



Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry Association
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Marijuana Not Conducive to Workplace Safety

SEPTEMBER 2016: The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration issued a report (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-12/pdf/2016-17954.pdf>) on August 12th affirming the Schedule 1 Controlled Substance classification of Marijuana after a scientific and medical evaluation in which the Department of Health and Human Services "concluded that marijuana has a high potential for abuse, has no accepted medical use in the United States, and lacks an acceptable level of safety for use even under medical supervision." (U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration)

As conversations ensue worldwide calling for increasing acceptance of marijuana use, the Drug & Alcohol Testing Industry Association (DATIA) finds clear evidence in the report, issued by the U.S. Department of Justice, that marijuana is a drug causing impairment inconsistent with workplace safety.

Studies show that employees who use marijuana have 75% more absenteeism, 55% more industrial accidents and 85% more workplace injuries than other employees¹. Perhaps the greatest negative impact from drug use overall is the economic loss. The U.S. National Institutes of Health report that drug abuse costs the U.S. economy \$246 billion annually in decreased productivity, turnover, medical costs, increased accidents and absenteeism². In fact, 40% of workplace fatalities are due to substance abuse³.

For states in the U.S. that have embraced broad-sweeping changes in policies related to marijuana legalization, the results have been immediate. Employees testing positive for THC (the psycho-active component of cannabis) rose from the national average of 6% to an alarming 20% in Colorado and 23% in Washington. In fact, there has been an increase for all workplace illicit drug use for the first time in nearly two decades.

Marijuana use affects motor coordination, short-term memory, alters judgement and in high doses can cause paranoia and psychosis⁴⁵. The workplace is negatively impacted by drug use when safety protocols become jeopardized and machinery or equipment is used improperly. Often the small business owner is the chief victim when costs associated with these risks put their life's work in jeopardy.

Employers in the U.S. are feeling pressured to cease testing for cannabis due to perpetuated myths about drug-testing for THC that must be clarified. While THC is absorbed by the body's fatty tissues (including the brain), detectable THC in a drug screen indicates that normal functions are compromised⁶.

¹ Crites-Leoni, Abbie. "Medicinal Use of Marijuana: Is the Debate a Smoke Screen for Movement Toward Legalization?" *Journal of Legal Medicine* (1998): 273-280. Journal.

² "The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the United States" National Institute on Drug Abuse, Rockville, MD, 1992

³³ *Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace: Costs, Controls and Controversies*, Bureau of National Affairs, 1986, p.7

⁴ <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/job185drugs/cannabis.htm>

⁵ <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>

⁶ Workplace Drug Testing in the Era of Legal Marijuana, p. 9, DuPont, Robert et al., Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc. Rockville, MD, 2015

⁶ Dr. Sample, Barry. Drug Test Trends. Quest Diagnostics Drug Test Index Data presentation. DATIA Conference May 2015, Miami, FL

It has been consistently and repeatedly proven that workplace drug policies, which include a drug testing program, reinforce the best practices in drug prevention. In fact, individuals who self report drug use in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health have use rates 50% greater than those who are in a workplace drug testing program⁷.

Regardless of statements in support of drug use, it is not safe for employees to come to work under-the-influence of any substance that compromises workplace safety. Every employer has the right to expect work readiness and to enforce all safety standards in the interest of public health and safety.

Helpful Resources:

<http://datia.org/datia-resources/marijuana-outreach-resources.html>

<http://datia.org/datia/resources/DATIAEmployerBrochure.pdf>

http://datia.org/datia/eNews/marijuana_longbrochure.pdf

http://datia.org/datia/eNews/marijuana_shortbrochure.pdf

http://datia.org/datia/advocacy/IBH_workplacetesting.pdf

About DATIA

Founded in 1995, the Drug & Alcohol Testing Industry Association (DATIA) is a 1,500+ member industry trade association representing the full spectrum of drug and alcohol testing providers including laboratories, collection sites, C/TPAs, BATs, MROs, SAPs, employers, and testing device manufacturers. DATIA's mission includes working closely with key policy makers to ensure that the interests of the industry are heard and taken into account when changes in drug and alcohol testing rules are proposed. DATIA works to ensure that these provide for safe and effective drug free workplaces. DATIA further works to educate the industry on current standards of service and regulatory policies and procedures.