



## PART 1: DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE – POSSIBLE?

Alcohol and drug abuse has reached epidemic proportions in the workplace, touching every industry at every level. In the U.S., more than 1 in 10 employees have a drinking problem with nearly one third using illegal drugs. The National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence (NCADD) reports that 70 per cent of the estimated 14.8 million workers in the U.S. use illegal drugs.

Substance abuse costs United States' businesses an estimated \$276 billion in health care, workplace injuries, disability payments, and losses in productivity.

A person impaired on the job, due to substance abuse, is a threat to themselves and to the health and safety of co-workers. Users often lose their jobs, families, health, and lives to the disease of addiction. Their co-workers, families, and friends suffer as well. Substance abuse can rob people of their good judgment, self-control, and dignity.

Studies show that substance abusers are far less productive, miss more work days, are more likely to injure themselves or someone else, and file more Workers' Compensation claims. Although OH&S legislation doesn't address substance abuse in the workplace, policies differ from province to province and business to business. Implementing a Drug-Free Workplace Program "DFWP" will improve safety, promote employee health, and reduce operating expenses. This kind of program is essential to reduce workplace injuries and enhance the livelihood of employees.

Safety Services Company has made the support and implementation of DFWP policies and training our core commitment for the remainder of 2015. Look for more

stories each month that focus on this issue, with guidelines, insights and interviews that you won't find elsewhere, to help keep your business and employees safe and better informed.

Safety Services Company can help your business develop a DFWP from the ground up. Learn more by visiting [safety-services-company.com](http://safety-services-company.com).



## COMPLIANCE CORNER

September 2015

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***"70 percent of the  
estimated 14.8 million  
workers in the US use  
illegal drugs..."***

**National Council on  
Alcohol and Drug Dependence**

## REAL-LIFE LESSONS

A solid education, no matter how it is acquired, is the foundation for how we develop mentally, and continue to absorb knowledge throughout our lifetime on the job. Learning styles can be broken down into three specific types:

Auditory learners often thrive by hearing the information, and respond to changes in tone and inflection, tend to regurgitate information well, and enjoy working in groups where active participation takes place.

Visual learners take information best through imagery. Charts, graphs, and pictures are useful tools for this type of learner. They need to see what they are expected to know and would opt to read information rather than listen to it.

Kinesthetic learners understand new training material best by using a hands-on approach. They tend to choose direct involvement in operating a new piece of machinery, instead of watching a video or reading instructions. Kinesthetic learners have a hard time sitting still, would rather stand than sit, and prefer real demonstration rather than verbal explanation.

To instill job safety and proper training of workers, providing choices of learning environments is beneficial. Visit us at [safety-services-company.com](http://safety-services-company.com) to learn more.

## OVERDUE PROTECTIONS AGAINST BERYLLIUM

A long overdue proposed protection for many against the dangers of working with and around beryllium may finally become a reality. The United States federal government has a new standard designed to significantly reduce worker exposure to beryllium, offering updated protections to 35,000 workers across their country. The suggested change was originally proposed in 2012 by the United States' lead beryllium product manufacturer Materion, along with United Steelworkers (USW™) representing a large number of workers exposed to beryllium.

Beryllium exposure occurs most often in occupations such as foundry and smelting, machining, beryllium oxide ceramics, composites manufacturing, and dental lab work. Inhalation of beryllium can lead to a serious, incurable illness called "chronic beryllium disease" and may increase the risk of lung cancer. Industrially, beryllium is used in three forms: as a pure metal, as beryllium oxide, and as an alloy with copper, aluminium, magnesium, or nickel. It is a grey metal that is stronger than steel and lighter than aluminium.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour currently sets the permissible exposure limit for beryllium at 0.002 mg/m<sup>3</sup> of air, while in the U.S., the standard limit is 2.0 mcg/m<sup>3</sup> of air and is what was established by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1948 and implemented into OSHA regulations in 1971. Under current standards, employers with workplace levels of beryllium exceeding the permissible exposure limit are required to make adjustments to reduce the concentration.

But with the new rule, industries in the U.S. that work with this chemical element would see a drastic change: the permissible exposure limit would be reduced to 0.2, and employers will have to adopt additional protections. Specific personal protective equipment, medical surveillance, health exams, and training will be required compared to what is currently in place.

When the original limitations in 1971 were introduced, the result was a significant reduction in beryllium-related fatalities. However, over time, it became clear that even exposures below that permissible limit would inevitably lead to long-term health effects.

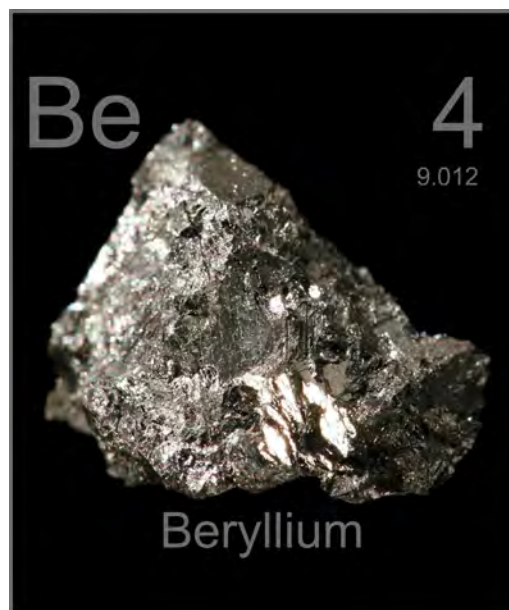
OSHA hopes that, should the proposed rule go into effect, it will spur a reduction in annual beryllium-related fatalities by nearly 100, and serious illnesses by 50.

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels said, "This collaboration of industry and labor presents a historic opportunity to protect the lives and lungs of thousands of beryllium-exposed workers. We hope other industries where workers are exposed to deadly substances join with unions and other organizations representing those workers to reduce exposures, prevent diseases, and save lives."

The proposed rule was published in the Aug. 7, 2015 issue of the Federal Register and is available online for public review at: [federalregister.gov](http://federalregister.gov). Comments on the rule must be submitted by Nov. 5, 2015.

### SOURCES

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/07/2015-17596/occupational-exposure-to-beryllium-and-beryllium-compounds>  
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/beryllium/>  
<https://www.osha.gov/newsrelease/nat-20150806.html>



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## SMALL BUSINESS SKIRTING COMPLIANCE?



Operating a small business successfully can be a tall order. It takes recruiting, obtaining and managing qualified employees, establishing your presence well within an industry, and taking your lion's share of the market while leaving competitors behind. In addition, determining what laws apply to your business and ensuring your business practices include ongoing acceptance of them can be a full-time job.

Unfortunately, many small businesses opt to skirt around compliance due to budgetary restraints. Others are simply unaware of the need or what is required to comply with health and safety standards. Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace is not only vital to the operational success of your business, but it is the law.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires all employers to provide a workplace which is free from recognized hazards that cause, or are likely to cause, fatality or injury to employees. Regardless of any compliance exemptions available related to business size, there is no exemption to keeping employees out of harm's way.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety provides small businesses with resources to help support well-being and compliance in the workplace. Safety Services Company also specializes in developing custom, cost-effective safety compliance material for small businesses.

## THE FATAL FOUR

Construction industry workers operate powerful machinery, often outdoors, at high elevations, undoubtedly a breeding ground for safety hazards. Here are the four most common contributors to fatalities in construction:

### Falls

Working from heights is common at most construction worksites. Dangerous work zones include scaffolding, surfaces such as roofs or structural steel, portable ladders, and boom lifts. Limit these injuries by stabilizing above-ground surfaces and using correct protective equipment.

### Struck-by

When a worker receives an injury caused by the impact of a moving object, it is considered a struck-by injury. Use proper protective equipment and follow best safety practices when operating or working near moving equipment.

### Electrical

Electrocutions are the third leading cause of fatality in the construction injury, caused by exposure to high amounts of electrical energy. Workers should be trained to recognize electrical hazards and proper use of extension cords.

### Caught-between

This hazard involves workers becoming caught, squeezed, crushed, pinched, or compressed between two or more objects or part of an object. This can also include being caught between a moving object and a stationary object, such as rolling heavy machinery and a wall. Be mindful of hazards and use communication with other workers to minimize risk.

A graphic with a blue and orange background. On the left, the text 'POST COMPLIANCE' is written in white and blue, with '24/7' in large white numbers below it. On the right, the text 'Get LABOUR LAW POSTERS now!' is written in white, with 'now!' in a script font. At the bottom right, the Safety Services Company logo and phone number '877-780-4106' are displayed.



# Q&A

## Q: WHAT IS A COMPETENT PERSON?

You may have heard the term “competent person” when referred to certain safety regulations and wondered exactly what it means.

Canadian Occupational Health and Safety standards define a competent person as one “having knowledge, training, and experience in the assigned work and knowledgeable of the OHS regulations that apply to that work.”

This definition is established in order to identify workers who are qualified to make certain decisions on the worksite. For example, only a competent person is permitted to administer safety training, because only through the appropriate amount of experience and knowledge can a person deliver accurate, thorough training that will lead to a safe and healthful workplace.

Before selecting a competent person as a candidate for a given workplace decision, determine whether the particular regulation in question indicates specific additional requirements for making that selection. In general, however, as long as the candidate meets the minimum requirements of the standard definition, selection is up to the employer’s discretion.

## FIT LIKE A GLOVE



Gloves and the foodservice industry have been at war for years. Considering the profound effects foodborne illnesses can have on a business, its workers, and its customers, wearing gloves while handling food would seem to be a common-sense decision. After all, gloves are a barrier between skin contamination and the food served and eaten. So why would many restaurants oppose laws that require foodservice employees to wear them?

The most common case against requiring the use of gloves during food preparation is complacency. Some believe that while wearing gloves, a worker may be lured into a false sense of security, believing gloves provide sufficient prevention of the transfer of foodborne illnesses. This complacency may lead food handlers to wash their hands less frequently (or not at all), or fail to change gloves between various kitchen activities.

Last year, regulators in the State of California repealed a law which banned foodservice workers from touching food with their bare hands. After a state-wide backlash and petitions, the Senate voted 32 to 0 for a repeal of the law, responding to the concerns of a large community of restaurateurs and bar owners who believed the law would do more harm than good.

Bars, for example, were included in the law and employees were required to wear gloves

while serving and garnishing beverages. Repercussions to this industry include losses from the cost of gloves and an increase in time spent changing gloves between each drink. The result—servicing fewer customers. There is also an environmental footprint component to this debate, examining the wastefulness of single-use, disposable gloves.

Many Californians, especially those in the foodservice industry, considered the repeal a major victory. However, supporters of the law still believe that wearing gloves is a necessary food safety precaution. Food safety experts say hand-washing isn’t practiced as commonly as it should be, and even when it is, not all germs that lead to foodborne illness are removed by normal hand-washing alone. Just a small number of germs can trigger an illness. Glove proponents believe gloves should be required to provide an additional barrier, even if they are fallible and subject to failure or tearing.

The proper use of personal protective equipment is a vital element of the health and safety of your business, employees and customers. Safety Services Company provides industry-specific training on its use.

Visit [safety-services-company.com](http://safety-services-company.com) to find out more.