



# How to Deal with Employee Drug Use



**Employees who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work can pose major problems for a business, compromising the safety and well-being of colleagues and exposing managers and employers to legal liability.**

**Here's what you should do when you suspect an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job.**



### **Refer to Your Policy**

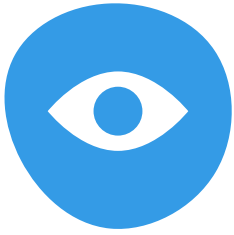
Every company should have a written drug and alcohol policy that includes the option to conduct drug and alcohol testing when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse. A general policy statement is not enough to permit testing, so this should be addressed specifically in your policy.



### **Document Complaints**

Managers often become aware of employee drug and alcohol use via complaints from coworkers or clients. It's important to take these complaints seriously and document thoroughly: complaints, observed behavior patterns and names of any witnesses to the behavior.





## Observe Behavior

Observe the employee's behavior and document your findings. Ask another manager or human resources manager to do the same. Documentation should be objective, and include observations about:

- speech
- appearance (such as bloodshot eyes)
- emotions such as agitation or irritability
- drowsiness
- excessive sweating
- other telltale signs



## Meet with the Employee

After documenting the issue, the difficult part begins. All involved parties (managers, supervisors, human resources) should meet to agree on the next step: meeting with the employee.

There should be two company representatives in this meeting, one to conduct the meeting and the other to act as a witness to the proceedings. It's important to be tactful and non-accusatory. Discuss the employee's behavior and your observations. You then have the options to follow the procedures outlined in your company policy.





## Drug and Alcohol Testing

Before sending an employee for drug or alcohol testing, ensure you have a signed drug testing consent form. If you have not obtained a consent form, bring one to the meeting for the employee to sign.

Provide transportation to and from the testing facility. Never allow a person suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol to drive.

If the employee refuses to take the test, refer to your drug and alcohol policy. Many policies state that refusing the test will be treated as a positive drug test result or will result in immediate termination of employment.



## Act on the Results

If the results are negative, get the employee back on the job as soon as possible.

If the test is positive, you may wish to send the employee for counseling or treatment before they return to work. Many policies offer return to work rights with a clause that allows for termination if the employee is found under the influence at work again. In some cases, an employer has the option to terminate immediately for a positive result.