

THE ADVOCATE

Promoting a Drug Free Work Place

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IN LESS THAN A SECOND...

Jack's hand trembled as he poured himself a second cup of black coffee, and his head throbbed as he struggled to harness his thoughts and bring them into some semblance of order. "Just a hangover," Jack told himself. He drank because he wanted to, not because he had to. He seldom missed a day of work; played golf at least once a week, and he supported a family. He was no alcoholic. He could go for several days without a drink. It was simply relaxing to have a few drinks at the end of the day. This morning, like many other mornings, Jack found relief from his hangover in black coffee and a couple shots of vodka. That always settled his nerves. He was ready for another day in the heating and air conditioning business. His company, ABC Heating & Air, was owned by three brothers, and had grown from four employees to 45 over the past five years. Jack joined ABC several months before having been fired from his previous job for insubordination. That was a long story that Jack seldom shared.



When he climbed into his company van, he checked to be sure his flask of vodka was carefully tucked into the compartment in his door--just in case his headache worsened. His first appointment was at a dentist office in the suburbs about 20 miles from his home. He yawned and rubbed at his eyes. He felt almost like he might be coming down with the flu. But, he had already missed a day of work the week before, and he didn't want to listen to his wife's bellyaching again, always blaming his bouts with the flu on his drinking.

He glanced at the flask in the door pocket, and pulled it from its hiding place and placed it between his legs. He didn't see the stop sign. The last thing he saw was the yellow school bus crossing in front of him.

Three junior high school students lost their lives that morning and several more were badly injured as Jack's van plowed into the side of the school bus flipping it onto its side before it burst into flames. Jack escaped with minor injuries, but with major memories that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

Nearly three-fourths of all alcohol and substance abusers are employed. Jack was one of them. His company, ABC Heating &

Air had what they considered adequate liability insurance, but they had never been the defendant in thirteen lawsuits stemming from one single accident. Jack's blood alcohol level was twice the legal limit that morning. His problem was no longer his own. There were many victims that day. The awards for damages exceeded ABC's insurance limits and they were forced to close their doors. Jack's future would be determined by a jury, but the futures of many others were determined by Jack.

More and more companies today have recognized the value of pre-employment and random drug testing programs. Studies show that 40% of industrial fatalities and 47% of industrial injuries can be linked to alcohol consumption and alcoholism.

Being a small company, ABC had not considered setting up a "Drug Free Workplace" program. The cost of such a program was something they had never factored into their budget. Sadly, they hadn't factored in millions of dollars in wrongful death and injury claims either.

Statistics also show that pre-employment and random drug testing programs are working to reduce the numbers of employees abusing drugs and alcohol. Monthly drug use rates among workers decreased from nearly 17% in 1985 to 7% in 1992 (according to NIDA), and they have remained at the lower level.

Yes, in a matter of seconds, lives can be destroyed by alcohol and drug abusers. In a matter of seconds, it may be too late to realize the importance of establishing a drug-free workplace. Yes, testing saves money...and lives!

Mission Statement

"To remain the leader in the drug and alcohol testing industry throughout the United States by utilizing both the skills of a highly trained and motivated staff and the latest technological advances while providing innovative products, superior value, and impeccable service to our customers."