Alcohol Awareness in the Workplace

Introduction:

April is Alcohol Awareness month, which makes it an opportune time to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) has determined that workers with alcohol problems are more likely to have injury-related absences, compared to workers who do not consume alcohol. Excessive alcohol use is associated with workplace accidents, employee conflicts, loss of production, and absenteeism leading to unemployment. Analyses of workplace fatalities shows many victims had been drinking alcohol before the accident occurred. Nearly one in four workers have consumed alcohol at work during the year, jeopardizing their safety and productivity. It is the employer's responsibility to provide management, training, counselling, and job performance evaluations. Workplace Alcohol Awareness Programs designed to prevent and reduce alcohol problems can benefit both the employee and the employer.

Discussion Points:

- Alcohol-related issues in the workplace
- Employer's responsibility
- Employee training, counselling and job performance evaluations
- Employee Assistance Programs and Employer Health Plan

Discussion:

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offer assistance to employees. These preventative measures, along with the Employer Health Plan when implemented correctly, will benefit the worker by alleviating workplace stress, and improving safety, behavior, productivity, and lifetime wellness.

Many workplaces are alcohol-free environments. Implementing alcohol-free practices, and screening for alcohol use will result in a reduction in alcohol-related workplace accidents and injuries, and create a healthy culture. This is especially important when the work involves the use of power tools, machinery, motor vehicles, and heavy equipment.

The use of alcohol is a personal choice. However, the employee must be held accountable for their actions, and it must not interfere with their ability to perform their job in the workplace.

As always, stay safe out there!