CrewSigned

# Drugs and Alcohol Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

This is not a lecture about what you do on your own time. It is about what happens when someone comes to work impaired, because on a job like ours, one slow reaction can hurt the person next to you. Operating equipment, working at heights, driving and using power tools all need a clear head.

Impairment does not only come from being drunk or high. A hangover slows you down. Marijuana affects your reaction time and judgment for hours, even where it is legal. Some prescription and over-the-counter medicines, like painkillers, muscle relaxers, sleep aids and some allergy and cold medicines, can make you drowsy or dizzy. Mixing any of these makes it worse.

Our rules are simple. Do not come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Do not bring them onto the job or into a company vehicle. If you are taking a medicine that warns about drowsiness or operating machinery, tell me before you start, so we can put you on a task that is safe for you that day. You do not have to tell me what it is for.

If you see a coworker who seems impaired, do not ignore it and do not try to handle it alone. Signs can include slurred speech, smelling of alcohol, stumbling, unusual sleepiness, confusion or acting very differently than normal. Keep them away from equipment, vehicles and edges, and tell me or another supervisor right away. That is not snitching. You might be saving their life and someone else's.

Opioid misuse is a big problem in construction and other physical trades, partly because so many of us get hurt and are prescribed painkillers. Overdose deaths have climbed fast in the last decade. If you are on pain medicine for an injury, use it exactly as prescribed, and talk to your doctor about other options.

If you are struggling, asking for help is the strong move. Many health plans and employee assistance programs offer confidential help. The national helpline at 1-800-662-4357 is free, confidential and open around the clock. Asking for help before something happens will not cost you your job here. An accident on the job could cost a lot more.

## Discussion questions

1. Which tasks on this job would be most dangerous for someone who was not fully alert?
2. What would you say to a coworker who showed up smelling of alcohol?
3. If you are taking a medicine that warns about drowsiness, who should you tell before you start work?

## OSHA standard

OSH Act Section 5, General Duty Clause
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/section5-duties

**SOURCES**

NIOSH, Substance Use and Work: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/substance-use/about/index.html
NIOSH, Opioids and Work: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/substance-use/opioids-and-work/index.html

*This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.*

# Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

**Drugs and Alcohol Toolbox Talk**

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

| # | Printed name | Signature | Company / trade |
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