



DrugPak

Quarterly Newsletter

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6 Reasons to Use Drug Testing Software: Real-World Benefits for TPAs and Employers

Managing a drug testing program is not just about compliance—it is about protecting your workplace, documenting processes, and addressing concerns with clarity and confidence. Employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) face growing pressure to maintain accurate records, ensure fairness, and meet federal or company-specific standards.

Drug testing software offers more than digital convenience. It brings transparency, auditability, and efficiency to a highly sensitive area of workforce management. Below are six real-world reasons TPAs and employers are turning to software to streamline and protect their programs.

1. Audit-Ready Data and Digital Trails

Using software to manage a drug testing program ensures that all selections, test results, and participant histories are tracked with time-stamped accuracy. One TPA shared how the Department of Transportation (DOT) contacted their medical review office to ask if an employee had ever been in the random testing pool and for how long. There was suspicion that a manager had quietly removed the employee from the pool because they believed the individual was using controlled substances and didn't want them to be terminated.

Using the software's audit logs, the TPA was able to confirm that the employee had, in fact, been removed from the pool on a specific date. What the provider didn't know—until then—was that the employee was still actively working.



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**Why Drug Testing Series – Part 3:
Navigating Legal Drug Use in the Workplace
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Testing for the Drugs People Use: Beyond a 5 Panel Test

Which drugs to include in a panel may depend on:

- applicable state law requirements or limitations
- federal regulations
- the type of work performed by those being tested
- the drug test method (lab-based vs. rapid-result)
- in some cases, corporate policy or culture

A SAMHSA Drug-Test Panel?

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, a federal agency that regulates government-mandated drug testing, traditionally required a 5-panel drug test that included:

 Amphetamines (Amphetamines, Methamphetamines)

 Cocaine (Cocaine, Crack, Benzoyllecognine)

 Marijuana – THC Tetrahydrocannabinol (Cannabinoids)

 Opiates (Heroin, Opium, Codeine, Morphine)

 Phencyclidine (PCP)



Other Drugs to Test For May Include...

Regardless of the federal standard, other substances often on a drug-test panel include:

- Alcohol (Ethanol)
- Barbiturates (Phenobarbital, Secobarbitol, Butabital)
- Benzodiazepines (Valium, Librium, Serax, Rohypnol)
- Buprenorphine (BUP)
- Ecstasy / Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)

Fentanyl and Other Dangerous Drugs

- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), “Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is **50 to 100 times more potent.**”
- Up to **100 times more powerful than morphine!**
- Potentially far more deadly to those who use it knowingly or unknowingly, as in the case of using other drugs that have been laced with fentanyl.
- In January of 2025, the Senate introduced a bill: **Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act or the HALT Fentanyl Act.**
 - This bill permanently places fentanyl-related substances as a class into schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. A schedule I controlled substance is a drug, substance, or chemical that has a high potential for abuse; has no currently accepted medical value; and is subject to regulatory controls and administrative, civil, and criminal penalties under the Controlled Substances Act.¹



1. S.331 – 119th Congress (2025-2026): HALT Fentanyl Act. (2025, June 12). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/331>

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Drug Testing Methods: What Fits Best with Reasons for Testing

We've all heard the expression "one size fits all" meaning a single size of something can be suitable for people of all sizes. I took it one step further and asked Google, which of course applied an AI search, and found it interesting that it said, "it can also mean a single approach or solution applied to all situations or individuals regardless of their specific needs or characteristics." That last phrase is particularly interesting as it implies more of a forced fit!

This drove my mind straight to urine screening and how for so many years it was the size that fit all simply because there were no other acceptable alternatives being used for drug testing and certainly none recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA's) nor The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Well, all that has changed and now we have many more options available that should be and in many cases are being utilized for workplace drug screening. This brief paper will outline what some of those methods are, and how they can be applied to the most common reasons for testing.



What are common reasons for workplace drug testing?

First, it is important to have a brief understanding of the windows of detection (WOD) for different testing methods because this is critical in selecting the method best suited for your applications. The following table shows three general windows from "short" to "intermediate" to "long" windows of detection and what sample types are best suited to fit those WOD.

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