

Issue 10 – Is controlling drug abuse more important than protecting privacy?

If a company is to be held liable – financially and morally - for the actions of it's employees and these employees are negligent in using drugs and alcohol then yes a company should be able to test them. This is where the problem lies.

Some of the things to think about are how accurate is a test, what is done with the results and is the test administered in a dignified way. What does it mean when an employer can require our blood , saliva, urine, hair or even the air in our bodies to be used in a breathalyzer to determine what may be in our system before we are employed. If we feel violated does that matter anymore? Also, the tests may be done under the guise of insurability rather than a requirement for employment, to administer such tests. This is where the law is averted. A newer issue is also who owns this information and how is it stored, used and who else is allowed to read/use this data.

How do members of our society keep pride in one's self if we never did drugs, never will and are the most honest truest person alive...why does this have to be proved through science? We need to be allowed to show those values within ourselves some other way, or our society has become one such that a person isn't believed unless they urinate and get it analyzed.

Is the test administered and analyzed by a trained professional? Do they make enough money for their job to not accept bribes and allow false results on a test? Does an incorrect reading told to an employer and even a retested result with a false result – tarnish us permanently and force us into continual unemployment? If one person in a company is made to take a test then everyone probably should be required.

I am not a proponent of someone going into work high on any drug and this includes people having too much to drink at lunch on a regular basis. I think all drugs can be abused and someone may ruin their life with addiction all too often. A person may want to use certain drugs for recreation in their off time, which I am only talking about marijuana, but other people feel drugs like LSD should be legal and used at their personal discretion. The test results for these entities will report usage from several months to weeks ago, not if it is being done on the job. Why should something done on a Friday nite, Saturday or Sunday cause your employer to be alarmed or concerned? I would say if this type of drug use really does affect one's performance at job tasks and endanger anyone then yes it does matter, otherwise, no – it should not be analyzed, reported and used in this manner. So now who decides what to look for when looking at proper job performance.

What about alcohol... a person may be abusing alcohol every day, just because it is legal doesn't make it ok to abuse. Does the airlines or anyone in the transportation industry test someone randomly, yearly, once or every time they operate equipment before they allow them to work. I feel testing is an unfortunate entity to some degree. I know I do not want someone under the influence of anything to have my life in their hands.

Citations Nov 28 2006:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/safety-health/drugfreeworkplace.htm>

<http://www.dot.gov/ost/dapc/>