

October 16 to 22 Drug-Free Work Week

The U.S. Secretary of Labor, Elaine L. Chao announced that the week of October 16 to 22 will be Drug-Free Work Week. The purpose of this week is to educate employers, employees, and the general public about the importance of being drug-free as a component of improving workplace safety.

"Drug-free workplace programs advance worker safety and can be a life-changing resource for workers who have drug or alcohol problems," said Secretary Chao. "Members of the Department's Drug-Free Workplace Alliance, during Drug-Free Work Week, will be promoting effective programs focused on detection, deterrence and assistance for workers who need it."

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how they can participate in Drug-Free Work Week and ways they can promote drug-free workplace messages during the campaign and throughout the year by visiting the department's Working Partners Website at <http://www.dol.gov/workingpartners>.

People in Recovery Make Good Employees

A recent article in the Los Angeles Times featured a story about a Los Angeles cafe owner who said he makes a point of hiring people in addiction recovery because they make good employees.

The cafe owner, Jon Esformes, said, "Someone who is in recovery has a real gratitude for the opportunity they have to be a part of the world and to be a part of something, because for so long they may not have been a part of anything." He said, "It was that kind of excitement I wanted in this restaurant as part of our team."

Esformes (who himself is a recovering alcoholic) cited the enthusiasm, integrity, and willingness to take instruction and criticism, of employees in recovery, some of which they may have learned in the 12-step programs.

Ten of Esformes fifteen employees are in recovery. Employers cannot ask employees about health problems, but some, he said, volunteer the information.

Experts say that it is crucial for people in recovery to have opportunities to rejoin the workforce. Scott Robertson, administrator for Glendale Adventist Alcohol and Drug Services, said "While treatment is a marvelous thing, if the treated individual doesn't acquire gainful employment, the likely success of the treatment would decline."

Hiring people in recovery is not without risks, however. Relapse is common, especially during the first year of sobriety. In addition, employees will often need time off to attend support group meetings and other appointments. Esformes says: "When I balance the exuberance that someone (newly sober) brings to the job and to the client's table, you know it would have to be a much higher cost to me to offset that. I get paid back tenfold."

Source: [Join Together \(June 2006\)](#)

Saying "No" to Drugs, "Yes" to Testing

Over the past 15 years, workplace drug testing in America has gone from ground zero to widespread employer acceptance. Today, approximately 49 percent of the full-time workforce are subject to some kind of workplace drug testing, according to reports from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Overall, restaurant employees constitute the second-highest group of illicit drug users in the United States. Years of testing by Costa Mesa, CA based OHS Health & Safety Services has found that random testing in restaurants result in over twice as many positive results than those at department stores or office jobs.

Comments like "I can't institute a drug-free policy because I will lose all my employees" are mythical statements," according to Joseph Reilly, chairman of the board for the Drug & Alcohol Testing Industry. "They might lose about 5-10 percent of their employees, but those were the ones that they needed to lose anyway."

"The fact that you are a drug-free workplace works well in any recruitment ads," said Mel Kleiman, principal at Houston-based Humetrics, a human resources consultant group. "When you run the ads, you'll get less people responding to it, but they'll less likely be drug users."

The high cost of employing such workers can be enough to close a business.

Wayne Hovland, Vice President of Drug Screening at Aurico Inc, said, "Drug users need to support their habits. Some resort to theft, from companies and from other employees."

"Regardless of your company's size, industry and location," Hovland says, "You are not immune from the problems of drug abuse. Implement a drug screening program now. A year from now, you'll be glad you did."

Source: [Pizza Marketplace News](#)

"Cocaine" in a Can... A Real Drink?

The New York Post reported on September 17 that a Las Vegas Company is marketing an energy drink called "Cocaine" to young partygoers, referring to it as a "legal alternative" to the real thing.

Redux Beverages says that the drink, that contains simple sugars, caffeine and vitamin B-12, gives users a "high" that lasts for five hours and doesn't make drinkers crash like other energy drinks. They say "Cocaine" is 350 percent stronger than Red Bull.

Redux owner, Jamey Kirby, said, "When a person sees the name of the drink, some psychological effect happens and the person is already experiencing the energy buzz before they even open the can." He added, "I can think of no other product except real cocaine that could have that effect on the public."

It is reported that the drink tastes like a cherry Jolly Rancher. Some drinkers reported getting a rush from the drink, but side-effects like heartburn and a racing heart were also noted. Kirby said one of the ingredients in "Cocaine" induces a slightly numb feeling in the throat, mimicking the effect of real cocaine.

The drink is slated to go on sale in New York this fall.

Editor's Note: I think this is a dangerous concept, and like other energy drinks, there are side effects--some of which can be harmful. What will they think of next??