If you are going to play a role in the fight against substance abuse, you need to know what to look for.

The following information is not intended to be a full disclosure of the drug and alcohol world; there is so much information to print that it cannot be contained within these two pages. Therefore, we provide you with this primer, and ask you to consult with a professional as to how to proceed should you suspect one of your employees, co-workers, friends or family members. Phone numbers of associations that can help you are listed at the end of this article, but you can also look for help under the heading “Drug Abuse & Addiction—Information & Treatment” in your region’s Yellow Pages.

The Facts
- 25,500,000 Americans suffer from the affects of alcohol or drugs, which carries over into the workplace.
- Approximately 40 percent of all workplace deaths are alcohol or drug related.
- Approximately 50 percent of all workplace injuries are related to drug and alcohol abuse.
- Seventy percent of all illegal drug users are employed either full or part time. More than 10 million people are current users of illicit drugs.
- It is estimated that one out of every five workers ages 18 to 25 use drugs on the job.
- It is estimated that one out of every eight workers ages 25 to 34 use drugs or alcohol on the job.
- One in 12 full-time employees reports current use of illicit drugs.
- One in every 10 people in this country has an alcohol problem.

The Substances

Alcohol
Possible symptoms of intoxication: slurred speech, impaired motor coordination, poor judgment, lack of control over physical and verbal actions, nausea.

Cannabis. (marijuana, hashish)
Possible symptoms, short term: increased heart rate, increased appetite, bloodshot eyes, dry mouth, reduced short-term memory, reduced understanding, reduced concentration, reduced coordination.

Possible symptoms, long term: loss of motivation, loss of comprehension, paranoia, cancer, psychological addiction.

Stimulants. (cocaine, “uppers”)
Possible symptoms, short term: enlarged pupils, increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased temperature, heavier breathing, per-
spiration, headaches, blurred vision, loss of coordination, dizziness.

Possible symptoms, long term: hallucinations, paranoia, psychological and physical addiction.

Other: If snorted, a common symptom is a runny nose. Free-basing, another way of taking a stimulant such as cocaine, can lead to an explosion. Some users inject the substances; this can lead to AIDS if dirty needles are used.

Depressants. (alcohol, “downers,” barbiturates: seconal, phenobarbital, Valium, librium, quaaludes)

Possible symptoms: slurred speech, staggering, slowed reactions, poor judgment, loss of control, stupor, paralysis, coma and death may result; possible physical and psychological addiction.

Inhalants. (cleaning fluid, paint thinner)

Possible symptoms, short term: nausea, nosebleeds, fatigue, lack of coordination and loss of appetite.

Possible symptoms, long term: hepatitis, brain damage, weight loss, muscle weakness.

Hallucinogens. (PCP, angel dust, LSD)

Possible symptoms, short term: violent tendencies, convulsions, coma, heart and lung failure.

Possible symptoms, long term: memory lapse, depression, violent tendencies, paranoia, hallucinations.

Narcotics. (heroin, codeine, morphine)

Possible symptoms, short term: drowsiness, nausea; pupils get smaller, coma, convulsion, death.

Possible symptoms, long term: tolerance increases, physical and psychological addiction, affects the fetus of pregnant women.

Other: AIDS, hepatitis, endocarditis frequently passed by needles of addicts.

Designer Drugs.

Possible symptoms: similar effects to the drugs they copy, but the effect of a designer drug is greater and often deadly.

Who Can You Call?

- AL-ANON: 1-800-356-9996
- American Council on Alcoholism Helpline: 1-800-527-5344
- Cocaine Hotline: 1-800-COCAIN
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information: 301-468-2600
- National Council on Alcoholism: 1-800-NCA-CALL
- National Institute on Drug Abuse Helpline: 1-800-843-4971
- National Institute on Drug Abuse Hotline: 1-800-622-HELP.

Sources: INTEC’s Hazard Awareness Training series and the Painting & Decorating Foundation, An Association of Professional Painters and Drywall Taping Contractors. INTEC’s HAT programs are made available for use as a part of a complete safety training. Call the HAT Assistance Line at 1-800-745-4818 for more information.