



# Too Impaired to Work



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In every industry, employees need to be healthy and focused to stay safe at work. Impairment is a major roadblock to workplace safety and the effects are more common than you think.

## Impairment risks

The more you know about the risks of impairment and how they can arise, the better you can judge your ability to work safely.

- Missing just a few hours of sleep can hamper your driving abilities. Even if you only drive to and from work, this can be a serious risk.
- If you regularly have trouble sleeping, talk to your doctor about getting screened for sleep disorders
- Many prescription drugs, including opioids and others, can impair your ability to work and drive
- Before starting a new prescription, ask your doctor about any potential side effects and how it might impact your ability to work or drive
- Cannabis taken in any form and at any dose can have varying effects for different amounts of time. Even if cannabis is legal for recreational purposes in your state, educate yourself on its impairing effects and your employer's policies to stay safe.
- Impairment begins with the first drink. Just because you have experienced feelings of impairment from alcohol before does not mean you can overcome them or work through them.
- Emotional impairment is another serious risk. If something is causing you stress or anxiety, whether on the job or back home, it can affect your focus at work and potentially make you less safe.
- Do not take chances. Nothing – not a doctor's prescription or past experience with an impairing substance – is an excuse to work unsafely.



## Cannabis: a growing concern

As cannabis is increasingly decriminalized and legalized for recreational and medicinal use across the U.S., it raises new safety concerns in the workplace and at home.

- For all workers who drive on the job or just to and from work, there is no "safe" level of THC for driving or operating heavy machinery
- There are many unknowns associated with cannabis. Do not assume that consuming it one way is less impairing or safer than another way; there is no way to know.
- Cannabis can be consumed in a number of ways, but whether taken orally through food, drinks or pills, or inhaled through smoking or vaping, it can put you and others at risk in the workplace
- Everyone experiences the effects of cannabis differently and for different amounts of time. Factors like the food and drink you've consumed throughout the day and any medications you take can change how cannabis affects you from one day to another.
- When cannabis is used to manage pain, treat it as a medical substance, not a recreational one. Talk with your doctor about your options before considering it a solution to any health problems.