

an applicant for a nursing position possesses a valid license after a tentative offer has been made. Similarly, a defense contractor may perform a security clearance check on applicants once initial, substantive, and discretionary methods have been exhausted. While these methods may be used as initial or contingent methods, depending on the preferences of the organization, two selection methods, drug testing and medical exams, should be used exclusively as contingent assessment methods for legal compliance. When drug testing and medical exams are used, considerable care must be taken in their administration and evaluation.

Drug Testing

More than 70% of substance abusers hold jobs, and substance abuse has been identified as a major cause of workplace violence, accidents, and absenteeism and increased health care costs. A workplace study revealed that the average drug user was 3.6 times more likely to be involved in an accident, received 3 times the average level of sick benefits, was 5 times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim, and missed 10 times as many work days as nonusers.¹³⁰ One comprehensive study found that over an 11-year period, approximately 50 train accidents were attributed to workers under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These accidents resulted in 37 people killed, 80 injured, and the destruction of property valued at \$34 million. A National Transportation Safety Board study found that 31% of all fatal truck accidents were due to alcohol or drugs.¹³¹

As a result of the manifold problems caused by drug use, many employers have drug-testing programs to screen out drug users. A survey of over 600 organizations by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 57% conducted pre-employment drug testing on all job candidates. In contrast, only 36% of organizations reported that they conduct drug tests on their current employees. Drug testing was more likely in larger organizations (those employing more than 2,500 employees) and in publicly owned, for-profit organizations. On average, each drug test cost the company between \$30 and \$40.¹³² These figures are much less than they were in 1996, when drug testing peaked and 81% of employers screened workers and applicants.¹³³

One of the reasons drug testing has declined is shown in Exhibit 9.14: drug tests do not catch many people.¹³⁴ Far and away, the highest positive test rate is for marijuana, and it is only 2.54%—meaning that only 2.54% of applicants tested positive for marijuana. Overall, only 3.8% tested positive (the positive results in the exhibit add up to more than 3.8% because some applicants tested positive for more than one drug). The 3.8% positive rate means that if an organization tested 100 applicants, only about 4 would fail the test (i.e., test positive). The positive rate has dropped over time—indeed, the largest provider of employer drug testing says that positive tests are at a 17-year low. The decline is probably due to a combination of factors, including lower drug use in the population and the deterrent effect of the drug tests themselves (if an individual has used drugs recently and is aware that the

well understood, substantive assessment organizations rely on these methods. This is a validity of substance initial interview need to supplement that, organizations and work sample

who receive job offers are not used, onary assessment ie intuition of the ed. Organizations essing the person/

focuses on person/ kely organizational must fulfill all the e roles outside the viors. These behav ork, covering for a

zation's staffing phi ve action (EEO/AA) ae representation of voluntarily or as part AAPs). At this point the finalists may be job offer. Regardless ssments, they should ive methods.

t 8.3, contingent methods are not always used, depend job and legal mandates. Virtually any selection method ent method. For example, a health clinic may verify that