



Alcohol & Impaired Driving: Employer Solutions

U.S. employers bear the majority of the costs for alcohol-related problems in higher premiums paid for employer-based health insurance. Over time, heavy drinking contributes to expensive medical conditions such as liver disease, stroke and cancer, which ultimately impact employer health care expenses. As an employer, you can help save lives by promoting safe driving. Reducing the incidence of impaired driving protects your employees and reduces overall costs to the company. This Safe Driving Kit includes several fact sheets with information about the crash risk of alcohol.



What Alcohol Use Is Costing Your Company

The Substance Use Cost Calculator gives employers a cost estimate of substance use in the workforce:
nsc.org/drugsatwork

It will give you specific information about the cost of substance use in your workplace, based on size of employee base, industry and state.

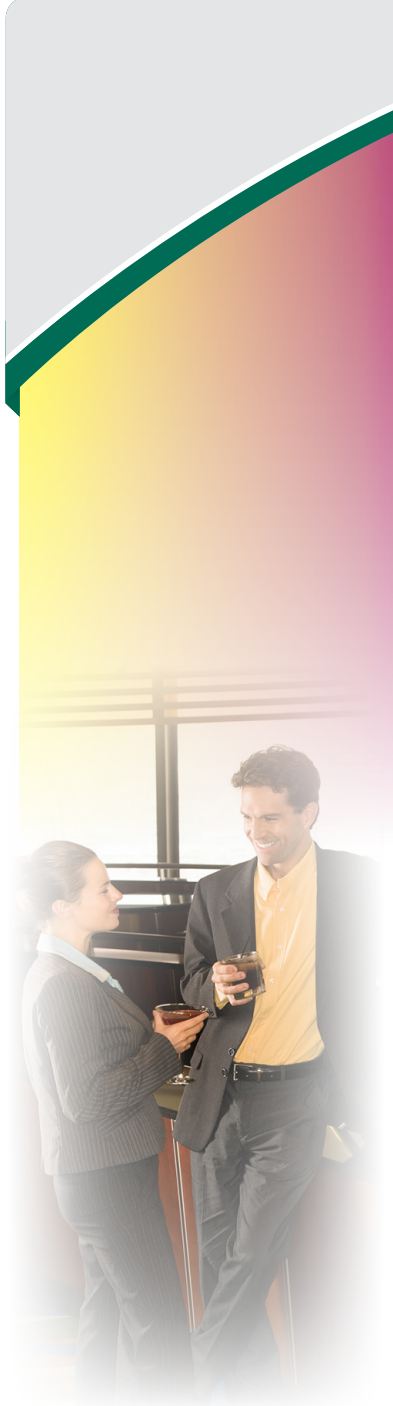
The Scope of the Problem:

Substance use disorders affect 20.8 million Americans, almost 8% of the adult and adolescent population. When you include family members of those affected, nearly one-third of the U.S. population is impacted by addiction. While 75% of these people are part of the workforce, most employers are unaware of the hidden costs associated with these problems. It is estimated that the yearly economic impact is over \$442 billion dollars. In addition, the cost of alcohol-related motor-vehicle crashes in 2010 was estimated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at \$201.1 billion.

Employer-Provided Help for Alcohol Problems

In the United States, only one in ten people with a substance use disorder obtains treatment. There is a connection between impaired driving and drivers' misuse of alcohol and other drugs. So to reduce the risks of impaired driving, employers should provide the means for employees and dependents who have problems with alcohol and other drugs to seek help.

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To avoid significant costs, employers can assist employees in receiving treatment for a substance use disorder. While the savings vary by industry, the average one-year cost avoidance for each employee who recovers from a substance use disorder is more than \$3,200.

Recovery-friendly workplace programs should include five key elements:

1. A clear, written policy
2. Employee education/stigma reduction
3. Supervisor training
4. Employee support programs/access to evidence-based treatment
5. Drug testing

Learn more about resources to help you implement these strategies here:
<https://www.shatterproof.org/take-action-in-the-workplace>

Social Drinking at Work Events: Reducing Risk

Impairment begins with the first drink. Even lower amounts of alcohol consumed during a meal or other social event can result in impairment while driving after the event. However, alcohol is sometimes served during work-related meals and events, and even encouraged when entertaining clients. Alcohol is often a part of events like sports games, happy hours, fundraising dinners and holiday parties.


Alcohol is a factor in nearly four of every ten work-related crashes. To prevent impaired-driving crashes, employees should be sober when driving. Reduce the risk of employees' driving under the influence of alcohol—both on and off the job—by enacting a company-wide sober driving policy. Your policy should clearly state that:

- Employees may only drive when they are sober, whether on company time or not
- A conviction for driving while intoxicated (DWI) will not be tolerated
- Consequences for not following the company's sober driving policy should be identified in the policy statement

Ideally this policy should be extended to guests of events hosted by your organization. If that is not possible, there are several ways that employers can reduce the risks of impaired driving after social events:

- Provide sober designated drivers who don't drink any alcohol
- Encourage use of taxis, ride share and public transportation, even by covering costs of this alternate transportation



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- Limit the number of drinks by issuing drink tickets, and schedule drinking earlier during an event; for example, offer drinks during a pre-dinner reception and serve alcohol-free drinks during the dinner
 - Do not offer open and unsupervised bars or other access to alcohol at events hosted by your organization
 - Designate sober staff specifically to monitor alcohol consumption among event attendees, particularly as guests leave for the parking lot
 - Ask guests to turn in their car keys if they plan to drink, so you can ensure guests are not intoxicated when they pick up their keys

It's important to know that employers who serve alcohol may face liability as hosts, if an event attendee crashes after leaving the event.



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