



SAFETY HANDOUT: Substance Abuse Prevention & Workplace Safety

October is National Substance Abuse Prevention Month



The Core Message: Safety is Shared. Support is Available.

In any workplace, substance abuse isn't just a personal health crisis—it is a safety concern that affects the entire team. Operating equipment, handling tools, or managing daily workflows requires 100% focus and alertness. Protecting our team means fostering a culture where seeking help is respected, and looking out for one another is our top priority.

1. The Impact of Impairment on the Job

Impairment in the workplace compromises reaction times, distorts situational awareness, and impacts everyday operations. The consequences of unaddressed substance use include:

- **Increased Accident Risk:** Slower reflexes can lead to severe equipment injuries, slips, trips, falls, or hazardous operational errors.
 - **Team Fatigue:** Unplanned absences put sudden strain on remaining crew members, forcing shifts to scramble and leading to overwork and stress.
 - **Impacted Morale:** When safety standards are compromised, it creates an uneasy environment for everyone on the floor or in the office.
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2. Identifying the Signs (The CARE Approach)

We are not here to judge or diagnose our coworkers, but we are here to look out for them. If you notice a drastic shift in a teammate's baseline behavior, keep the **C-A-R-E** framework in mind:

- **C - Changes in Performance:** Sudden drops in productivity, missed deadlines, or an unusual uptick in minor mistakes.
 - **A - Attendance and Punctuality:** Arriving late to shifts consistently, taking prolonged breaks, or frequent unexcused absences.
 - **R - Physical or Behavioral Signs:** Uncharacteristic changes in speech, coordination, appearance, or sudden, severe mood swings.
 - **E - Expressed Concerns:** If a teammate mentions feeling overwhelmed, struggling with chronic pain, or facing severe personal stressors, encourage them to seek support.
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3. Public & Professional Resources Available to Everyone

If you or a loved one is struggling with substance use, you do not have to navigate it alone. There are free, national, and fully confidential public resources available 24/7:

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** Call **1-800-662-4357 (HELP)**. Run by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, this is a free, confidential, 24/7 information service that provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.
- **The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text **988**. While widely known for mental health crises, 988 is also fully equipped to support individuals dealing with immediate substance use distress or emotional crises.
- **FindSupport.gov:** An online public portal designed to help individuals find affordable treatment choices, learn about recovery options, and understand how to access healthcare resources in their local area.