By the Numbers: Drug and Alcohol

DID YOU KNOW?

Drug and alcohol abuse lead to workplace accidents. According to OSHA, “Of the 17.2 million illicit drug users aged 18 or older in 2005, 12.9 million (74.8 percent) were employed either full or part time. “In addition, they found that 10-20 percent of work-related fatalities test positive for drugs or alcohol.

Despite the numerous safety protocols at the workplace, 40% of all industrial workplace fatalities are caused by substance abusers. And individual who is inebriated or hungover has decreased productivity and alertness. This means workplace accidents are more likely to happen. Workplace accidents caused by inebriation or a hangover is five times more likely to injure someone. Substance abusers are ten times more likely to miss work, negatively impacting themselves and others by jeopardizing their jobs, their health and safety as well as co-workers.

The rate of positive drug tests rose by double digits in five of 16 major U.S. workforce industry sectors from 2015 to 2017, according to a recent analysis done by researchers at Quest Diagnostics.

Quest Researchers found that from an examination of data from more than 10 million urine drug tests conducted over the three-year period showed that transportation and Warehousing had the largest increase, at 21.4 percent, followed by other services except Public Administration (15.4 percent), Finance and Insurance (13), tail trade (12.8), and Wholesale Trade (11.8).

Quest found that the highest positivity rates in 2017 were in consumer-facing industries, led by Retail trade (5.3 percent), Health Care and Social assistance (4.7), and Real State Rental and Leasing (4.6). Overall, the lowest rates were among the Utilities (2.8 percent) and Finance and Insurance (2.6) sectors.

Other findings:

- The Construction Industry experienced the greatest methamphetamine positivity rate in each year of the study, and had a 15 percent increase overall.
- Cocaine positivity rose in most sector in 2017. Those that saw the biggest jumps over the course of the study were Retail trade (42.9 percent); Administrative support, Waste Management and Remediation Services (35.3); and Transportation and Warehousing (22.7)
- Amphetamine positivity in the information sector rose more than 20 percent during the study period. However, the sector was the only one to show a drop in marijuana positivity (more than 8 percent) over the same time frame.
- Health care and Social Assistance (nearly 16 percent) and Educational Services (nearly 14 percent) also saw double-digit rises in amphetamine positivity from 2015 to 2017
- Marijuana was the most commonly detected substance, with the highest positivity rate (3.5 percent) found in accommodation and food services. That rate is nearly 35 percent than national average (2.6)

KEEP IN MIND

Drugged driving is on the rise – nearly matching drunk driving in the number of fatal crashes – according to a 2015 from the Governors Highway Safety Association and the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility.

The study revealed that 40 percent of drivers killed in crashed in 2013 tested positive for illegal, prescription or over-the-counter drugs. The figure was nearly the same as the percentage of drivers killed in crashes the same year who tested positive for alcohol in their bloodstreams.

Researchers unearthed some revealing facts the majority of drugs which include prescription medication:

- Impairs driving related cognitive functions as reaction time, distance perception, motor skills.

- Drug use combined with alcohol increases the risk of a crash.

