

WHAT IS OEDI?

OEDI stands for Oregon Employer Drug-Free Initiative – a name and direction change from the Workdrugfree Oregon program of Oregon Nurses Foundation. In July 2008 it became a program of Associated Oregon Industries Foundation, then changed its name to OEDI in January 2009 to ensure a clear business identity and statewide scope.



OEDI is Oregon's only statewide drug-free workplace initiative designed to help inform businesses of the value of drug-free workplace programs and assist them in launching and implementing these programs. OEDI brings this to a local level through a network of 15 Chambers of Commerce and local business groups -- extending from Astoria to Klamath Falls and east to La Grande and Lakeview.

How do businesses benefit from drug-free workplaces?

It is much more time-consuming and costly to be without a drug-free workplace program than to establish and maintain one. Companies that do not have a drug-free workplace program experience:

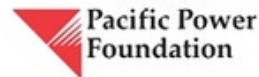
- Excessive absenteeism;
- Higher rates of on-the-job injuries;
- Higher workers' comp costs;
- Lower employee morale and productivity;
- More applicants who use drugs because they can't find employment with companies who have established drug-free workplace programs;
- A sense of helplessness in being able to do anything about an employee who is a substance abuser.

By putting in place a drug-free workplace program, your company will experience:

- Increased safety and lower workers' comp costs;
- Lower health care costs;
- Increased productivity, employee morale, and customer satisfaction;
- Less turnover and absenteeism;
- Higher quality applicants;
- Respect and a positive reputation in the community.

In the OEDI 2008 Survey of Oregon Businesses, employers of all size agree that **a safer and more productive workplace is the most**

Sponsor



To Get Started Contact Partners in Your Area

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Baker-Union County Chambers
Clatsop County Chambers
Gresham Area Chamber
Klamath County Chamber
McMinnville Area Chamber
Medford-Jackson County Chamber
Molalla Area Chamber
Newport Area Chamber
Portland Employer Drug-Free Initiative
Prineville-Crook County Chamber
Salem-Keizer Chambers
Lake County/SCOEDD
Workdrugfree Douglas County

Get Involved!

News & Events

March 31, 2009:
Supervisor Training, Workplace Behavior Problems: The Challenge of Substance Abusers
10 am – 2:30 pm
OSU Extension Office, Lakeview
[Download Flyer](#)

April 2, 2009:
Employer Seminar, Drugs, Alcohol & Medications:
A Roadmap to a Clean & Sober Workforce
Noon – 1:30 pm

important benefit gained from implementing a drug-free workplace program.

Why was OEDI established?

Business in five of nine Oregon Business Plan bus tour stops in 2005 reported that drug use was a key obstacle to hiring otherwise qualified workers. Statewide surveys showed that substance abuse was a concern of over 70% of Oregon employers, yet only 12% had drug-free workplace programs in place. At its January 2006 Leadership Summit, the Oregon Business Plan approved OEDI as part of its strategic framework to build a more competitive Oregon economy.



What are OEDI's goals?

The overall goal of the Initiative is to substantially increase the number of drug-free workplaces statewide. Specifically, it will:

- Educate and mobilize the business community to combat substance abuse through a business-to-business awareness and education campaign;
- Raise legislator awareness of the impact of drugs on workplace safety and productivity;
- Prioritize substance abuse prevention in Oregon's public workforce system; and
- Elevate importance of student preparation for the drug-free workplace.

OEDI's 15 partner sites offer legal policy workshops, company supervisor trainings and employer forums on issues such as addressing medical marijuana and prescription drug abuse in the workplace. The partners also conduct business education campaigns, survey local business needs, document success stories, and distribute business toolkits with local resources.

What are Oregon's biggest challenges?

Substance abuse cost the Oregon economy \$5.9 billion in 2006, the equivalent of K-12 education spending. Over \$4 billion of that cost was in lost productivity, which directly impacts business competitiveness. OEDI focuses on helping smaller businesses overcome such obstacles as lack of time, money and expertise and the fear of losing hard-to-replace employees. It is achievable.

PacifiCorp: A DRUG-FREE "POWER" HOUSE

Having a drug-free workplace increases safety for employees and customers

PacifiCorp knows that when working with electricity, safety has to be a number-one priority. The company supplies 1.7 million people with power in several western states, including Oregon, and it realizes that by having a drug-free workforce, its employees and customers are safer. In fact, since 1989, PacifiCorp has had a drug-free policy, making them one of the pioneers of drug testing in Oregon.

Diana Corder, Corporate Account Manager for PacifiCorp, and Tom Gauntt, PacifiCorp Company Spokesman, both say a drug-free workplace is necessary, especially considering the potential dangers of working with electricity.

Corder said, "A drug-free workplace is essential for safety; it's another tool that can be used to create a working environment that is as safe as possible."

Making it work

Ingram Books, Roseburg
[Download Flyer](#)



Representative Bruce Hanna
(R-Roseburg)



J.L. Wilson,
Associated Oregon Industries



Paula Barran,
Barron Liebman Attorneys



Dan Sabatino,
Western Partitions

Corder said the key parts to PacifiCorp's drug-free workplace program are the five core components of a drug-free workplace model:

- A formal written substance abuse policy;
- Supervisor training in enforcing the policy;
- Employee education on the dangers of workplace substance abuse and company policy;
- An employee assistance program or referral to local resources;
- Drug testing.

"PacifiCorp implements a variety of drug testing procedures, including pre-employment, suspicion/cause, post-accident, and random," said Corder. She also stated that having access to local resources is a key aspect to the company's drug-free workplace policy.

Program challenges

Maintaining a drug-free workplace policy has been relatively straightforward for PacifiCorp, since it has been drug testing for so long. However, Corder said it's still important to find the best way to implement the program so it's done in a fair and reputable manner.

Additionally Gauntt said, "The company's workforce is widely dispersed over several states, which can make communication challenging. It can also make providing access to local resources tricky, especially in remote areas."

Numerous benefits

In spite of the challenges, PacifiCorp experiences substantial benefits through the use of its drug-free workplace program in addition to the increased safety factor. Corder said the company and its employees experience an increased sense of morale and accountability, especially since both parties know they have drug-free community efforts on the job.

Advice for other employers

When asked what advice PacifiCorp would give to workplaces without a drug-free workplace program, Gauntt said, "Think of the image you give to your customers in the community." He also said that a drug-free workplace is something you owe your employees; it's one less thing everyone has to worry about.

Although there are costs associated with setting up a program, Corder says that companies need to be cognizant of the negative impact of not having a drug-free workplace program. "The negative impacts of not having a policy far outweigh the costs of initial implementation," she said.

Drug-free employment works

As evidenced by PacifiCorp, a drug-free workplace program is a great way to protect the safety of both employees and customers alike. The program will provide a variety of positive outcomes that will not only help ensure safety, but increase productivity and morale. Contact OEDI for help in starting or strengthening your program!

MEDICAL MARIJUANA BATTLE CONTINUES

Outnumbered ten-to-one by medical marijuana advocates in a House Business & Labor Committee hearing last week, representatives of Oregon's leading business organizations testified in support of **HB 2497** and **HB 3052**. These identical bills, sponsored by Representative Bruce Hanna and Representative Mike Schaufler, clarify that employers are not required to accommodate medical marijuana in the workplace, regardless of where the use occurs.

Business representatives also raised concerns about HB 2881,

sponsored by Representative Peter Buckley, which seeks to require employers to use a Medical Review Officer (MRO) to review any positive marijuana test and give the MRO the decision on whether medical marijuana cardholders no longer pose a safety risk and can return to work.

The committee also considered HB 3274 which would put the state in charge of growing, distributing and taxing medical marijuana.

Business representatives made the following points:

- **J.L. Wilson, Associated Oregon Industries:** Oregon employers continue to have safety and liability concerns due to the confluence of two major events: (1) BOLI's position forcing employers to accommodate a federally-controlled substance; and (2) the explosive growth of Oregon's medical marijuana program, which now has over 21,000 cardholders, with 90% qualifying for "severe pain" and only 6% qualifying under the original conditions of the Act.
- **Paula Barran, Barran Liebman Attorneys:** The vast majority of employer advice provided by SAIF relates to confusion over Oregon's medical marijuana law. Barran urged the committee to look at the risk of losing federal stimulus dollars by requiring employers to accommodate medical marijuana cardholders. Employers must certify they are in compliance with the Drug-free Workplace Act in order to qualify for federal contracts and grants.
- **Dan Sabatino, Western Partitions:** As a large union contractor with up to 1,000 employees, the company spent over five years and \$50,000 accommodating a cardholder who was trained in fall protection but who used marijuana at lunch, then fell and shattered his leg. Sabatino said that when an injury happens, it is not the marijuana user that is held liable, it is the employer.
- **Anthony Miller, Oregon Self-Insurers Association:** Representing over 130 employers, Miller said that OSIA is not seeking to overturn Oregon's Medical Marijuana Act, but legal clarity concerning an employer's right to maintain a drug-free workplace. One member, a large well-known health care organization, recently experienced frequent mistakes with patient medications by a pharmacy technician with a medical marijuana card.
- **Ken Hector, Silverton Hospital:** Every aspect of medical care is safety sensitive. Silverton Hospital does not allow employees to work while using drugs or alcohol, including prescriptive narcotic medication in which the strength is known and the dosage specified. With medical marijuana, there are no dosage recommendations and worse, the strength varies from plant to plant. Controls are non-existent.
- **Michael Adamski, The Stoller Group:** The company places over 18,000 individuals annually in temporary employment – school bus drivers, construction site flaggers, food processors -- and is often presented with applicants with medical marijuana cards. Adamski stated that it is a serious system flaw to allow certain employees to have marijuana in their systems, putting the safety of everyone around them in jeopardy. It is also irresponsible to ask employers to essentially disregard their drug-free work policies.
- **Duane Grange and Lee Briney, American Society of Safety Engineers:** The three ASSE chapters in Oregon, representing 800 occupational safety, health, and environmental professionals, support **HB 2497** and **HB 3052**. Grange noted the importance of ensuring a workplace is safe for all. Briney noted that **HB 2881** would impose an undue financial hardship, particularly on small employers, by requiring use of a MRO for any positive marijuana test. In addition, she stated that most MROs are not qualified to determine whether or not an employee

under the influence of any drug would be fit for duty nor would they be willing to make that determination because of the tremendous liability involved.

- **Jerry Gjesvold, Serenity Lane:** With the growth of Oregon's medical marijuana program, Gjesvold has assisted more than 30 employers in how to respond when an employee tests positive for marijuana and then presents a medical marijuana card. He said that in all of the cases, the employee presented the card after testing positive. In regard to applicants for medical marijuana cards, there are no conditions that require an evaluation for possible abuse or dependency by a qualified addiction specialist. Gjesvold also noted that, as there are no objective means of measuring impairment with marijuana, an MRO would be unable to make return-to-work determinations under HB 2881.
- **Cory Kuvaas, FlexForce Staffing:** No Oregon employer should be required to accommodate medical marijuana. By requiring employers to accommodate medical marijuana cardholders, Kuvaas said the state puts them at risk of being sued for injuries caused by impaired workers.

Chair Schaufler plans to assemble a work group to address all three bills. In the meantime, AOI will continue to battle for business. However you can make the move to get involved in making your business a drug-free zone.



Oregon Employer Drug-Free Initiative

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