

Prescription Abuse in the Workplace Fast Facts

Workplace Injuries and Violence

Many disability claims—for workplace and automobile injuries as well as family and workplace violence—can be attributed to substance abuse.

Employees who abuse alcohol or drugs are three and a half times more likely to be involved in a workplace accident than other workers.

Up to 40% of industrial fatalities and 47% of industrial injuries can be linked to alcohol use and alcoholism. Furthermore, employees who use drugs are five times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim

Prescription Drugs Most Commonly Abused Pain Relievers

- o propoxyphene or codeine products (e.g., Darvocet®, Tylenol® with Codeine)
- o oxycodone products (e.g., Percocet®, OxyContin®)
- o hydrocodone products (e.g., Vicodin®)
- o tramadol products (e.g., Ultram®)

Stimulants

- o amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, and phentermine products (e.g., Biphedamine®, Dexedrine®, Fastin®)
- o mazindol products (e.g., Mazanor®)

Central Nervous System (CNS) Depressants

- o temazepam, flurazepam, or triazolam (benzodiazepines that are generally used as sedatives rather than anxiolytics, e.g., Restoril®, Dalmane®, Halcion®)
- o any barbiturates (e.g., Amytal®, Butisol®, Tuinal®)
- o benzodiazepines (those that are typically used as anxiolytics rather than as sedatives, e.g., Valium®, Xanax®)
- o meprobamate products (e.g., Equanil®)
- o muscle relaxants (e.g., Flexeril®)

The Cycle of Addiction



A person becomes addicted once he or she is psychologically or physically dependent on a substance.

Psychological dependence means that an individual believes that he or she cannot function in social, work or other settings without being intoxicated in some way. About 15% of regular substance users become psychologically dependent on the substance.³

Physical dependence, on the other hand, includes one or both of the following experiences over time:^{3, 5}

- o Tolerance: A need for increased amounts of a substance to achieve intoxication.
- o Withdrawal: Symptoms such as nausea, chills, and/or vomiting upon discontinuing use of the substance.