

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Original Implementation: July 14, 1998

Last Revision: April 18, 2020

Purpose

This policy affirms the university's commitment to providing a safe, healthy, and productive learning and working environment by taking appropriate steps to maintain a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace.

Definitions

Medical review officer (MRO) refers to a licensed physician who is responsible for receiving laboratory results generated by the employer's drug testing program, evaluating, interpreting and verifying those drug testing results in conjunction with an employee's medical history, and determining whether a positive result was caused by the use of prohibited drugs or by an employee's medical condition.

General

The university must set an example to ensure the safety, health and welfare of its employees, students and the citizens which it serves, by taking the appropriate steps for maintaining a drug-free workplace as mandated by the state and federal governments. This policy supplements all other SFA policies regarding drug and alcohol use and related topics by establishing the guidelines for drug and alcohol testing. The drug and alcohol testing program is for the purpose of ensuring a healthy and safe workplace, and may not be used for the purpose of criminal prosecution.

Stephen F. Austin State University may require employees in safety sensitive positions to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing based upon reasonable suspicion, post-accident, or post-university referred drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation. University safety sensitive employees who are subject to Department of Transportation regulations in 49 C.F.R. parts 382 and 40 (primarily drivers with commercial driver's licenses) will additionally be subject to random drug and/or alcohol testing proscribed by federal law.

Reasonable suspicion can be established by any of the following:

1. Direct observation of drug or alcohol use or possession and/or demonstration of physical symptoms of the influence of a drug or alcohol as related to work activities,
2. A pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, consistent with alcohol or drug abuse,
3. Arrest or conviction of a drug or alcohol related offense as the focus of a criminal investigation into illicit drug use, possession, or trafficking,
4. Information provided by reliable or credible sources,
5. Information, which is independently corroborated,
6. Evidence that an employee or student worker has tampered with a previous drug or alcohol test, or
7. Possession of drug paraphernalia.

Individuals having reasonable suspicion of an employee in a safety sensitive position, based on the above criteria, must contact the director of human resources and/or the director of environmental health, safety, and risk management. When feasible, the office of the general counsel will be contacted to confirm whether a given circumstance is sufficient to conduct a test.

Reporting personnel shall document the exact reasons why they suspect that a certain employee in a safety sensitive position has violated the drug and/or alcohol policy to include: the symptoms exhibited by the employee; the actions of the administrator, faculty, employee or student worker; if at all possible, corroborating statements from other administrators, faculty, employees or student workers; and other evidence which tends to establish a reasonable suspicion of illicit drug or unauthorized alcohol use.

Statements by the reporting personnel should document specific facts, not speculation, about an employee's behavior or appearance which would lead a reasonable person to the conclusion that the employee was using or in possession of illicit drugs or unauthorized alcohol. The emphasis should be placed on how the behavior of the employee is affecting his/her performance.

Post-accident

Each employee in a safety sensitive position who is involved in an accident that occurs during the course and scope of employment shall be required to submit to a drug/alcohol test. (A drug or alcohol test will also be requested if damage has occurred to university property as a direct result of the employee's behavior.)

As a condition of continued employment, any employee in a safety sensitive position who is participating in a substance abuse treatment program or who has a rehabilitation agreement with the university following an incident involving substance abuse may be required to submit to additional drug testing. This section shall not apply to employees in safety sensitive positions who have successfully completed a drug and or alcohol rehabilitation program prior to employment with the university.

Until the results of a test are received, an individual will automatically be removed from all safety sensitive functions, but may perform duties as assigned. Individuals may be suspended with pay pending investigation, if the continued participation of that individual presents a real and present danger to personal safety or property or threatens the health and safety of the individual or peers.

Prohibited Employee Conduct

1. Engaging in the manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of prohibited substances on university property, in university vehicles, or while in the conduct of university business. (Alcohol possession or use may be permitted on university property as articulated by university policy.)
2. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Testing positive for alcohol and controlled substances as a safety sensitive employee.
4. Refusing to submit to required testing as a safety sensitive employee.

5. Permitting a subordinate employee, in a safety sensitive position, to perform or continue to perform safety sensitive functions when the supervising employee has actual knowledge that a safety sensitive employee has engaged in conduct prohibited in paragraphs above.

Refusal to Submit Test

An employee in a safety sensitive position who refuses to consent and submit to a test when requested under any of the circumstances provided for above will be subject to disciplinary action including termination.

Refusal to submit includes:

1. Failure to provide adequate breath for testing without a valid medical explanation after he or she has received notice of the requirement for breath testing in accordance with the provisions of this policy,
2. Failure to provide adequate urine for controlled substances testing without a valid medical explanation after he or she has received notice of the requirement for urine testing in accordance with the provisions of this policy, and/or
3. Engaging in conduct that clearly obstructs the testing process.

Positive Test

An employee in a safety sensitive position with a positive test will be removed from performing his or her safety sensitive functions. Their supervisor and the director of human resources will meet with each employee who tests positive and inform the employee of the test result.

Based upon the information available after the meeting with the employee, the supervisor and the director of human resources shall determine whether:

1. To proceed to impose appropriate disciplinary action (keeping in mind any minimum penalties as may be required by federal or state law, if criminal penalties may have been pursued, and the nature of the infraction as related to the job functions of the individual) pursuant to university procedures for discipline and dismissal of employee; or
2. To offer the employee the opportunity to participate in and satisfactorily complete an appropriate employee assistance program or rehabilitation program for alcohol and/or drug abusers as a condition of continued employment solely at the employee's expense. An employee who is permitted and chooses to participate in such a program must be informed that the university will pursue appropriate disciplinary action if the employee does not satisfactorily complete the prescribed program.

Recurrence of Substance Abuse

Upon the second occurrence of the necessity to potentially refer an employee to counseling or rehabilitation treatment, there will not be an option to refer the employee in a safety sensitive position for treatment and termination will be automatic.

Subsequent disciplinary actions

When an employee has experienced work related problems as a result of alcohol or drug use and has been reinstated, subsequent disciplinary action will not be taken for the previous work related problems provided the problems cease after reinstatement.

Employees Subject to Drug and Alcohol Testing

All employees in safety sensitive positions of Stephen F. Austin State University are to be included in the alcohol and/or drug testing program and will be subject to testing. Employees identified for testing purposes are expected to cooperate fully with designated clinic and/or laboratory personnel by making themselves available for testing, giving a valid sample and completing accurately all of the steps and necessary documents associated with the test.

Employees in safety sensitive positions at the university who are subject to this drug testing policy are defined as all employees whose job duties have a direct effect on the health, safety and welfare of employees, students and citizens, which the university serves including the following described duties:

- Drivers with commercial driver's licenses (CDL),
- Employees who are required to have a university certified driver's license in their job description,
- Persons who carry a firearm for security purposes,
- Employees who control dispatch of emergency services,
- Employees who repair or maintain university owned or leased vehicles,
- All maintenance personnel including but not limited to electricians, plumbers, carpenters, etc.,
- All employees who maintain the critical infrastructure of the university including but not limited to database administrators, systems administrators, programmer and systems analysts, network support specialists, etc.,
- Persons required to use dangerous equipment in the course and scope of their jobs including saws, drills, torches, tractors, mowers, and other motorized equipment,
- Employees using chemicals or other dangerous substances in the course and scope of their jobs,
- Medical professionals including licensed doctors, licensed nurses, certified athletic trainers.

Facilities for Testing

Employees selected for testing procedures shall report to the designated independent facility, or may be escorted by an authorized supervisor. A specimen will be collected and tested by an independently approved laboratory using valid, reliable testing procedures as outlined under the U.S. DOT regulations at 49 C.F.R. part 40. The services of an MRO will be retained for proper laboratory results interpretation.

Test Results

Drug and alcohol screen test results will be reviewed by an independent MRO after receipt of the specimen by the laboratory. Employees who test positive for substances prohibited by this program shall be afforded an opportunity to consult with the MRO and to provide medical records or other biomedical information to assist the MRO in determining whether there is a legitimate medical explanation for the test results, including use of a legally prescribed medication. Upon review of all confirmatory tests and other medical records, the MRO shall issue a confirmation report verifying test results. The MRO's confirmation report and the results therein shall be deemed conclusive.

If a post-accident drug screen produces a positive result due to a safety sensitive employee's lawful use of prescription medication which may impair judgement such as driving, handling equipment or making sound decisions, the employee will be removed from all safety sensitive work and, as soon as reasonably practical, discuss any limitations with the employee's supervisor. An employee may be required to provide a doctor's release to resume regular safety sensitive work duties.

The MRO shall have knowledge of substance abuse disorders and appropriate medical training to interpret and evaluate an individual's positive test result (as reported by the laboratory) together with his or her medical history and any other relevant biomedical information.

Any results below the minimum stipulated test levels for drug testing or under .02 for alcohol testing shall be considered a negative test result. Any employee with properly confirmed positive drug test results, or greater than .02 alcohol test as certified by the MRO, shall continue to be removed from any safety sensitive work and shall report to the supervisor upon request.

Records

All information from an employee's drug and alcohol tests is confidential, unless otherwise required by law. Records will be maintained in a secure manner so that disclosure of information to unauthorized persons does not occur.

Appeal and Retesting

Employees may appeal positive test results by submitting a written request to the director of human resources within 24 hours after being informed of the positive test result. The appellant has the right to have a second test performed at a certified laboratory of his/her choice. The specimen transfer between the laboratories will follow standard protocol. An MRO shall interpret the alternate laboratory's test results, considering the nature of the result and time elapsed since the original test. All expenses for such retests will be the responsibility of the appellant.

Notice

All new employees shall receive notice of this policy and be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt. Failure to sign an acknowledgement of receipt shall not nullify the notice provided by the university. Existing employees will be notified of the policy and its revisions.

Cross-reference: Discipline and Discharge (11.4); Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse (13.11); 49 C.F.R. §§ 40, 382

Responsible for Implementation: President

Contact for Revision: Director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management, Director of Human Resources, and General Counsel

Forms: Notice and Acknowledgement of Policy Receipt

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs