



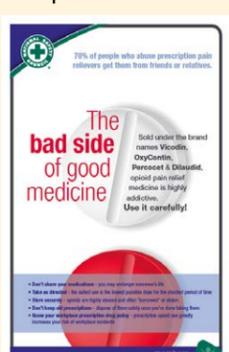
About the National Safety Council:



The National Safety Council saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Visit us at nsc.org for up-to-date industry news, information and tools to take your safety program to the next level.

Featured Safety Poster and Checklist

Share these resources with your employees to raise awareness of the dangers of prescription painkillers.



[Poster: The Bad Side of Good Medicine](#)

[Safety Checklist: Opioid Prescription Painkillers](#)

Featured Webinar



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

[Addressing Prescription Drug Abuse in the Workplace.](#)

NSC Safety Awards



Recognize exemplary safety behavior at your organization. Submit applications for the [2016 Safe Driver of the Year](#) and the [Occupational Excellence Achievement Awards](#) today! Learn more [here](#).

Member Benefits Guide



[Learn more about the many benefits of NSC membership available to you and your employees](#)

Join the Conversation



Welcome to *Spotlight on Safety*, an e-newsletter brought to you by the Department of the Interior Office of Occupational Safety and Health in partnership with the National Safety Council. We hope you will find this monthly newsletter of value. Please send feedback or ideas on topics you would like to see to membershipinfo@nsc.org. Please put "Department of the Interior feedback" in the subject line.

5-Minute Safety Talk



More than 20% of the workforce has misused or abused prescription painkillers. Could someone in your organization be among them?

This [5-Minute Safety Talk, The Worst Drug Epidemic \(It's Not What You Think\)](#), explains the scope of the problem and what organizations can do to help.

Prescription Drugs in the Workplace

It's a national epidemic. Prescription drugs kill more people in the United States - about 47,000 people every year - than motor vehicle crashes. [Opioid painkillers](#) are the biggest culprit, killing 52 people every day, but antidepressants, sleeping pills and other drugs also are being misused at an alarming rate.



You'd think such a widespread problem would be front-page news, but surprisingly, many people don't know about it, [doctors continue to over-prescribe](#) and the death rate [continues to rise](#).

[Employers have a huge role](#) in helping the National Safety Council end these unnecessary deaths. Did you know employer-supported treatment yields better recovery rates than treatment initiated by friends and family members? Does that sound like a lot of responsibility for you as an employer? It is.

Case Study: Indiana



Eighty percent of Indiana employers have been impacted by prescription drug abuse in their workplaces, according to a [survey](#) conducted by NSC and the Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force. Two-thirds of employers believe prescription drugs are a bigger problem than illegal drugs, and drug poisonings have increased fivefold in Indiana since 1999.

Interestingly, though 80% of employers have experienced this problem, only 53% have a written policy on prescription drugs. And of those who do drug testing, only 52% test for commonly abused opioids.

While this survey specifically focused on [Indiana](#) employers, the results reflect national trends, according to [recent data](#) from the National Center for Health Statistics. In fact, most deaths from prescription drug overdose are [working-age adults](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In addition to safety concerns, there is a very real cost attached to drug misuse and abuse in the workplace:

- Absenteeism
- High turnover
- Injury and accidents
- Workers compensation costs
- Healthcare costs
- Theft

Expanded Drug Testing and Policy

Employer-initiated treatment does work. Employers in Indiana said they want to help their employees recover and come back to work; they're seeing addiction as an illness and not a personal failure, according to the survey.



In addition to expanding drug testing panels to include opioids, training employees is key, according to a [webinar produced by NSC](#).

- Form a team of both internal employees and external experts - doctors, law enforcement, wellness vendors, even a coroner who can speak to the death rates related to prescription drug overdose
- Identify resources; how much money is in the budget for training?
- Develop policies and procedures on drug testing, disciplinary action, education and training, and remember that doctors who treat your employees won't know your company policy
- If an employee doesn't tell you they are taking prescription drugs, you won't know unless an accident occurs; engage employees so they will step up and identify concerning behavior
- Maintain or develop a relationship with local law enforcement
- Treat substance abuse as a disease
- When an employee does return to the workforce, reintegration should involve continued treatment, random drug screening and limited stress in the workplace

Other Resources

- [The Proactive Role Employers Can Take](#)
- Infographic: [A Hidden Workplace Epidemic](#)
- [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration presentation, [Preventing Prescription Abuse in the Workplace](#)

Marijuana: What Now?

The legalization of medical and recreational marijuana use has had an enormous impact on employers.

The National Safety Council will present a **webinar**, Weed in Your Workplace: What You Need to Know, on April 20, 2016 at 1:00PM CT. We hope that you join us.

[Register Now](#)

Bring Safety Home



Effective workplace training on the dangers of prescription drugs will enable workers to bring that message home to their families. Every year, poison control centers receive millions of calls seeking help for poisoning, and the most common calls are for prescription and over-the-counter drug overdoses.

This has become such a problem for teens that the Partnership for a Drug Free America has dubbed teen prescription drug users as [Generation Rx](#).

"Nearly one in five teens report abusing prescription medications to get high," with many thinking it's safer than using illegal drugs, according to PDFA.

Poisoning also extends to exposure to [environmental substances](#) or ingestion of [cleaning products](#), [button batteries](#), [lead paint](#) and other substances, and children are particularly at risk. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers these tips how to [poison-proof your home](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also offers lots of [useful information](#) to keep your family safe.