

Interviewer:

Welcome to the Ohio State University Employee Assistance Program presentation on the Drug-Free Workplace Policy and what it means to employees at the Ohio State University.

Today, we are talking with Robert Meier from the Ohio State Employee Assistance Program about why we have a drug-free workplace policy and what it means to be a drug-free workplace.

Robert is here to give us a little background on the drug-free workplace policy. He'll identify some key terms and concepts for us and help us understand drug and alcohol use patterns. Robert will talk about the differences between "use", "abuse", and "addiction". He'll also help clarify the behaviors and problems that arise from alcohol or drug use on the job.

And, of course, I'd like for him to provide information for employees and managers regarding when and how to seek help if they observe problems, including resources here at Ohio State to provide help, guidance and support.

Robert, welcome.

Robert:

Thanks, glad to be here.

Interviewer:

Robert, why is it important to have a drug-free workplace policy?

Robert:

Well, the university is really concerned about safety and that's the focus of the policy - safety for students, faculty, staff, graduate associates, and visitors. On the job drug and alcohol use can lead to an

increased risk of accidents and violence. On the job drug and alcohol use presents serious challenges for any employer and does not contribute to a high performance culture. By raising awareness, we can direct our focus towards safety and performance issues that can be influenced by alcohol and drug use.

Additionally, having a drug-free workplace is a federal mandate for the Ohio State University.

Interviewer:

A federal mandate?

Robert:

Yes. There are two federal laws that apply to Ohio State – the Drug-Free Workplace Act and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

Any large employer who receives federal grants must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act or forfeit all or part of their federal funding. This includes Ohio State.

Interviewer:

And what about the second law, the Drug Free Schools and Communities act?

Robert:

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act pertains mostly to students and their behaviors or use of alcohol and drugs. What students do during their personal time at the university is subject to the rules outlined under the university's Drug-Free Schools Policy. When a student is a "student employee" and at work, they are covered under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.

Interviewer:

Where can one find the university's Drug-Free Workplace policy?

Robert:

It can be found on the Office of Human Resources website at hr dot osu dot edu.

Interviewer:

What are some of the key components of the university's Drug-Free Workplace Policy?

Robert:

First, the policy applies to all university faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student employees.

Secondly, it prohibits the following:

- the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances
- the inappropriate use of prescription drugs at work
- the unauthorized use of alcohol by university employees on university premises or in university vehicles on or off campus
- and working under the influence of alcohol or while unlawfully using controlled substances.

Thirdly, violations of the policy may result in:

- corrective action, up to and including termination,
- They may require participation in an evaluation by the Ohio State Employee Assistance Program or an external Substance Abuse Professional,
- and/or follow through with education/treatment program.

Interviewer:

So you're saying that alcohol use on the job and unlawful drug use while working is strictly prohibited. Correct?

Robert:

Yes. That's the very essence of the policy.

Interviewer:

Does this include being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on university property or while representing the university on university time such as at a conference?

Robert:

Yes. It does.

Interviewer:

Most university policies spell out responsibilities within them.

What are the university's responsibilities under the Drug-Free Workplace policy?

Robert:

First, the university supports and maintains a drug-free work and living environment to provide for the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors.

Secondly, the university is responsible for informing employees of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy and make information on drug and alcohol use available to all OSU employees and students.

The university also maintains information related to employee drug and alcohol issues in a confidential manner. This means that only those people who have a "need to know" will be informed of any specific information regarding an individual with an alcohol or drug use issue.

Information on positive test results for employees who use alcohol and drugs will be maintained in confidential files within designated departments.