



Core Competencies Consortium/Third Party Administrator (C/TPA)

The C/TPA operates in a complex environment requiring skills and knowledge in a variety of subject areas related to drug and alcohol testing management. For the purpose of C/TPA accreditation the competency skills and knowledge subject areas are divided into these categories:

- Regulatory issues
- Breath Alcohol Testing, Collections and Procedures
- Random Testing and Consortium Services
- Training, Development and Leadership
- Services and Product Offerings
- Ethical Standards, Integrity and Confidentiality

I. Regulatory Issues

Competency Statement: The C/TPA must be knowledgeable about applicable regulations and rules including Federal and State guidelines for drug and alcohol testing programs. These regulations include Department of Health and Human Services Mandatory Guidelines, 49 CFR Part 40, applicable Federal Agency regulations, and various state programs and laws regarding drug and alcohol testing and drug free workplace programs. The C/TPA must also have knowledge of state and local laws (to include pending legislation) pertaining to drugs of abuse and marijuana laws in the areas where the C/TPA provides services, including an understanding of how those laws and regulations impact workplace drug testing programs. Knowledge and understanding of the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is necessary for the C/TPA to be effective in providing services to FMCSA regulated employers. C/TPA must abide by reporting requirements to any other agencies that pertain to their area of operations.

II. Breath Alcohol Testing, Drug Test Collections and Procedures:

Competency Statement: The C/TPA may or may not directly perform breath alcohol testing and/or specimen collections but certainly coordinates these services for their employer clients. The C/TPA must ensure their vendors providing alcohol testing and specimen collections are performing these services in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. Knowledge of collections and procedures will enable the C/TPA to:

- Describe and apply appropriate procedures for chain of custody and for urine specimen collections and problem collections
- Describe and apply appropriate procedures for breath alcohol testing, alcohol screening tests and problem tests

The C/TPA must ensure the vendors providing breath alcohol testing and/or specimen collections are appropriately trained and qualified to perform these services. The C/TPA should have written procedures for coordination and management of specimen collection and alcohol testing service

providers, including contracts or agreements for services being provided, mechanisms for evaluating their performance annually, and dispute resolution measures for billing or service issues.

III. Random Testing and Consortium Services

Competency Statement: The C/TPA must have knowledge of and operational procedures for regulatory compliant random testing and consortium services. The procedures shall include a scientifically valid computerized selection method and efficient notification process. DOT best practices for random testing shall be followed. A clear procedure for managing the random testing consortium for owner operators must be in place with consortium rules and a signed contract or agreement with each consortium member.

IV. Training, Development and Leadership

Competency Statement: The C/TPA working in an evolving industry must stay abreast of regulations and industry knowledge. This includes the C/TPA owner or manager and the C/TPA staff who must be involved in ongoing training on regulations, emerging technologies, substance abuse trends in America and industry best practices. The C/TPA should participate in industry associations for ongoing training events and annual conferences. The C/TPA management and leadership must set the example and foster a culture of following company procedures, industry standards and best practices.

V. Services and Product Offerings

Competency Statement: The C/TPA must know and understand the products and services being sold. Drug test panels and specimens being tested at laboratories can be complex; there are many options besides 5 panels and federal panels. An understanding of the MRO process and responsibilities is critical to the C/TPA whether these services are offered internally or outsourced. Knowledge and understanding of current and emergent technologies used to order tests, distribute test results, and manage random testing is critical. If other non-testing services are offered there must be a thorough knowledge of these services and how they work, these might include:

- Physical examinations scheduling and management
- Driver qualification file management
- FAA background check management
- FMCSA safety check requirements (391.23) management
- Background check services (CRM, SSN, EMP, etc.)—direct and indirect
- Prior employer drug/alcohol violations checks (40.25)
- FMCSA Clearinghouse services (reporting, queries)

VI. Ethical Standards, Integrity and Confidentiality

Competency Statement: Workplace drug testing affects the livelihood of job applicants and employees; thus, ethical conduct and confidentiality are critical functions of the C/TPA operation. The C/TPA owner, manager and staff must know the difference between right and wrong. A C/TPA mantra is to take responsibility for mistakes or errors, find the root cause, resolve the issue, and take steps to ensure the issue does not continue to occur. Respect for team members, customers, vendors, and competitors is a core value for integrity in the drug and alcohol testing industry. The Accredited C/TPA shall abide by the current published NDASA C/TPA code of ethics.