



## DRUGS on the Job . . . What You Need to Know

### Did you know:

- ❑ Almost 1/2 of Americans entering the workforce have used illicit drugs in the past year
- ❑ At least 1 in 10 workers abuses one or more substance
- ❑ Approximately 10-23% of all workers abuse drugs on the job
- ❑ Drug abusing employees require 300% higher medical costs and benefits which consequently increases health insurance rates
- ❑ Employees using drugs are 3 times more likely to be late for work and 2.5 times more likely to have absences of 8 or more days
- ❑ Employees who abuse alcohol have an absenteeism rate 3.8 to 8.3 times higher than non-alcohol abusing workers
- ❑ Drug users in the workforce are 3.6 times more likely to have workplace accidents
- ❑ 40% of industrial fatalities and 47% of industrial injuries can be linked to alcohol abuse and alcoholism

We can't afford to ignore drug problems in the workplace. With education we can lower our risks, but we also need to be on the lookout for potential problems. In Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky the drugs of choice are alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine.

### Alcohol

Alcohol, a central nervous system depressant, is the most widely abused drug. About half of all auto accident fatalities are related to alcohol use. Alcohol acts first on the parts of the brain that affect self-control and other learned behaviors. Low self control often leads to aggressive behavior associated with some people who drink. In large doses, alcohol can dull sensation and impair muscular coordination, memory, and judgment. Taken in larger quantities over long periods of time, alcohol can damage the liver and heart and can cause permanent brain damage. On the average, heavy drinkers shorten their life span by about 10 years.

### Marijuana

Marijuana, AKA 'grass', pot, weed, Mary Jane, Aca-pulco Gold, joint, and roach, alters sense of time and reduces the ability to perform tasks requiring concentration, swift reactions, and coordination. The drug has significant effect on judgment, caution, and sensory/motor abilities. While alcohol dissipates from the bloodstream in a matter of hours, marijuana can stay in the body for 28 days. Driving ability is impaired for at least 4-6 hours after one "joint" and long term use can result in impaired memory, hallucinations, paranoia, and reduction or temporary loss of fertility.

### Cocaine

Cocaine is a stimulant, which increases heart rate and pressure. As a powder, cocaine is inhaled (snorted), ingested, or injected. It is known as 'coke', 'snow', 'nose candy', and 'lady'. Cocaine is also used as free-based cocaine known as 'crack' or 'rock', which is smoked. Many people think that smoking crack cocaine is safer than snorting or other forms, but it is not. Crack cocaine is one of the most addictive substances known today. The crack "high" is reached in 4-6 seconds and lasts about 15-30 minutes. The most dangerous effects of crack are that it can cause vomiting, rapid heart beat, tremors, and convulsive movements. All of this activity increase the body's demand for oxygen and can result in a cocaine-induced heater attack. Since the heat regulating center in the brain is also disrupted, dangerously high body temperatures can occur. With high doses, brain functioning, breathing and heat beat are depressed, leading to death.

For more alcohol and substance abuse information contact:

Drug-free Workplace Hotline (800) 843-4971  
National Institute for Drug Abuse Treatment Hot-line (NIDA) (800) 662-HELP  
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### Inside this issue:

*Drugs and Work Don't Mix*

*Last Year In Review*

*For What It Is Worth*

### For What it is Worth!

A little old lady went to her doctor with a little problem and says, "I have this problem with gas, but it doesn't really bother me much. The farts never smell and are always silent. In fact I have passed some gas while here and you probably didn't even know it."

The doctor says, "I see. Take these pills and come back in a week."

The next week the little old lady goes back. Upon entering the office she says, "Doctor, I don't know what you gave me, but now my gas stinks terribly, although it is still silent."

The doctor replied, "Well, we have made some progress, your sinuses have cleared up, now we will work on your hearing."

## 2002 in the Rearview Mirror

Keep in mind that this article is written from my perspective as Safety Director and includes information from the entire Company, Construction Division, Aggregate Division, Pre-cast Product Division and Ready-Mix Division. We had a good year last year, but not a great year. The total dollars involved in employee injuries was down some, the number of injuries was down some. A

few plants had a great year and a few plants had a not-so-great year. Our incident rates are trending down over a period of several years, and that is great news. The not so great news, business insurance premiums went up about 40% in spite of an increase in deductibles again. By type of injury, there were 37 listed as bruise/contusion. A closer look shows at least 8 of



