, accidents, downtime, turnover, and theft. By being in regular contact with their employee, the employer may be able to recognize warning signs of intoxication in their voice. Since SafetyLine automatically takes a voice recording of

the employee at every check-in, it can be used to facilitate communication with the employer at regular intervals. If a substance abuse problem is suspected, it is important for a supervisor to address potential issue with the employee immediately.

### WHAT SORTS OF HARM REDUCTION TECHNIQUES CAN EMPLOYERS EMPLOY TO MAKE A SAFER ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR LONE WORKERS?

In order to reduce harm, employees can administer monthly drug tests to help prevent drug abuse by employees. However, drug testing has its flaws and it should not be the only strategy. Educating workers on the risks of drug use on the job in the training process and emphasis on an organizations zero tolerance drug policy should help deter them from drug abuse on the job.

### ARE THERE ANY OTHER RESOURCES THAT EMPLOYERS CAN UTILIZE WHEN IT COMES TO DRUG ABUSE?

When employers ask me this question I usually direct

them towards a very valuable resource called "An Employers Guide to Workplace Substance Abuse" published by the National Business Group on Health. This guidebook provides you a picture of how important the issue is, and how you can prevent having employees intoxicated in the workplace. You can read this guidebook [HERE](#). This booklet covers everything you need to know about recognizing warning signs related to different substance use as well as provides vital recommendations to prevent your employees from being intoxicated at work.

Drug abuse is a serious issue in society and it can potentially affect your workplace. The International Day Against Drug Abuse is an opportunity to address this problem. Drug abuse exists everywhere in the world, and it negatively affects friends, family, and employers. When it comes to your employees and the well-being of your company, one should be vigilant towards preventing drug use on the job, as well as having response procedures in case an emergency arises. SafetyLine provides complete safety monitoring for effective emergency resolution. It can be an effective part of your company's safety strategy, helping to ensure that your employees get home safely to their friends and family.

Karmik is a harm reduction organization that focuses on educating people about how to reduce the harms related to related drug use so they can live happier, healthier lives. Their harm reduction training program is well respected in the Greater Vancouver region, and members of Karmik are often invited to speak to the media and at conferences regarding the issue of drug abuse in society. To learn more about them, visit their website [HERE](#).

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