

BOLHOUSE, BAAR & LEFERE, P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

THE LEGALITY AND BENEFITS OF DRUG TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE

David S. Lefere

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I recently came across a U.S. Department of Labor statistic that estimated that drug use in the work place costs employers approximately \$75-\$100 billion dollars annually in lost time, accidents, health care and worker's compensation costs. In today's economy, it has become necessary for my business clients to operate as lean and as efficiently as possible. For this reason, drug testing and drug screening has become an important issue for many of them. The purpose of drug testing and drug screening is to lessen drug abuse's impact in the work place, including tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, attitude problems, theft, decreased productivity, crime and violence.

The drug policy I most often recommend is a Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy. Courts, both in Michigan and the United States, have consistently upheld the legality of requiring a pre-employment drug screening test as a condition of employment. My clients who have implemented a Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy have found that it weeds out potential candidates who have drug and alcohol problems before a problem can occur. Implementing a Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy does not need to be a long or cumbersome process. However, a policy should not be implemented without first establishing the proper procedures. For example, consent needs to be obtained from the employee or prospective employee, clearly indicating that drug testing is a requirement for employment or continued employment.

Compared to the cost of even one employee with a substance abuse problem, most companies find that eliminating the problem in the first place is worth the time and money involved in implementing and operating a Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy. We have helped many employers implement a Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy and would be happy to help your organization implement such a policy or simply review the policy you may currently have in place.