

Drug and Alcohol Testing



One company's experience

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Drug and Alcohol testing

The Australian Workers' Union is delving into one of the hottest industrial issues of 2003 - drug and alcohol testing in the workplace. The AWU is hosting its annual OH&S conference on this topic called Testing The Limits.



Illicit drug use is relatively common among school aged young people

Over half (52%) of senior students have tried cannabis and 15% report regular use (Department of Human Services, 1999).

A survey conducted by the Australian Drug Foundation in 1997 found that half of the secondary schools had responded to at least one cannabis incident during the previous twelve months (ADF, unpublished, 2000).

The International Labour Organisation estimates that:

- 20-25% of all occupational injuries are a result of drug and alcohol use
- 62% of harmful drug and alcohol users are in full time employment, which means about 300,000 workers in Australia
- 3-15% of fatal injuries are related to drug and alcohol use.

- Alcohol is the most commonly abused psychoactive drug
- Cannabis (marijuana) is the most often used illegal drug.

Concerns

- Invasion of privacy and contravention of civil liberties?
- Will the tests be an accurate and precise measurement of impairment?
- How can workers be protected from harassment and bullying in relation to test results and processes?
- Equity: If workers are to be subjected to random drug and alcohol testing, will managers also be tested? Will the CEO be tested?

Fit for Work Culture

- Duty of Care
- Substance Abuse Policy, Guidelines and Method
- Induction/Orientation Programme
- Mandatory HSE Learning Requirements
- HSE Meetings, poster campaigns, Lunch and Learns
- Health and Well-being Initiatives e.g. health appraisals, Employee Assistance Programme, Quit Smoking, etc.
- Halliburton Core Beliefs
- Commitment vs. Compliance
- Change Management

Testing for restricted substances

- Pre-employment testing
- Pre-access testing
- Random testing
- Post-incident testing
- Reasonable suspicion

The Halliburton Way

- Drug and alcohol testing is not about drinking or drug taking, it is about promoting a healthy, safe and productive workplace.
- Fitness for Work



How are we doing?

- Employee Survey: HSE and Ethics highest scoring dimensions
- D&A testing (reality check)

Testing

- Role of the line manager
- Using an external tester
- Physical arrangements
- Dignity to be maintained
- Process in event of positive test

Outcomes

- Advantage of using experienced tester
- Some tested positive
- Disciplinary hearing
- Rehabilitation
- Future retesting
- Reoffending?

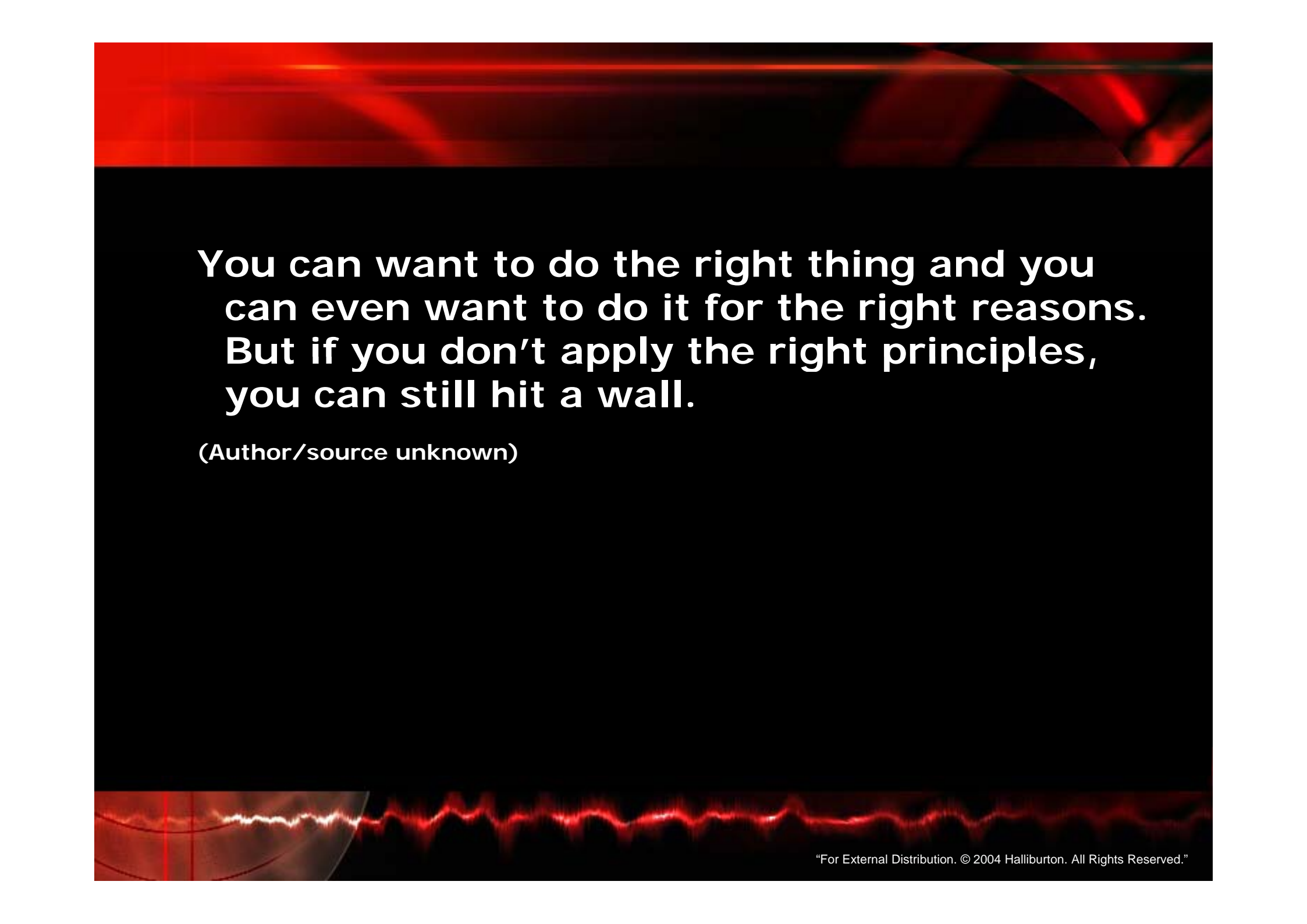
Lessons learned

- Assumption of compliance
- Attention to process
- Feedback from managers
- Employee reaction
- Educative value
- Contractor compliance
- Challenges of legal environment
- Australian v. American context

Conclusion

Australian Workers' Union secretary Bill Shorten said a balance was needed between employers' obligations for making workplaces safe and employees' right to privacy.

"We are not opposed to drug and alcohol testing because at the end of the day, we support safe workplaces." he said. "But we would expect a series of safeguards to be put in place to protect workers from being unfairly targeted. We need to be careful that drug and alcohol testing also does not interfere in what people do in their private lives."



**You can want to do the right thing and you
can even want to do it for the right reasons.
But if you don't apply the right principles,
you can still hit a wall.**

(Author/source unknown)