Goals: This safety session should teach you to:
A. Understand the dangers of substance abuse at work.
B. Recognize signs of substance abuse.

OSHA Regulations: **Drug-Free Workplace Act**

1. Substance Abuse Violates Company Policy and May Violate the Law
   A. Company rules ban drug or alcohol use at work, or working under their influence. It’s illegal for anyone to possess or use drugs such as cocaine and marijuana.
      o The Drug-Free Workplace Act also bans illegal drug use at firms with federal contracts.

2. Drugs and Alcohol Create Major Health Hazards
   A. Alcohol can damage the liver and heart. Abusers are often sick because they ignore good eating, sleeping, and other health habits. It’s also addictive for some people.
   B. Cocaine is addictive, makes users so “up” they don’t eat or sleep, and can cause respiratory and nasal damage, seizures, loss of brain function, and even death.
   C. Marijuana harms the lungs and possibly reproductive and brain functions.
   D. Heroin is highly addictive; users are prone to illness and malnutrition, with major risks of overdose and of HIV and hepatitis infection from dirty needles.
   E. Hallucinogens can cause depression and mental breakdown.
   F. Amphetamines are addictive and may cause brain damage.
   G. Inhalants can cause nerve, brain, stomach and liver damage; overdose is a risk.
   H. Sedatives are addictive, with long-term risk of liver or kidney damage. They have the potential for overdose and can be deadly if combined with alcohol.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Are Major Safety Hazards to Users and to Others
   A. They impair judgment, coordination, reaction, concentration, and perspective.
   B. No one should drive or operate equipment during or after drinking or using drugs.

4. Learn to Recognize Signs of Possible Alcohol Abuse
   A. Missing work or being late after drinking
   B. Poor concentration and coordination
   C. Being argumentative, anxious, defensive, and/or blaming others for problems
   D. Letting responsibilities slide
5. Learn to Recognize Signs of Possible Drug Abuse.
   A. Cocaine:
      1. Feeling almost superhuman, though judgment and decision-making are impaired
      2. Restlessness, poor concentration, paranoia, and big mood swings
   B. Marijuana:
      1. Physical and mental slowdown, forgetfulness, inability to judge space or distance
      2. Feeling that work and other responsibilities aren’t important
   C. Heroin:
      1. Slow, fuzzy actions and reactions
      2. Loss of interest in anything but drugs, and sometimes stealing to pay for them
   D. Hallucinogens (PCP, Ecstasy, angel dust, etc.):
      1. Seeing or hearing things that aren’t there; inability to recognize danger
      2. Bizarre, sometimes violent, reactions and behavior
      3. Panic from flashbacks of past drug experiences
   E. Amphetamines (speed, meth, etc.):
      1. “Hyper” behavior, fast, constant talking, nervousness, and mood swings
      2. Pushing beyond physical capacity and carelessness
   F. Sedatives (downers, including codeine cough medicine):
      1. Slow mental and physical reflexes
      2. Difficulty doing precise work
   G. Inhalants (nitrous oxide, airplane glue, amyl nitrate, etc.):
      1. Slow mental and physical reflexes and dizziness
      2. Reckless or violent behavior

6. Don’t Ignore Signs of Substance Abuse
   A. If you feel you may have a substance abuse problem:
      1. Remove yourself from situations where you could put anyone in danger
      2. Get help from the employee assistance program, AA, etc.
   B. If you feel a co-worker may have a substance abuse problem:
      1. Discuss your reasons for concern with the person and urge him or her to get help.
      2. If you continue to see signs of possible substance abuse, tell your supervisor.

**Summation: Substance Abuse Puts the User and Others in Danger**

People use alcohol and drugs to feel better or cope with problems. But substance abuse solves nothing and creates major new problems, including safety risks.