

Drug Testing for the Workplace

Categories : [Legal and Protective Services](#), [Substance Abuse](#)

The information provided on the 211 eLibrary is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be and should not be construed as legal advice. Readers must consult an individual employer to learn the specific drug testing policy for that place of employment.

Employers may put drug testing programs into place due to federal regulations or because of business or legal requirements. Drug testing can also be done through a voluntary drug-free workplace program instituted to reduce incidents of substance abuse among an organization's employees.

The following information is summarized for the website of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Division of Workplace Programs: <https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/employer-resources>

TYPES OF DRUG TESTS

The following types of tests are available for substance abuse testing:

- Blood Tests – Blood tests are given to indicate if the person was under the influence of substances at the time the test was administered;
- Breath-Alcohol Tests – Breath-Alcohol tests are given to indicate if the person was under the influence of alcohol at the time the test was administered; and
- Urine Tests – Urine tests are given to indicate if the person has used drugs in a recent period of time.
- Other types of tests available for substance abuse testing include hair, sweat patch and oral fluids.

Further information can be found at the Connecticut Clearinghouse website:
<https://www.ctclearinghouse.org/topics/drug-testing/>

EMPLOYERS

Employers may want or need to perform drug testing on employees or prospective employees in specific types of situations. Some examples of these tests and the situations they are used for are as follows:

- Pre-Employment Tests – Employers perform tests on job applicants and make offers of employment based on negative test results;
- Post-Accident Tests – Employers test employees involved in serious accidents or incidents on the job to determine if alcohol or drug abuse was a contributing factor;
- Random Tests – Employers test employees on a random basis; usually, employees are in a safety or security-sensitive occupation;
- Reasonable Suspicion Tests – Employers test employees after observing patterns of possible drug use, symptoms of being under the influence, or an arrest or conviction for substance abuse; and
- Treatment Follow-up Tests – Employees who have returned to work after participating in an alcohol or other drug rehabilitation program are tested at random or specific intervals to ensure they are abstaining from substance abuse.
- Annual Physical Exam – Employers must be sure to inform employees that drug testing will be part of an annual physical exam. Failure to provide prior notification is a violation of the employee's constitutional rights.

EMPLOYEES/JOB APPLICANTS

The following information applies to employees or job applicants who may be subject to drug testing

- Some employers may be required to test you when you apply for a job. However, you must be given notice of this requirement in writing and be given the results of a positive urinalysis test. The results are confidential.
- Employers cannot ask employees to take drug tests unless they have a reasonable belief that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs which can affect job performance. Employees with jobs where safety is important, such as bus or truck drivers, forklift operators, or health care professionals can be tested at any time.
- If a drug test result is positive, the employer must have the employee take a second test. The second test must be performed by a different testing company. An employee cannot be fired, transferred or refused promotion unless the second test verifies the results of the first test.

HOW TO FIND A DRUG TESTING LABORATORY

A list of drug testing laboratories certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services can be found by calling the Drug Free Workplace Helpline at 800-967-5752 (1-800-WORKPLACE).

SOURCES: Connecticut Clearinghouse website; Drug Testing – Division of Workplace Programs

PREPARED BY: 211/nl

CONTENT LAST REVIEWED: August2024