



DrugPak

Quarterly Newsletter

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What Is the Most Important Part of a Drug Free Workplace Policy?

A policy is an indispensable component of an effective drug testing program, but what specifically is the most important component of the policy? Is it the purpose statement? No. The program objectives? That is a great starting place, but nope. Then it must be the types of tests required? Wrong again. Perhaps it is the legal requirements? Extremely important but not most important.

A written workplace drug testing policy is the first line of defense for employers and establishes the program expectations for employees. The policy sets forth the company's rules and procedures and can be utilized to justify disciplinary decisions. When those decisions are challenged, the policy is front and center. Therefore, the most important part of a policy isn't a specific piece, it is a combination of elements that work together. A policy is like a puzzle, without all the right pieces, the development is incomplete.

What Should a Policy Contain?

There are many critical parts to a policy, and the most important piece may just depend upon who is asked this question. However, a written drug free policy should contain at a minimum the following important elements.

1. The program objectives

The most common reason for drug testing is safety, the safety of employees, clients, and the public while protecting the company's property, equipment, operations, and profitability is a common objective of a drug-free workplace.





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WHAT STUDIES SHOW



Highlights in 2026

Recent movement on the federal level to reschedule marijuana has left many questioning what this means for the workplace. While the full extent of this change is still to be seen, let's take a look at what we do know about the impact of marijuana use in general, on the road, and at work.



Marijuana Use in General



"The unfortunate truth is that the loosening of marijuana policies — especially the decision to legalize pot without adequately regulating it — has led to worse outcomes than many Americans expected. It is time to acknowledge reality and change course." NY Times

Among people 12 or older, past-year use of the following substances increased between 2021 and 2024.

- Marijuana: increased from 19.0% in 2021 to 22.3% in 2024
- Hallucinogens: increased from 2.7% in 2021 to 3.6% in 2024

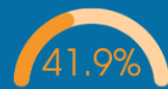
NY Times for America to Admit That It Has a Marijuana Problem. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/opinion/reschedule-legalized-marijuana.html>
 https://www.camhsa.edu/newsroom/press-announcements/2023/07/23/camhsa-releases-annual-national-survey-on-drug-use-and-health/

Marijuana Use on the Road

Research in Montgomery County, Ohio, shows that from January 2018 to September 2024, THC was found in 41.9% of deceased drivers over that six-year period, which includes the legalization of recreational marijuana in 2023.

A 2020 report from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety revealed an alarming connection between marijuana use and serious traffic accidents. Researchers compared data on the fatal crashes in the state of Washington before and after recreational marijuana was legalized. They found that:

- Prior to legalization, about 8.8% of drivers involved in fatal crashes tested positive for THC.
- In the 12 to 24 months following legalization, that percentage more than doubled to 18%.
- By 2017, the fifth year after legalization, 21.7% of drivers involved in fatal crashes were THC-positive.



THC was found in 41.9% of deceased drivers

Fatal Crashes Involving Drivers Who Test Positive for Marijuana Increase after State Legalizes Drug. AAA Newsroom, January 26, 2020. <https://www.aaa.com/press-room/2020/01/fatal-crashes-involving-drivers-who-test-positive-for-marijuana-increase-after-state-legalizes-drug/>
<https://www.aaa.com/media-center/press-releases/2025/over-40-of-deceased-drivers-in-motor-vehicle-crashes-test-positive-for-the-study-shows>

Marijuana Use at Work

According to the 2025 Quest Drug Testing Index, marijuana positivity rates in 2022, 2023, and 2024 were nearly double in states that allow recreational marijuana compared to states where it is not legal.



Table 25. Marijuana Positivity by 2023 State Legalized Use Status – Urine Drug Tests (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all tests for Marijuana Metabolite)

Drug Category	2018	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Recreational Use	2.5%	2.7%	3.1%	3.6%	4.1%	4.6%	5.5%	6.8%	6.9%
Medical Use Only	2.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.7%	3.2%	3.6%	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%
Both ¹ Recreational and Medical Use	2.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.3%	3.3%
National	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	3.6%	3.9%	4.3%	4.5%	4.5%

<https://www.questdiagnostics.com/content/dam/corporate/restricted/documents/tduw-testline-index/DTI-2025-Tables.pdf>

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Can Oral Fluid Drug Tests Be Cheated? What Employers Should Know

Cheating a drug test is persistently a hot topic online. Charlatans promise elixirs that will change body chemistry, and long-time drug users explain various techniques for dodging a positive test. However, adulterating a lab-based oral fluid drug test is not as simple as the internet might lead a prospective employee to believe.

Oral Fluid Drug Testing and Adulteration

Laboratory-based oral fluid tests are some of the most difficult drug tests to cheat. To begin with, the circumstances of an oral fluid test make certain methods of adulteration or dilution impossible. Whereas individuals must be allowed some privacy with urine tests, oral fluid tests can be done in full view of supervisory personnel, making each collection event an observed collection. Common methods of cheating urine tests include utilizing the clean urine of another person, adding a substance such as bleach or dish soap to the sample, or diluting the urine sample with water. These methods are not possible in an oral fluid test the way they are in a urine test. Also, an individual does not have the time and privacy for any tricky maneuvers because the collection is accomplished so quickly and done in full view.

Oral Fluid Adulteration Products

A few products do pop up online that claim to “detox” the mouth prior to an oral fluid drug test. However, scientific testing of these products shows these claims to be false. In addition, product reviews on sites such as Amazon indicate that these



products do not accomplish all that they promise. Reviews such as, “This product does not work. I followed the directions to a T, and still tested post to THC. I did not get the job because I relied on this product!” or simply, “It didn’t work. I lost my job” comprise the vast majority of comments.

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Why Drug Testing Software Matters for Employers and HR Professionals

HR and safety professionals already juggle countless responsibilities to keep their organizations running smoothly and compliantly. For companies with workplace drug testing programs, whether required by federal regulations, state laws, insurance programs, or internal safety policies, the technology behind the program can make a major difference.

The right drug testing software helps simplify processes, reduce administrative headaches, improve compliance, and create a better experience for everyone involved. From ordering a test to receiving results and managing records, software plays a role in every step of the testing process.

Why Drug Testing Software Is Important

Workplace drug testing involves much more than sending someone to a collection site. Employers often coordinate with:

- HR and safety departments
- Third-party administrators (TPAs)
- Collection sites
- Laboratories
- Medical Review Officers (MROs)
- Compliance teams
- Billing and accounting departments

Without centralized software, managing all these moving parts can quickly become overwhelming and lead to errors or delays.

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