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# Drug Testing

Here it is. You've emailed, called, written and requested lots of questions about the drug screening process. We've listened to your questions about the various aspects of drug testing—including how random tests are selected, what happens if your employee tests positive and when would you observe a drug test? The answers are all right here. Your most frequently asked questions.



## What are the different reasons we can order for a drug test?

There are several:

- **Pre-employment.** After you've made the job offer, but before you actually put the employee to work. For DOT-regulated employees (like truck drivers) you **MUST** have at least a verbal notification of a negative test result **BEFORE** you allow the driver in a vehicle.
- **Random.** When employees are randomly selected to receive a drug or alcohol test. A random selection does not take into account if an employee has been selected before, or how many times that employee has been selected. The employee is eligible each new draw period. And employers are **NOT** allowed to exchange a name drawn with another name that has not been drawn. Otherwise it would not be random.
- **For-Cause/Reasonable Suspicion.** Employers are often reluctant to use this category whenever they suspect an employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Instead we often get employees who want us to list the purpose as "random". We can't do that. For-Cause or Reasonable Suspicion means that you have noticed a change in the behavior, odor or work performance of an employee and you suspect drug or alcohol use.
- **Post-Accident.** If an employee has an accident at work and either physically hurts himself, hurts someone else or causes damage to company assets, then you may perform a Post-Accident test for drugs or alcohol.
- **Follow up.** Some employees may be required to submit to regular follow up testing if they had previously tested positive and a substance abuse counselor orders follow up testing. Typically the follow up testing plan will include a specific number of ordered tests within a specific time period.

## How long does it take to get a drug test result?

That depends on the type of test you ordered. If you ordered a rapid-results test, a **NEGATIVE** result will be available within 10 minutes. Lab-based tests take longer, but a **NEGATIVE** result is typically reported over night.

Non-negative tests where the presence of one or more drugs is detected require confirmation testing. This confirmation testing can take 2-3 additional days. It takes this long because the laboratory is identifying the particular drug and the level of drug in the specimen.

More on  
next page

### **What happens if my employee tests positive?**

When we receive a positive drug screen result, the first thing we will do is call the donor. We want to find out if the donor is taking any prescription medication that may have caused a positive test. We collect this information and it is reviewed by Dr. Ostrander, our Medical Review Officer(MRO). If it is determined that the prescription caused the positive laboratory test, then the MRO can declare it a negative test.



In these cases we will recommend that the employee be removed from safety-sensitive work for the duration of his prescription regimen. Just because an employee has a legitimate prescription, does not mean the he necessarily should be allowed to perform safety-sensitive work on the job.

Federally-regulated employees will have the CDL portion of their driver's license suspended by the Department of Licensing. In order to get the CDL portion restored, the employee must have an evaluation and assessment by a certified substance abuse professional AND must successfully pass a Return To Work drug screen.

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### **Can you test positive for marijuana from second-hand smoke?**

No. A positive marijuana drug screen is caused by either ingesting (as in through food) or directly smoking (and thereby direct inhalation) of marijuana—either through a rolled cigarette or some other pipe (bong).

### **Do antibiotics cause a positive drug screen?**

No.

### **Will drinking a lot of water flush out drugs faster?**

Not typically. Water will make a person urinate more frequently, but drugs metabolize in the body system at certain rates. Drinking more water simply serves to dilute a sample and make it more difficult to test.

### **Do you pat a person down before their drug test?**

No. When a donor presents for a drug screen we do the following:

- Verify their identify with a photo identification
- Have them remove the contents of their pockets. The wallet or purse can be locked up and the donor keeps the key until the end of the process
- Remove any outer clothing such as jackets, vests, hats or sweatshirts
- Pull up each pant leg
- Wash their hands with soap and water

More on  
next page

**Will drug screens detect prescription drugs such as vicodin or percocet?**

The standard DOT 5-panel drug test will not detect synthetic opiates—which is what these types of prescriptions are. The rapid-results testing kits likewise will not be able to detect these synthetic opiate drugs. However, a lab-based test where the Opiate ID is ordered, WILL detect the presence of these synthetic opiate drugs.

**Why would you do an observed drug screen test?**

An observed drug test is when the collector of the same sex as the donor accompanies the donor to the bathroom and observes the urine collection directly from the patient. This is a mandatory procedure for DOT-regulated employees if the first sample collected did not meet temperature guidelines or if the sample appears to have been adulterated. For non-regulated employees, it is at the discretion of the employer. We recommend however, following the DOT standard.

**If someone is sick, would that cause their sample to be either too cold or too warm?**

No. Urine samples that come directly from the body at the time of collection will be between 90 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit. If the temperature reading is above or below those levels, then the donor did not produce a sample that came directly from their body at the time of collection. Most likely they brought the urine in and attempted to keep it warm while they waited for the drug screen test to start.

**How accurate are the rapid-results tests?**

They are EXTREMELY accurate. They have a 99.9% accuracy rate. This means that 99.9% of the time a test result for a rapid results cup and a lab-based test would be the same—whether positive or negative.

**If a driver tests positive, can he challenge the lab result?**

Yes. The donor can choose to have the “B” bottle sample tested at a different laboratory. All DOT samples are split into two vials—and “A” and a “B” sample. The laboratory tests the “A” sample and stores the “B” bottle. A donor can, with a written request, have the “B” bottle sample tested at another qualified laboratory—at his own expense. The result from the “B” bottle test is the final result.

We have never seen the “B” bottle sample test differently than the “A” bottle sample.

**If an employee cannot provide enough of a sample, can they leave and return another time to try again?**

No. Once the employee has started the drug testing process, he must complete it. He will have 3 hours to provide a minimum sample of 45 mL. And we cannot combine samples. For example if a donor provides 15 mL of sample on his first try, we cannot save it and combine it with the urine collected from his second attempt.

The body naturally produces about 30 mL of urine every hour, even if the patient does not have the urge to ‘go’. We can provide the donor with up to 40 oz of fluid within a 3-hour period. It is a reasonable expectation to collect 45 mL of sample within a three-hour period.

If the donor leaves before completing the testing process, it is considered a refusal to test. Refusals are considered POSITIVE test.



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