

## The Charterboat Consortium

# Signs and Symptoms of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

“Drug and alcohol abuse” is when someone misuses a drug, whether it is alcohol, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, or illicit drugs. Employees who abuse drugs or alcohol create an unacceptable safety hazard for themselves and for you. As a responsible supervisor or employee, you must learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and take action to keep the railroad safe for you and your fellow employees. This document lists some of the common signs of abuse. Any one or two of these signs do not automatically mean that someone has a problem, but they might. If there are unexplained changes in a person's appearance or behavior, ask a supervisor about getting them professional help.

For more information, call:

**The National Employee Assistance Helpline  
(800) 779-1212.**

### SIGNS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

#### **Eyes and Facial Expression**

- \* Difficulty focusing, glazed eyes
- \* Glassy, bloodshot eyes

#### **Speech**

- \* Slurred, drawn-out, or rambling speech

- \* Tendency to shun conversations and face-to-face meetings

#### **Body Movements and Coordination**

- \* Alcohol breath or attempts to mask it with mints, mouthwash
- \* Impaired coordination
- \* Slowed reflexes
- \* Extreme sleepiness or unconsciousness
- \* Relaxed inhibitions
- \* Tremors and sweating
- \* Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- \* Asphyxiation or difficulty breathing

#### **Behavior**

- \* Headache, nausea, choking, violent vomiting
- \* Mental confusion, stupor, coma, or person cannot be roused
- \* Hangover, overall grouchiness
- \* Unusual passive, combative, or argumentative behavior
- \* Abrupt changes in mood or attitude
- \* Absenteeism, particularly Monday
- \* Uncharacteristic weight loss
- \* Hallucinations
- \* Depressed mood
- \* Nervousness
- \* Insomnia
- \* Alcohol smell on clothes/body

### SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE

#### **Eyes and Facial Expression**

- \* Blank stares
- \* Difficulty in focusing
- \* Dilated or constricted pupils
- \* Droopy eyelids
- \* Glassy, bloodshot eyes

- \* Involuntary eye movement
- \* Jaw grinding
- \* Sniffles and/or runny nose
- \* Teeth grinding

#### **Speech**

- \* Dry mouth, low raspy speech
- \* Incomplete verbal responses
- \* Repetitive speech patterns
- \* Thick or slurred speech
- \* Uncontrolled talkativeness

#### **Body Movements & Coordination**

- \* Perspiration
- \* Anorexia
- \* Body tremors
- \* Dizzy, unstable walking
- \* Track marks
- \* Poor coordination
- \* Muscular tremors (involuntary quivering)
- \* Exaggerated or depressed reflexes

#### **Behavior**

- \* Behavior recurring in cycles
- \* Burned out
- \* Confusion
- \* Disorientation about time and environment
- \* Drowsiness
- \* Extremely excitable
- \* Hallucinations
- \* Impaired short-term memory
- \* Impaired time and distance perception
- \* Impaired judgment (putting self in dangerous situations)
- \* Inability to sit still for any length of time
- \* Irritability, anxiousness, apprehensiveness
- \* Lethargic or apathetic
- \* Loss of coordination

- \* Loss of memory
- \* Mood swings
- \* Odor or presence of vomit on clothes
- \* Physical collapse
- \* Poor balance and/or lack of coordination
- \* Poor coordination
- \* Repetitive, bizarre behavior
- \* Short attention span
- \* Silly, giggly behavior for no reason
- \* Talk about or attempting suicide
- \* Violent or threatening (verbally or physically) behavior

### PERFORMANCE

An employee suffering from drug or alcohol abuse will find that their attention is focused more on drugs or alcohol, than doing a good job.

This decreased motivation, combined with impaired skills and judgment, will often lead to:

- \* Difficulty in following instructions or completing assignments
- \* Extended breaks, missed deadlines
- \* Increased waste
- \* Lost or damaged equipment
- \* Missed workdays
- \* Poor quality work
- \* Reduced efficiency
- \* Theft
- \* Uneven work habits, a bad attitude
- \* Unexplained disappearances from the job