

Drugs and Alcohol

Issue One: OTC* and Prescription Drugs

There are many reasons why individuals take medications. Examples can include allergies, anxiety, cold, depression, diabetes, heart and cholesteral conditions, pain, as well as many others.

It is important to understand that these medications may cause reactions that can impair your ability to drive safely (see right). This can especially be the case if you are taking more than one medication at a time. In order to understand how your medications are interacting with each other and your body, it is important to talk to your doctor once a year about all medications and supplements you are taking. You should also do this when you start taking a new medication. It may help to give your doctor a list of the work tasks you perform.

If you are taking medications you can work with your doctor to minimize the negative impacts they might cause. Adjusting your dose/timing of doses, changing medications, and seeking other ways to address your medical problem are all ways you and your doctor can work together.

Possible Reactions:

sleepiness
blurred vision
dizziness
slowed movement
fainting
inability to focus/pay attention
nausea

*OTC= over the counter

**Information taken directly from US DOT and NHTSA's document 'Driving When You Are Taking Medications'

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Issue Two: Safety-Sensitive Employees

Anyone designated as a safety-sensitive employee, according to US DOT regulations, is subject to DOT drug and alcohol testing. For FTA grant recipients, subrecipients, operators, or contractors, the following are considered safety-sensitive functions: vehicle operation, vehicle control (such as dispatching), vehicle or equipment maintenance, and armed security. If you perform any of those four functions (on a daily basis or in an emergency situation), you are considered safety-sensitive (it is not based on your job title).

As a safety-sensitive employee, the following conduct is prohibited by the regulations:

- You cannot use or possess alcohol or illicit drugs while assigned to perform, or actually performing, safety-sensitive functions.
- You cannot report for duty, or remain on duty, if any of the following are true: you are under the influence of or impaired by alcohol; you have a blood alcohol concentration of .04 or greater (with a blood alcohol concentration of .02-.039, some regulations do not permit you to continue working until your next scheduled shift); you have used any illicit drug.
- You cannot consume alcohol within four hours of reporting for service or after receiving notice to report.
- You cannot report for duty or remain on duty when using any controlled substance unless prescribed by a doctor.
- You cannot refuse to test for alcohol or controlled substances.
- You cannot adulterate or substitute your test specimen.

**Information taken directly from US DOT's document 'What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug and Alcohol Testing' and 49 CFR Part 655, "Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations"

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Quiz One: OTC* and Prescription Drugs

Please answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following are possible reactions to over the counter and prescription drugs? (circle all that apply)

- (a) dizziness
- (d) nausea
- (c) sleepiness
- (d) blurred vision

2. Since you do not need to see a doctor to get over the counter drugs, they do not have any side effects and do not interact with prescription drugs.

True or False (circle one)

3. It is important to understand how medications interact with each other if you are taking more than one type of medication.

True or False (circle one)

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Quiz Two: Safety-Sensitive Employees

Please answer the following questions:

1. Your status as a safety-sensitive employee is based on your job title and not the actual tasks you perform.

True or False (circle one)

2. You cannot consume alcohol within how many hours of reporting for service or after receiving notice to report? (choose one)

- (a) 2 hours
- (b) 6 hours
- (c) 4 hours
- (d) 24 hours

3. You cannot report for duty after using a controlled substance unless it was prescribed by your doctor.

True or False (circle one)

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Issue Three: Prohibited Drugs

DOT drug tests are conducted using only urine specimens, and the following drugs/metabolites in your urine will cause a test to return positive:

- Marijuana metabolites/THC
- Cocaine metabolites
- Amphetamines (including methamphetamine, MDMA, MDA, MDEA)
- Opiates (including codeine, heroin (6-AM), morphine)
- Phencyclidine (PCP)

While some states allow the use of medical or recreational marijuana, federal laws and policy do not recognize any legitimate use of marijuana. Drug tests will not be verified as negative based upon state medical or recreational marijuana initiatives. DOT states that marijuana remains listed as a drug in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, and it is unacceptable for safety-sensitive employees to use marijuana.

**Information taken directly from US DOT's document 'What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing' and DOT Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance Notice December 3, 2012.

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Issue Four: Testing

Safety-sensitive employees can be tested for drugs and alcohol in the following situations:

Pre-employment- when you are hired, you are required to submit to a drug test. Employers may also conduct alcohol testing, but it is not required.

Reasonable Suspicion/Cause- you must submit to a drug and/or alcohol test if a supervisor requests so based on reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion means a trained supervisor(s) or other company official(s) reasonably believes you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, based on specific observations concerning your appearance, speech, behavior, or body odors.

Random- you are subject to random, unannounced drug and alcohol testing.

Post-Accident- this is required if you are involved in an event (crash, accident, etc) meeting certain criteria of the DOT agency.

Return to Duty- if you have violated any prohibited drug or alcohol rules, you must take a drug and/or alcohol test before you can return to safety-sensitive functions for any DOT-regulated employer.

Follow-up- the Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) determines how often you will be tested, for how long, and for what substances. This can continue for up to 5 years.

**Information taken directly from US DOT's document 'What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing' and 49 CFR Part 655, "Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations"

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Quiz Three: Prohibited Drugs

Please answer the following questions:

1. The Department of Transportation does not recognize any legitimate use of marijuana, even if a driver works in a state that has passed state laws that allow the medical or recreational use of the substance.

True or False (circle one)

2. Methamphetamine in your urine will cause your test to return positive.

True or False (circle one)

3. Department of Transportation drug tests are conducted using only urine specimens.

True or False (circle one)

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Quiz Four: Testing

Please answer the following questions:

1. Random drug and alcohol testing is unannounced.

True or False (circle one)

2. Upon hire, an employer may conduct alcohol testing but it is not required.

True or False (circle one)

3. Follow-up testing can continue for up to how long?

- (a) 2 years
- (b) 90 days
- (c) 5 years

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Issue Five: Refusal to Test

As a safety-sensitive employee, you cannot refuse a test. The following are examples of refusals to test:

- Not appearing or remaining at a test site until the test is complete.
- Not providing a urine, saliva or breath sample.
- Not allowing yourself to be monitored while giving a urine sample (this will not always be required).
- Not supplying enough urine, saliva or breath when there is no adequate medical reason for the failure.
- Not taking a second wind when directed to do so.
- Not cooperating with any part of the testing process.
- Failing to undergo medical evaluation as part of “shy bladder or lung” procedures.
- Failing to sign Step #2 of the Alcohol Testing Form (ATF) or Copy #2 of the Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form (CCF).
- Providing a specimen that is adulterated/substituted.
- Not complying with any part of the testing process.
- Not following the observer’s instructions.
- Possessing or wearing a prosthetic or other device that could interfere with the collection process.
- Admitting to the collector or Medical Review Officer (MRO) that you adulterated or substituted the specimen.

**Information taken directly from US DOT’s document ‘What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing’

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Issue Six: Refusals, Positive Tests & Violations

If you test positive, refuse a test, or violate DOT drug and alcohol rules the following will occur:

- 1 A supervisor or company official will immediately remove you from DOT-regulated safety-sensitive functions.
- 2 You will not be permitted to return to performing DOT-regulated safety-sensitive duties until you have completed the following: undergone an evaluation by a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP); successfully completed any education, counseling, or treatment prescribed by the SAP before returning to service; and provided a negative test result for drugs and/or a test result of less than 0.02 for alcohol (this is your return to duty testing).
- 3 Upon returning to a safety-sensitive job, you will be subject to unannounced testing for drugs and/or alcohol no less than 6 times during the first year of active service with the possibility of this continuing for up to 5 years (this is decided by the SAP). These tests will be directly observed.

While the DOT regulations do require that anyone with a positive or refusal be removed from DOT safety-sensitive functions, it does not address employment actions such as hiring/firing/leaves of absence. That is up to your employer. If you leave to work for another provider that is regulated by a DOT agency, your drug and alcohol testing history will follow you to your new employer.

**Information taken directly from US DOT’s document ‘What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug & Alcohol Testing’

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Quiz Five: Refusal to Test

Please answer the following questions:

1. Simply appearing at the test site is enough- if you leave the site before the test is complete it will not count as a refusal to test.

True or False (circle one)

2. Safety-sensitive employees cannot refuse a test.

True or False (circle one)

3. Not cooperating with a particular aspect of the test is considered an incomplete and not a refusal to test.

True or False (circle one)

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Quiz Six: Refusals, Positive Tests & Violations

Please answer the following questions:

1. If you refuse a test, you will be required to finish your shift so that the agency will not be short-staffed (including performing DOT-regulated safety-sensitive functions).

True or False (circle one)

2. Upon returning to a safety-sensitive job after a positive test, test refusal or other violation of DOT drug and/or alcohol rules, you will be subject to unannounced drug and/or alcohol testing no less than how many times during the first year of active service? (choose one)

- (a) no less than 4 times
- (b) no less than 8 times
- (c) no less than 12 times
- (d) no less than 6 times

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Issue Seven: Drug and Alcohol Abuse Problems

If you have a drug or alcohol abuse problem, seek help. Most communities have programs available to confidentially assist you through the evaluation and treatment of your problem. To find a treatment facility, check your local yellow pages, local health department, or visit the US Department of Health and Human Services website to view their treatment facility locator.

Many workplaces also have programs available to assist employees and family members with substance abuse, mental health, and other problems that affect their job performance. Here are some programs that might be available to you:

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)- while not required by the DOT, some employers/unions might have these programs in place. Remember, you can contact an EAP even if you haven't had a positive test!

Voluntary Referral Programs- allow you to self-report your abuse problem to your employer before a violation occurs.

Peer Reporting Programs- encourage or require employees to report co-workers who have an abuse problem.

Education and Training Programs (required by all federal agencies)- educate employees about drug/alcohol abuse and explain testing procedures and company policies.

**Information taken directly from US DOT's document 'What Employees Need to Know about DOT Drug and Alcohol Testing'



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Quiz Seven: Drug and Alcohol Abuse Problems

Please answer the following questions:

1. Your employer is required by the federal government to have drug and alcohol education and training programs.

True or False (circle one)

2. The following are places you can find information about treatment facilities if you have a drug or alcohol abuse problem (choose one):

- (a) the local yellow pages
- (b) a local health department
- (c) the US Department of Health and Human Services website
- (d) all of the above

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