



safety spotlight



August 2017

Welcome to *Safety Spotlight*, an e-newsletter brought to you by the U.S. Department of the Interior, in partnership with the National Safety Council. We hope you find this newsletter of value. If you have any feedback or ideas on topics you'd like to see featured, please send us an email at membershipinfo@nsc.org and put "DOI Safety Spotlight feedback" in the subject line.

About the National Safety Council



The National Safety Council eliminates preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Visit us at nsc.org for up-to-date news, information and tools to take your safety program to the next level.

5-Minute Safety Talk



The worst drug epidemic is not what you think. More than 20% of the workforce has misused or abused prescription painkillers.

[This 5-Minute Safety Talk](#) looks at the scope of the problem and what can be done to stop it.

As the Opioid Crisis Continues, What Can Employers Do?

Drug overdose is the leading cause of preventable death for adults age 25 to 64. Sixty people die every day from prescription opioid painkillers, and just one employee with a prescription drug problem can put others at risk for serious injury.



The statistics are sobering:

- Workers with substance use disorders miss nearly 50% more work days than their peers
- Only [39% of employers](#) view this as a threat to safety, despite 71% saying they have experienced an issue
- Construction, entertainment, recreation and food service businesses have twice the national average number of employees with substance use disorders
- Healthcare costs for employees who misuse or abuse prescription drugs are three times the costs for an average employee

The Bottom Line – and the Front Line

The [Substance Use Cost Calculator](#) is a quick way for employers to compute what this drug crisis means to their workforce financially.

Featured Safety Poster

There are so many reasons NOT to keep unused prescriptions. This poster outlines those reasons – and ways to safely dispose of leftover medicine.



[Don't Keep Unused Prescription Drugs](#)

Featured Audio Recording

But beyond dollars and cents, employers have a responsibility to help employees get into treatment and eliminate the stigma associated with addiction. Employers can:

- Put strong policies in place
- Expand drug testing panels to include opioids
- Train supervisors and employees to spot the signs of drug misuse
- Treat substance use problems as a disease
- Leverage employee assistance programs to help employees return to work

Encouragingly, workers in recovery have lower turnover rates and are less likely to miss work days, less likely to be hospitalized and have fewer doctor visits.

The [NSC Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#) offers materials that can help employers develop a workplace policy and resources to share with staff. In addition, the NSC Speaker's Bureau includes doctors who can speak to your organization about prescription drug misuse. [Book a presentation.](#)



Doctors Positioned to Reduce Painkiller Misuse

Prescription painkillers are overprescribed, but is the [tide turning](#)? The amount of opioids prescribed in the U.S. peaked in 2010 and has been decreasing since, according to a [CDC Vital Signs report](#).



Physicians can be the leaders in attacking this epidemic by embracing new research on opioids and modifying old prescribing habits. [Two doctors in Ohio](#) are doing just that, with significant results.

- In 12 months, they prescribed 41,850 fewer opioid pills than in the previous 12-month period
- Five Cincinnati-area emergency rooms have adopted their pain treatment protocol, resulting in 23,110 less opioid pills dispensed in just weeks since inception
- Two additional ER's have inquired about following suit

What about Marijuana?

Legalization of marijuana – whether for medical or recreational use – is rolling out across the country. It's having an enormous impact on employers, who now have to ask:



- How is marijuana use impacting safety on the job?
- Can an employee file a discrimination lawsuit if medical marijuana use doesn't align with our organization's drug policy?
- How is legalized marijuana affecting the bottom line?



Visit our [Online Learning Library](#) to view our extensive webinar and audio recording selection. This month's suggested topic:

[The Changing Face of Substance Abuse: Prescriptions, Synthetics and Medical Marijuana](#)

Last chance to save: NSC Congress & Expo advance registration deadline!



Register by August 18 to **save up to \$125 off** admission fees for the 2017 NSC Congress & Expo, set to take place Sept. 25-27 in Indianapolis.

Join more than 15,000 environmental, health and safety professionals from around the world to:

- Keep up to date on industry trends
- Discover new products and services
- Network on a global level

[Register today](#)

FREE Webinar: The Results Are In! Safety Benchmarking Study



**August 23, 2017
10:00-11:00AM (CST)**

What does a defensible drug policy look like today?

Watch [Weed and Your Workforce: What you Need to Know](#); or check out the slides [here](#).

Bring Safety Home



Take action against prescription drug overdose in your community. The National Safety Council has put together this [Prescription Drug Community Action Kit](#) that provides strategies to fight drug addiction at the local level. This kit helps identify who should be involved, and includes goals, actions steps and ways to measure success.

With more than 60 people dying every day from opioid pain medications, it's important to expand the dialog and meet people where they live.

NEW! 2-Minute Safety Video - Prescription Drug Misuse

Start your next safety meeting with this [2-Minute Safety Video](#) on the epidemic that is affecting workplaces across the country: Prescription drug misuse.



Tip Sheet and Checklist



Prescription opioid addiction is a public health crisis. Download and share this [Tip Sheet](#) with employees so they can understand the risks and alternatives. If your doctor suggests taking opioids, bring this [Checklist](#) so you'll know what questions to ask and health conditions to discuss.

Get the results of the Benchmarking Study that will help you identify areas for improvement while providing insight on how to effectively shape safety policies for future success. Find out how to download personalized reports for your organization.

[Register now](#)

Member Benefits Guide



[A guide to your member-exclusive benefits](#)