Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace – Landscaping Fatality File

Fatal Accident Due to Impaired Operation in Landscaping

On April 14, 2023, a fatal accident occurred at a residential landscaping project in Denver, Colorado, resulting in the death of a 33-year-old worker, Paul Jackson. Jackson was operating a riding lawn mower while under the influence of alcohol when he lost control of the machine, leading to a rollover that trapped him underneath. Despite immediate efforts by coworkers to free him and administer first aid, Jackson succumbed to his injuries at the scene.

The investigation revealed that Jackson had been consuming alcohol during his lunch break, a violation of the company's drug and alcohol-free workplace policy. However, the policy was not consistently enforced, and there was no routine screening or monitoring in place to detect substance use among workers. Additionally, the company lacked proper training programs to educate employees on the dangers of operating machinery while impaired.

In response to this tragedy, the landscaping company has implemented strict enforcement of its drug and alcohol-free workplace policy, including random drug and alcohol testing, mandatory safety training sessions on the risks of substance use, and the introduction of an employee assistance program (EAP) to provide support for workers struggling with substance abuse.