

# What every employer needs to know about marijuana and the workplace



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Economic loss from employee drug use costs the average small business owner \$7,000 per month, and the United States \$246 billion annually, via lacking productivity, staff turnover, workplace accidents, absenteeism and increased medical costs.

**THC, the active ingredient, of the cannabis plant, is impairing — which threatens workplace safety.** The user experiences reduced motor coordination, short-term memory loss and altered reaction time. High doses can cause paranoia and psychosis <sup>1,2</sup>, and high-potency THC yields longer lasting highs that may affect the entire workday.

**Know how to detect someone who is under the influence.** One of the best ways is to be able to spot deviation from normal behavior. Attend annual trainings on signs and symptoms leading to a reasonable-

suspicion drug test. Decisions to test should be made on specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations of appearance, behavior, speech or body odors.

**“B-b-but I used marijuana one time 30 days ago!”** Such one-time use cannot be detected 30 days later via urinalysis. Detectable THC in urine indicates regular or chronic marijuana use that science tells us compromises normal functions. Lab-based oral tests can detect THC use in the previous 24 hours.

**Create a culture of safety.** Keep your drug policies updated, regularly and clearly communicated and consistently enforced.



## BY THE NUMBERS

- Employees who use THC have 55% more industrial accidents, 75% more absenteeism and 85% more workplace injuries than those who don't. <sup>4</sup>
- Employees in a mandatory drug-testing programs have 55% less drug use than those who aren't. Testing reduces workplace accidents as much as 70%. <sup>5</sup>

## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/job185drugs/cannabis.htm> <sup>2</sup> <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana> <sup>3</sup> Workplace Drug Testing in the Era of Legal Marijuana, p. 9, DuPont, Robert et al., Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc. Rockville, MD, 2015 <sup>4</sup> Abbie <sup>5</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse