



BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

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DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE IN MINING

The mining industry stands out as the sector with the highest prevalence of heavy alcohol use, according to findings in recent studies. Specifically, employees engaged in extraction activities (such as mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction) demonstrate the highest rates of mortality stemming from natural and semisynthetic opioid-related overdoses, as well as the second highest rates of mortality linked to synthetic opioid-related overdoses.

A comprehensive report conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reveals the following statistics:

1. Approximately 17.5% of workers reported engaging in heavy alcohol use within the last month.
2. Around 5% of workers admitted to using illicit drugs within the past month.
3. About 11.8% of workers reported experiencing drug or alcohol dependence within the past year.
4. 1% of workers acknowledged suffering from an opioid use disorder.

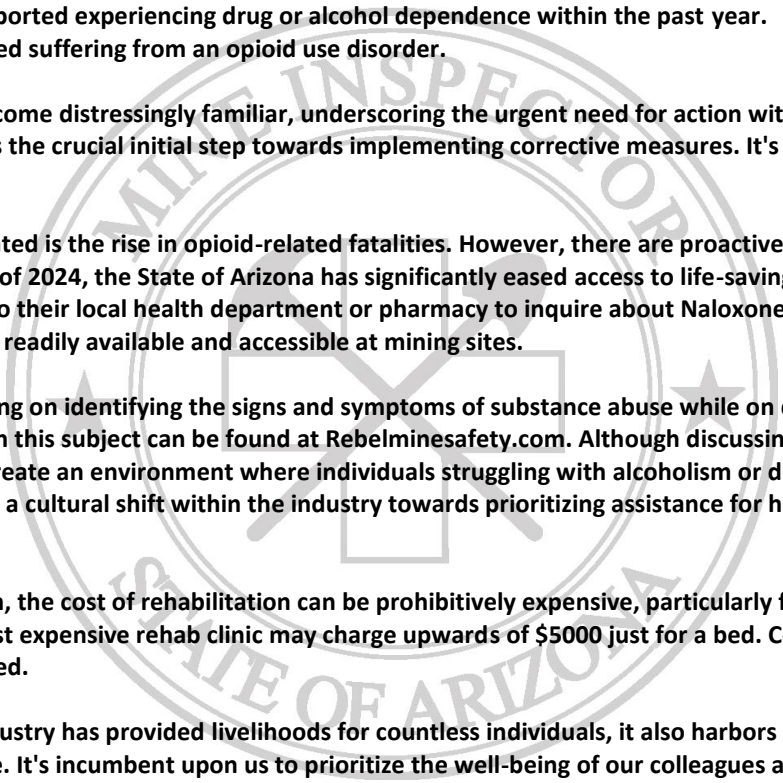
Regrettably, these figures have become distressingly familiar, underscoring the urgent need for action within our industry. Acknowledging the existence of these challenges is the crucial initial step towards implementing corrective measures. It's imperative that we confront this reality head-on.

One of the major concerns highlighted is the rise in opioid-related fatalities. However, there are proactive measures that can be taken to address this issue. For instance, as of 2024, the State of Arizona has significantly eased access to life-saving medications. I strongly encourage everyone to reach out to their local health department or pharmacy to inquire about Naloxone HCl 4Mg nasal spray, commonly known as Narcan, which should be readily available and accessible at mining sites.

Additionally, comprehensive training on identifying the signs and symptoms of substance abuse while on duty can be highly beneficial. More information and resources on this subject can be found at Rebelminesafety.com. Although discussing such matters may seem taboo in an industry setting, it's crucial to create an environment where individuals struggling with alcoholism or drug dependence feel supported and not stigmatized. I advocate for a cultural shift within the industry towards prioritizing assistance for hardworking individuals in need of help.

Based on my independent research, the cost of rehabilitation can be prohibitively expensive, particularly for those without insurance. In the Phoenix area, for example, the least expensive rehab clinic may charge upwards of \$5000 just for a bed. Costs may vary in more rural areas, and availability might also be limited.

In conclusion, while the mining industry has provided livelihoods for countless individuals, it also harbors numerous hazards, including the hidden dangers of substance abuse. It's incumbent upon us to prioritize the well-being of our colleagues and employees. Let's take the time today to check in with one another and ensure that everyone makes it home safely.



ALCOHOLISM SYMPTOMS: COMMON SIGNS OF A DRINKING PROBLEM

Behavioural and Social

- Secretive behaviour around alcohol
- Drinking heavily alone
- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Loss of interest in hobbies/social events

Physical

- Lethargy and headaches
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Alcohol withdrawal symptoms
- Lack of personal hygiene

SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE. B.L.U.E.

BREATHING — Breathing during an overdose is shallow, gurgling, erratic, or completely absent.

LIPS — Lips and fingertips are blue, due to decreased oxygen throughout the body.

UNRESPONSIVE — The victim will not respond to verbal or physical stimulation.

EYES — Pupils are pinpoint, as the opioids constrict the pupils to an unusually small size.



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