



Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

Substance Abuse and Accidents

Objective: Describe the effects of alcohol and drugs on workers and on safety.

How to Use This Module

Drugs and alcohol cause many changes to the body and the mind. They can have a disastrous effect on safety. For this module:

- Review the effects of alcohol and other drugs.
- Discuss the case studies with workers using the Case Study Questions in this module.
- Discuss other cases of alcohol and drugs you have seen on the job using the Case Study Questions.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

Background

Drugs and alcohol have many detrimental effects on the body. Those effects can be short-term or long-term. All those effects increase the possibility of accidents on the job.

Alcohol

Alcohol, a drug, depresses the central nervous system. With moderate drinking, a person may experience:

- Dizziness
- Dulling of senses
- Impaired coordination
- Impaired reflexes
- Impaired memory
- Impaired judgment

Consumed in large amounts or over a long period of time, alcohol may cause damage to the liver, heart, and pancreas. Heavy binge drinking can depress the parts of the brain that control breathing and heart rate; it can cause death.

Illegal Drugs

Illegal drugs include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, speed (amphetamines), heroin, LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), PCP (phencyclidine), and many others. They can last for several months in the body. They can cause:

- Decreased long- and short-term memory
- Decreased concentration
- Distorted senses
- Impaired perception of time and space
- Slowed reaction time
- Temporary blindness
- Hallucinations

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Even legal, “safe” drugs can have harmful effects if used improperly. For example, prescription or over-the-counter drugs may cause drowsiness. They may have other harmful effects if:

- They are used in combination with another drug.
- They are used in the wrong dosage.
- Safety precautions are not followed.

Substance Abuse and Job Performance

- Alcohol can affect job performance for up to 14 hours.
- Combining alcohol and other drugs multiplies their effects. That increases the risk of injury and death.
- Drugs and alcohol increase the possibility of accidents.

Case Study 1

Joe drank beer and wine in high school and started using other drugs as a young adult. While working at Miller’s nursery, he started taking speed to get going in the morning. The drugs interfered with Joe’s judgment and caused a series of on-the-job injuries to him and others.

Case Study 2

Molly, a forklift operator, drank alcohol during her lunch hour. During a 16-hour shift, she drank on two more occasions and then went back to work. Molly knew she was high but felt that she could work. Before the shift ended, Molly struck a barrier with the forklift and was thrown from the vehicle. She lost work as a result of the injury.

Case Study Questions

- What was the immediate cause of the incident?
- What factors led to the incident?
- How could similar accidents that could result in illness or injury be prevented?
- How could these situations be prevented?

Review These Important Points

- Alcohol is a drug.
- Even with moderate drinking a person experiences impairments.
- Drugs can last several months in the body.

- Working under the influence of drugs or alcohol can cause a serious accident.
- The effects of alcohol can last up to 14 hours.
- Using both alcohol and drugs increases the problem and can lead to a serious accident.
- If you have a problem, tell someone who can help.
- If a co-worker has a drug or alcohol problem, tell someone who can help.

About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

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Answer Key: 1 = T, 2 = T, 3 = F, 4 = F, 5 = T.

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Substance Abuse and Accidents

Name _____

True or False?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Drinking alcohol will affect job performance. | T | F |
| 2. Job performance may be impaired up to 14 hours after drinking alcohol. | T | F |
| 3. The combination of drugs and alcohol has little to no effect on working. | T | F |
| 4. If a co-worker is affected by drugs or alcohol, it is not a problem. | T | F |
| 5. With moderate drinking, a person may experience impairments in coordination, reflexes, judgment, and memory. | T | F |