Working Sober is the Only Safe Way



Some people are driven to distraction by a picture hanging crooked, or a light switch or wall plate that is installed off square. But if a worker is off kilter as a result of being impaired by alcohol or drugs, whether prescription or otherwise, the results can go far beyond shoddy workmanship.

Sobering Statistics

According to the American Council for Drug Education (ACDE), 23 million Americans use marijuana at least four times a week and 18 million people abuse alcohol. In Canada, between four and five million people are believed to engage in high-risk drinking.

The ACDE estimates that more than 70 percent of people who abuse alcohol or drugs are employed.

Sobering Effects

If you have ever worked while hung over from a night of partying, or been high or drunk on the job, you know how difficult it is to concentrate on working. No one has to tell you that your productivity and work quality is suffering, but have you considered the danger you pose to yourself and others?

Substance abusers are five times more likely than other workers to cause injuries and they are responsible for 40 percent of all industrial fatalities, according to the ACDE.

Here are two tragic examples of what can happen when drugs or alcohol are mixed with work:

A 39-year-old construction worker died after falling 21 feet (6.4 meters) from a load of lumber on a forklift truck. The beams were being raised to a second story window and after starting to pull the heavy beams from inside a house, the victim stepped out onto the forks to push them inside. He lost balance and fell when the beams shifted. Tests found alcohol and drugs in the victim’s body.

A 33-year-old equipment operator died after slipping between the tracks and the body of the bulldozer he was operating. The operator had given a co-worker a ride on a bulldozer and he lowered the blade to the ground and stood on the track to hand the other worker a jacket that he had forgotten to take with him.

The bulldozer suddenly moved backwards and the operator fell and was crushed to death. A blood test revealed that the operator had been significantly impaired by alcohol.

Working with a Hangover Is No Good, Either

Even if you aren’t high or drunk while working, you can be a menace to yourself and others if you are suffering the after effects from a previous night of partying. Whether you’re dealing with a pounding headache, a stomach that feels like a volcano ready to erupt or severe fatigue, your mind is anywhere but on your job. All it takes is a second of inattention to find yourself in the wrong place at the wrong time, or to endanger a co-worker through your hazy actions.

Is It Time for Some Serious Soul-Searching?

If you’re dragging yourself into work hung over or consuming alcohol or drugs on the job, you need to take a serious look at your lifestyle and seek help.

If you seriously believe you are hurting no one but yourself you are wrong, potentially dead wrong.