

- ◆ Health Screenings Matter
- ◆ Ask Us

### Workplace Drinking Culture

From its colorful past, it is clear that the workplace has strong ties to drinking culture. Today, it persists through many meetings and business-centered social events which commonly occur in restaurants, bars, and other settings.

Findings from the 2006 Prevalence and Distribution of Alcohol Use and Impairment in the Workplace: a U.S. National Survey show:

- Around 15% of the workforce is directly affected by alcohol use and impairment
- 1.83% drink before work
- 7.06% drink during the workday
- 1.68% work under the influence
- 9.23% work with a hangover

#### The Effects of Drinking Culture for Employers

Alcohol impairment and hangover diminishes a person's reaction time and his/her ability to reason. This increases the risk of a workplace injury or fatality. According to U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), employers pay almost \$1 billion a week for direct workers' compensation costs in addition to the indirect costs of accident investigation, replacement employees, training, lost productivity, damage and repair of equipment and property.

Lost productivity increases the costs of doing business. Full time workers who were current drug users were more likely to report missing two or more workdays in the past month due to illness or injury, when compared with workers who were not current users.\* The National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse estimates the costs of substance abuse to the federal government for expenses due to absenteeism at \$890.8 million in 2005.

Other consequences of a drinking culture include employee turnover and negative company morale.



#### What Employers Can Do

- Implement a policy that can be enforced regarding drinking on company time
- Provide education for employees and supervisors
- Provide information about EAP services
- Allow flex time for employees to attend appointments that address their alcohol use

The return on investment in employees' well-being is a win-win for everyone. **If you would like more information about behavioral health and the workplace, contact Cheryl Cichowski at the Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services at [Cheryl.cichowski@maine.gov](mailto:Cheryl.cichowski@maine.gov)**

\*How Illicit Drug Use Affects Business and the Economy.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/ondcp-fact-sheets/how-illicit-drug-use-affects-business-and-the-economy>

### Employer Success Story

The City of Portland's **City Fit!** wellness committee has created opportunities for employees to learn and experience wellness offerings. Since March 2013, the wellness committee has organized:

- Two voluntary biometric screenings
- Lunch and learns including topics on diabetes, nutrition, parenting and working with difficult people
- Free weekly yoga
- Free physical activity programs through Move and Improve with incentives for participation
- City Fit! dog walking group
- Writers group
- Two wellness fairs

Programming for 2015 includes a Winter Warm-Up event at Riverside Fun Park, Family Ice Skating, ongoing Weight Watchers programs, participation in the Trek Across Maine, and a summer strawberry picking event.

**If you are interested in learning more about what the City of Portland is doing, please contact Janice Kimball at 874-8624 or [jlk@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:jlk@portlandmaine.gov).**

### April Health Observances

- ◆ [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#)

### May Health Observances

- ◆ [Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month](#)
- ◆ [National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Stroke Awareness Month](#)



Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

## Health Screenings Matter

Getting a health screening is one of the most important things you can do for your health. They are tests that check for diseases before there are any symptoms. This allows doctors to catch the disease early and begin treatment sooner, which can make the disease easier to treat.

These tests can be used to look for:

- Certain types of cancer
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Hearing loss
- Vision loss



Different screening tests are done at different ages and are different for men and women. Use the link below to see the screening guidelines for each group:

- [Women at any age](#)
- [Women 50 and older](#)
- [Men at any age](#)
- [Men 50 and older](#)

### What Employers Can Do

- Provide on-site health screenings (blood pressure, bone density tests, etc.)
- Allow employees to use flex time for health screenings
- Make sure your health insurance will pay for screening tests
- Encourage employees to get their screenings done when recommended

Health screenings can help lower health care costs and by encouraging your employees to get their health screenings, employers can help their employees stay healthy.

**For more information about health screenings and preventative care, visit:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/prevention/>.

**Do you want to highlight your worksite in a future newsletter or have questions that you want Maine CDC staff to answer?** Please send your worksite success story or questions to Meredith Backus at [meredith.backus@maine.gov](mailto:meredith.backus@maine.gov)

## Ask Us

**Question:** I have coworkers in my office that regularly clip their nails at their desk. Is this sanitary?

**Answer:** No. Fingernails may harbor dirt and germs. When you clip your nails at work, you have the potential to spread some infections. The clipping noise can also be distracting for other employees.

To help prevent the spread of germs and nail infections:

- Keep nails short and trimmed (done at home)
- Avoid biting and chewing nails
- Avoid cutting cuticles– they act as a barrier to infections
- Scrub the underside of nails with soap and water every time you wash your hands

## Additional Resources



National Institutes of Health



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*Department of Health and Human Services*

*Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives*

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