

# Construction Safety: Opioid Crisis

September 21, 2018

## Related Services

Construction  
Disability, Leave and Health  
Management  
Drug Testing and Substance  
Abuse Management  
Workplace Safety and Health

When the White House declared the country in an opioid-addiction crisis back in October 2017, it was not news to the construction industry.

Job site hazards and strenuous activity mean that pain disproportionately afflicts construction workers, making them more susceptible to substance abuse, says the Itasca, Illinois-based National Safety Council (NSC). Even when used properly, side effects of opioids can include impairments such as sedation and dizziness, which are not conducive to maintaining safe job sites. The result is increased safety risks.

Further, the current labor shortage in the construction industry is expected to last another three years. A construction report by USG Corporation and U.S. Chamber of Commerce found decreases in worker and job site safety can name addiction and substance abuse issues as contributing factors. Almost 40 percent of contractors say they are highly concerned about the effects use of and addictions to opioids (followed by alcohol and marijuana, at 27 percent and 22 percent of contractors, respectively) have on worker safety.

Construction employers are considering managing the risk more aggressively by providing abuse-related educational programs and drug screening in support of workers' efforts to seek rehabilitation. Some in the industry have even implemented random opioid testing, where, if an employee tests positive, they can keep their jobs upon completion of a treatment program. In addition, insurers suggest the construction industry employers explore partnering together to develop safety programs and guidelines that minimize or eliminate site-related accidents.

Jackson Lewis attorneys are available if you have any questions about workplace safety and drug testing programs.

©2018 Jackson Lewis P.C. This material is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to constitute legal advice nor does it create a client-lawyer relationship between Jackson Lewis and any recipient. Recipients should consult with counsel before taking any actions based on the information contained within this material. This material may be considered attorney advertising in some jurisdictions. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome.

Focused on employment and labor law since 1958, Jackson Lewis P.C.'s 1,000+ attorneys located in major cities nationwide consistently identify and respond to new ways workplace law intersects business. We help employers develop proactive strategies, strong policies and business-oriented solutions to cultivate high-functioning workforces that are engaged and stable, and share our clients' goals to emphasize belonging and respect for the contributions of every employee. For more information, visit <https://www.jacksonlewis.com>.