



## HR Update

### National Human Relations News

*An Update for PIA/GATF's Human Relations Professionals – May 2007*

#### Study Finds Drug Use Among Workers at All-Time Low

Results from a recent annual study conducted by Quest Diagnostics, Inc. showed that the steady decline in drug use among U.S. workers has reached its lowest point since the study's inception in 1988. The [2006 Drug Testing Index](#), based on urine workplace drug tests conducted by Quest Diagnostics for over nine million employees, found that 3.8 percent of those tested displayed positive results for drug use. This is down from a 4.1 percent positivity rate in 2005 and 13.6 percent in 1988.

The most notable rates of decline among specific types of drugs were in amphetamine and marijuana usage. Positive test results for abuse of amphetamines (including methamphetamines) fell by twenty percent among federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers. This is the lowest recorded rate, 0.28 percent, recorded for workers in this category. The wider workforce also saw a marked decline, twelve percent, in the percentage of workers using of the same class of drugs. Marijuana usage by the general workforce fell by 6.3 percent in 2006.

This is further evidence of the continuing trend of reduced drug usage by workers in the U.S. since employers began to increase the incidences of drug screenings among employees. The [2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services, also strongly supports the idea that employers who enforce drug testing procedures are more likely to have significantly lower (50%) incidences of drug use among their employees.

Please see the chart below for the full listing of results from the 2006 Drug Testing Index.

#### Positivity Rates by Drug Category (General US Workforce)

Drug	2006	2005	2004
Amphetamines	0.42%	0.48%	0.52%
Barbiturates	0.23%	0.25%	0.27%
Benzodiazepines	0.62%	0.58%	0.58%
Cocaine	0.72%	0.70%	0.72%
Marijuana	2.38%	2.54%	2.88%
Methadone	0.22%	0.23%	0.21%
Opiates	0.32%	0.32%	0.32%
Oxycodones	0.64%	0.56%	-
PCP	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%
Propoxyphene	0.55%	0.57%	0.63%

#### Positivity Rates by Testing Reason (General US Workforce)

Testing Reason	2006	2005	2004
Follow-up	7.4%	9.6%	9.9%
For Cause	18.1%	28.3%	27.8%
Periodic	1.9%	2.4%	1.9%
Post-Accident	5.7%	5.8%	5.7%
Pre-Employment	3.9%	3.9%	4.1%
Random	5.5%	6.6%	7.1%
Return to Duty	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%

#### USCIS Announces Enhancement to Basic Pilot

On March 19, 2007, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) kicked off a new employment eligibility program titled, Photo Screening Tool Pilot. It is intended to be an enhancement to the long-standing Basic Pilot, an Internet-based employee verification system operated by USCIS in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The

goal is to reduce the amount of queries by employers participating in Basic Pilot that cause secondary verifications. USCIS hopes participants will find the new screening tool to be easier to use.

The new program, which currently has 48 participating companies, allows employers to compare Lawful Permanent Residence cards (i.e., green cards) and other employment authorization documents containing photographs presented by new employees during the hiring process to the official photographs stored in DHS databases. It may also make allow employers to more easily identify altered photo in submitted ID's. The program will last for three months.

Basic Pilot, created in 1998, allows employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility status of newly hired employees by providing an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. Since the program has been in existence for nearly a decade, consideration being given to a name change and re-branding effort to emphasize that it is no longer a pilot program.

Employer's can [register online](#) for the program. They will be provided with instructions for completing the registration process. Upon completion, employers are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which provides the terms of agreement between the employer, the SSA and DHS.

As a participant in the Basic Pilot, employers are required to verify all newly hired employees, both US citizens and non-citizens. Employers may not verify selectively, and must verify all new hires while participating in the program. The program may not be used to prescreen applicants for employment, go back and check employees hired before the company signed the MOU, or re-verify employees who

have temporary work authorization. Employers may choose to leave Basic Pilot at any time.

An added benefit of participation is that it provides employers with a "rebuttal presumption" that it has not knowingly hired any illegal aliens. However, this should not be misconstrued as an exemption from worksite enforcement.

### **DHS Releases Proposed REAL ID Rule**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, (DHS) recently released new proposals for rulemaking concerning compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005. The law is intended to standardize the issuance of driver's licenses and state identification cards to prevent counterfeiting efforts.

Currently DHS is accepting comments on the rule for a period of 60 days. A final version of the regulation should be issued this summer.

### **Bird Flu Vaccine Approved by FDA**

For the first time, the Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of a vaccine against bird flu. The Sanofi Aventis SA vaccine will primarily be used for emergency purposes in the event of a person to person pandemic outbreak of the H5N1 influenza virus. The vaccine will not be a long-term solution to the threat of bird flu and therefore will not be commercially available at this time.

The federal government will have a supply large enough to treat 20 million people. Some of those likely to receive dosages include emergency and health care workers and members of the military deployed to infected areas.

The FDA cautions that there is still further research to be done to find a more effective vaccine to treat the widest possible segment of the population. Only effective in 45 percent of

adults were found to be protected after the receiving the highest dosage. The present vaccine is will be administered by shot in two doses over the course of one month.

### **GCC SRDF Pension Plan Releases Annual Funding Notice**

In mid-April the Graphic Communications Conference, Supplemental Retirement and Disability Fund (SRDF) administrator sent out to plan participants and employers three notices: Annual Funding Notice, Summary Annual Report, and SRDF Pension Communicator newsletter.

These documents review the financial condition of the plan and make a few corrections from the Summary Plan Description that was distributed last year. As with all union printing pension plans right now, the SRDF is underfunded.

The SRDF's newsletter mentions that despite benefit reductions since 2003, the plan is still having financial problems. Plus, it hints that more changes can be expected. "In the near future, consistent with the long term funding requirements mandated by the newly enacted Pension Protection Act of 2006, additional action will be required to bring the Fund's assets and liabilities into closer balance." (emphasis added)

According to the Pension Act, depending on the level that the fund is underfunded, the plan may be required to make various changes, such as mandatory increased employers contributions (5 and 10% of contributions which will not be calculated into the benefit accrual formulas), reduce the current benefit formula for active participants going forward, and/or changes to various supplemental parts of the plan, etc. The SRDF newsletter also says that it will provide more information in six to 12 months.

*Editor's Note:* We give the SRDF administrator and trustees a lot of credit for their level of communications to employers and

plan participants. It's better than most that we've seen inside and outside of the printing industry. See [GAIN](#) for more information and the plan notices.

### **New Union Label Expected**

Unionized printers who have a "union label license agreement" with the Graphic Communications Conference of the IBT should expect a new label from their local union later this year. We hear from the GCC that they're working on an update that will probably highlight their merger with the Teamsters.

*Editor's Note:* If you're a union shop with a license agreement, it would be wise to give your label customers a heads up on the pending change.

We also strongly urge all union label shops to ensure that their union label license agreement is current, and if not, to seek an updated agreement from your union local. Typically, these agreements coincide with the expiration of the union contract or they last three to four years. We recommend you keep your current and all versions of expired union label license agreements with your other important business papers.

### **Free Safe Welding Information Available**

The American Welding Society is being generous once again offering free access to download safe welding fact sheets, a copy of the ANZI Z49.1, *Safety in Welding, Cutting and Allied Processes*.

Participants have to fill out a form to get the download. However, the option to opt out from being contacted is offered. This is the standard of all standards and to get it for FREE is tremendous opportunity. All printers do hotwork of some fashion at their facilities. At some firms, contactors are not hired to do the work. With the number of hotwork fires each week in incident alerts, the need to have a

sound hotwork program is essential. Along with this free download is a listing of thirty-one "Technical Fact Sheets" regarding welding safety, including "Welding Fume Fever", "Cylinder Storage" and "Arc Viewing Distance".

### **NFPA Offers Free Access to Codes and Emergency Evacuation Standard for People with Disabilities**

The National Fire Prevention Association is also offering free access to its information. NFPA codes can be read using [this system](#). This is another great source of safety information to learn from. Once the webpage is accessed, select the appropriate standard, agree to their terms, and free access to read the entire standard will be granted.

Also, a new [Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities](#) was developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The document provides general information to assist in identifying the needs of people with disabilities related to emergency evacuation planning. The guide addresses the need for evacuation plans to include everyone, and highlights the needs, criteria, and minimum information required to

incorporate appropriate planning strategies for people with disabilities into these plans.

The document is a valuable resource for people with disabilities as well as employers, building owners and managers, and others involved in developing emergency evacuation plans. Critical information on the operational, planning, and response elements necessary to develop a well thought out plan for evacuating a building or taking other appropriate action in the event of an emergency are covered. Five general categories of disabilities covered in the guide include mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech impairments, and cognitive impairments.

Four elements of evacuation information needed by occupants are: notification, way finding, use of way, and assistance. Basically, in the event of an emergency, a person would need to be notified of the emergency; identify a way out; assess if they can get out on their own, with the help of a device, or with assistance; and identify and express if assistance is needed and what that would involve. Materials include a personal emergency evacuation planning checklist that building services managers and people with disabilities can use to design a personalized evacuation plan.

---

For more information on articles in this update, please contact Jim Kyger ([JKyger@piagatf.org](mailto:JKyger@piagatf.org)) at 202-730-7968 or James Coates ([JCoates@piagatf.org](mailto:JCoates@piagatf.org)) at 202-730-7969.