



## Drug & Alcohol Use In The Workplace

Most of the nation's approximately 16.4 million current illicit drug users and approximately 15 million heavy alcohol users hold fulltime jobs and are affecting productivity, according to a new study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The study showed that an annual average of approximately 9.4 million current illicit drug users (including 7.3 million current marijuana users), and 10.1 million heavy alcohol users were employed full time in 2002 to 2004. Among full-time workers using these substances, 3 million met criteria for illicit drug dependence or abuse, and 10.5 million were dependent on or abused alcohol.

The study shows that substance use can pose significant risks to workers' health, safety and productivity. The report also says that workers who use illicit drugs are less likely than nonusers to be employed by companies that have drug or alcohol testing policies and programs.

"Substance abuse is a serious problem for the health, well being, and productivity of everyone in the workplace," says SAMHSA Administrator Terry Cline. "One important way SAMHSA is addressing this public health risk is with 1-800-Workplace (1-800-967-5752), a help line for employees and businesses dealing with...substance abuse."

### 2007 Dates:

#### January:

Plan Your Safety Training Now!  
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#### February:

Child Passenger Safety Week

#### March:

Poison Prevention Week  
Workplace Eye Safety Month  
Save Your Vision Month

#### April:

Sports Eye Safety Month  
Intl Building Safety Week  
Work Zone Aware. Week  
Playground Safety Week

#### May:

Clean Air Month  
Melanoma Awareness Month  
Electrical Safety Month  
National EMS Week  
Poison Prevention Week

#### June:

National Safety Month

#### July:

EYE INJURY PREV. MONTH

#### August:

Prepare Your Winter Safety Training!

#### September:

Farm Safety /Health Week

#### October:

Nat. Fire Prevention Week  
Drive Safely Work Week  
Radon Action Week

#### November:

Take advantage of the weather and do your classroom training!

#### December:

"3D Month" - National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Illicit drug use and heavy alcohol use are associated with higher levels of absenteeism and frequent job changes, the report said. For example, nearly twice as many current illicit drug users skipped 1 or more days of work in the past month compared with workers who did not abuse drugs. Drug users were also far more likely to report missing 2 or more workdays in the past month due to illness or injury compared with workers who did not abuse drugs.

Substance users also had far higher job turnover rates. Among full-time workers who reported current illicit drug use, 12.3 percent said they had worked for three or more employers in the past year, compared with 5.1 percent of non-abusing workers.

Another major finding was that current drug users were more likely to work for employers who did not conduct drug or alcohol testing programs. Nearly a third of current illicit drug users said they would be less likely to work for employers who conducted random drug testing.

Overall, approximately 30 percent of the full-time work force reported that random drug testing took place in their current employment setting. Workers in the transportation and material-moving (62.9 percent) and protective services (61.8 percent) occupational categories were the most likely to report working for employers who conducted random testing. Workers in legal occupations and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupational categories (10 percent) were the least likely to report working for employers who tested for illicit drug or alcohol use on a random basis.

According to the study, unemployed people had higher percentages of current illicit drug use and heavy alcohol use than those with full-time, part-time, or other employment statuses. But because full-time workers constitute about two-thirds of the 18- to 64-yearold population, the actual number of those using drugs was higher among the full-time workers.

## Car Accidents Exact A Heavy Toll

In a single year, more than 157,000 Americans were killed and about 1.6 million hospitalized as a result of car crashes, falls, violent acts and accidents, federal officials have said. The Federal Government issued an annual report urging the nation to pay more attention to basic safety.

Researchers with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said their analysis of data from the 50 states and District of Columbia showed that unintentional injuries were a problem that cut across age, gender and race.

One in 10 U.S. residents, or about 29.7 million people, were treated for non-fatal injuries in emergency rooms in 2001, according to the CDC report, the first to study the magnitude of both fatal and non-fatal injuries in the nation.



## Heat Stroke & Heat Exhaustion

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Summer is a great time to work outside and play outdoor sports. But as teams gear up for August football and soccer workouts under the hot sun, about 300 Americans die in heat-related incidents each year, some of them healthy athletes and children. An athletic trainer talks about preventing/treating heat exhaustion, dehydration and heat stroke.

**LISTEN TO YOUR BODY** - These illnesses are usually due to heavy loss of fluid and salt. In many cases, the condition worsens as the athlete, afraid of "wimping out," continues to exercise after the body starts to suffer. A sweating body needs fluids to maintain blood volume, so drink water or sports drinks (not caffeinated or alcoholic beverages) before, during and after exercise. How much you need to drink depends on how big you are and how hot it is, but as a rule of thumb, drink six to eight ounces for every 15 minutes of intense exercise in the heat. By weighing in before and after a workout, you can determine exactly how much fluid you've lost (a pound equals 16 ounces). Try to replace a bit more than you lose. With dehydration, blood volume decreases and the heart must work harder. During summer exertion, blood volume may drop by as much as 10 percent.

**GET A PHYSICAL EXAM** - The report also recommends that athletes undergo a physical exam before beginning play. Most teams require it, but doctors don't always do a history of heat illnesses, one of the best predictors of heat illness is a previous one. The physical should note the use of any medications. "Some children use Ephedra and other supplements. They should warn medical staff in order to avoid problems," says Dr. Douglas Casa, chairman of the report. Ephedra, a popular weight-loss and energy-boosting dietary supplement, was linked to the heat-stroke death of Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler. According to the Food and Drug Administration, the supplement is an adrenaline-like stimulant that can have destructive effects on the heart and nervous system.

**START SLOW** - The task force says that safety begins long before athletes head to camp. "Children should prepare their body for the heat through "acclimatization", or exercising outside two to three hours per day for one to two weeks, then go to camp," says Dr. Casa. "Many children aren't prepared for long days under the sun after spending all day under air conditioning playing videogames." Start doing more intense and longer exercise during the day before they start doing these two-a-day workouts. This is a powerful tool for preparing the body for exercise in the heat.

**TAKE REST BREAKS** - In general, take breaks every thirty minutes in a shady or air-conditioned place. Modify that or skip outdoor exercise in extreme humidity, which keeps sweat from evaporating to cool you off. The hotter it is, the more breaks you take. Wear a hat and use sunscreen. Sunburned skin doesn't sweat properly. Fans, cool towels, ice packs and spraying the body with cold water can also cool down the body during exercise.

**IF SOMEONE IS SHOWING THE SIGNS OF HEAT ILLNESS, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?** - If you suspect heat stroke, call 911 and do everything possible to lower the person's body temperature. The faster you can cool the person, the more likely they're going to survive. There is a treatment that has 100 percent survival rate. There is a "golden hour" for heat stroke. How fast you get somebody's body temperature down impacts if they have organ damage or not. When people die from heat stroke they usually die later the next day from organ damage. No one dies immediately from heat stroke, they die later. What matters is how long your temperature is over a critical threshold for cell damage. Ice water immersion is the best thing you can do.

If someone shows signs of heat stroke, strip them to their underwear and immerse them in ice water. If there's no tub, use fans, ice bags or cold towels. College/professional teams have pools made by Rubbermaid set up right at practice.

This is probably the most important point to make in this segment. People will not die from heat stroke if treated right away. For more mild symptoms of heat exhaustion, cramps or dehydration, move to a shaded or air-conditioned area and take off excess clothing and gear. Check the person's pulse and temperature. A temperature of 104 or more may signal heat stroke, the most severe form of heat illness.

### Cambridge

Risk Control Department  
175 West Jackson, Suite 1000  
Chicago, IL 60604  
phone 312-381-8072  
fax 312-381-8992

[www.cambridgeriskcontrol.com](http://www.cambridgeriskcontrol.com)

Mark Almburg  
Vice President Risk Control  
312-381-8240  
[mark.almburg@cambridge-na.com](mailto:mark.almburg@cambridge-na.com)

Steve Rusicka, CHSP  
Risk Control Supervisor, East  
800-686-2762 x416  
[steve.rusicka@cambridge-na.com](mailto:steve.rusicka@cambridge-na.com)

John Tahlier, MS  
Risk Control Supervisor, West  
608-837-7602  
[john.tahlier@cambridge-na.com](mailto:john.tahlier@cambridge-na.com)

### Which is better...?

"Sports drinks or water?" M. H. in IL.

If the activity is fairly continuous for 1 hour or longer, a sports drink is the better replacement fluid. However, if the activity lasts less than 1 hour, water is the best option. In either case, about 6-8 ounces of fluid replacement every 30 minutes during strenuous, continuous activity.

Source: [www.umass.edu](http://www.umass.edu)

### AFTER HEAT ILLNESS, WHEN IS IT SAFE FOR A CHILD OR ATHLETE TO GO OUT AND PLAY AGAIN?

- No one who has suffered heat stroke should be allowed to return until his or her doctor approves and gives specific return-to-play instructions. Parents should work with a child's doctor to rule out or treat any other conditions or illnesses that may cause continued problems with heat stroke. The child should return to physical activity slowly, under the supervision of an ATC or other qualified health care professional, especially for sports with equipment.

After heat cramps or exhaustion or dehydration, get hydrated again, and then go back to activities.