

The Most Important Relationship for Companies Implementing a Drug and Alcohol Testing Program

The current situation companies face is how to keep their employees and customers safe in a changing world where a person is more likely to die from a drug overdose than a car accident. An employer has a duty and responsibility to ensure that employees are not impaired when performing their jobs, especially if there is a safety component involved. An impaired employee puts themselves at risk, fellow employees, and anyone directly related to the company. Aside from health and safety concerns there are overall legal and liability risks involved with impaired workers performing tasks on behalf of a company or organization.

As an employer understanding how to set up a drug and alcohol program and implement it can be a daunting task. There are regulations depending on what type of company you own and what types of services you provide. This is especially true if you have drivers who require a CDL (commercial driver's license) to complete their job requirements. Safety sensitive positions may be regulated by state or federal rules. If your company has employees that are subject to DOT regulations, it's the law. Pre-employment screenings are required and random testing is not optional either. Your TPA (Third Party Administrator) will pull the random list but as the DER (Designated Employer Representative) you are responsible for sending in the chosen employee. The DER is also responsible for specifically following all guidelines related to a positive screen. There will be new situations that will occur and the DER may be unsure of how to proceed. A key component to the DER and TPA relationship is having the confidence to contact the TPA and have them guide you through how to follow regulations and stay compliant.

As a company when you begin the process of implementing a drug and alcohol testing program choosing the correct TPA can make all the

difference in the ease of how your program runs and your job as a DER. A TPA should be available to answer your questions and share resources about current guidelines and regulations. As a DER ask questions! If you don't know the answer it is always better to seek it out rather than falling back on, "that's how we have always done it." A mistake could subject a company to penalties or legal issues. A reputable TPA will be certified in the industry, easily accessible, and up to date on current laws and regulations. Every company or organization is different so find a TPA that meets your needs as an employer. Choose a TPA that is reliable and delivers on the services provided.

Tips for the DER and TPA relationship:

- Ask questions if you aren't sure about anything related to your drug and alcohol program
- Follow your company policy, it is there for a reason
- Keep accurate documentation, this will always help in a legal or audit situation

DER Training: <https://www.itihq.com/blog?id=23>

Supervisor Training:

<https://www.itihq.com/files/1d8/Supervisor%20February.pdf>