

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## TOPIC C036: DRUG & ALCOHOL HAZARDS

**Introduction:** Drug and alcohol use are growing problems in today's workplaces. Studies estimate over 10% of employees have problems with chemical dependency. Substance abuse and/or addiction in the workplace is extensive, affecting every industry, at all employee levels, and is a situation that won't resolve itself.

**Know Your Hazards:** Workers who are impaired while on the job are a risk to themselves or to any co-workers in the vicinity. Customers and vendors are also affected when product quality and delivery schedules are not maintained due to worker impairment.

Untreated chemical dependency can be very expensive to employers and the economy. Government studies estimate the nationwide losses in productivity, profits, and overall performance is over \$100 billion a year. Abusers/addicts will often sacrifice their careers, families, health and sometimes even their lives to the disease. The suffering also extends to their families, fellow workers and friends. People caught in abuse/addiction lose their good judgment, self control, dignity and self respect.

Substance abuse among workers has been linked to a host of economic, social, and public health problems. Research indicates that nearly 75% of illegal drug users are employed in full and part-time jobs. For companies, that means unhealthy employees, unsafe working conditions, loss of productivity, smaller profits, more accidents, higher medical claims expenses and a host of other negative effects for the company and the employees.

The costs of alcohol and drug abuse, both in the workplace and in society, are alarmingly high. Many types of expenses the company faces are:

- Administrative losses from absenteeism, tardiness, overtime pay, sick leave abuse, health insurance claims, disability payments, and costs associated with accidents
- Hidden losses caused by diverted supervisory and managerial time, friction among workers, material waste, equipment damage, poor decisions, and damage to public image
- Losses with legal implications such as Workers' Compensation, drug trafficking on the job, disciplinary actions, grievances, threat to public safety, and worksite security
- Costs of employee health insurance and other health care services

### **Hazard Mitigation:**

Efforts to address employee performance problems, including those related to alcohol and drugs have been ongoing for decades. Companies have long realized the link between a worker and the worker's life. Drug and alcohol problems have caused serious family problems and had an immediate negative effect on work performance.

As companies realized that healthy, happy and sober employees produce the best products and results, their efforts to help evolved into what are known today as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), which, in addition to alcohol and drug abuse issues, address a variety of other employee problems that can affect performance on the job. These assistance programs allow employees to help themselves by working together to overcome substance abuse problems in the workplace. Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) also recognize the important relationship between worker health and productivity and many provide EAP benefits in their health coverage.

**Special Note:** For many years, drug and alcohol dependency has been recognized as treatable diseases by the American Medical Association (AMA). If you, a friend or a co-worker are wrestling with substance addiction, seek help. An excellent source of information for help is the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Hope Line, which can be reached at **(800) NCA-CALL**.

**Employee Attendance:**(Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

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