

# DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

## PROGRAM UPDATE

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National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration



### Questions and Answers About NASA's Drug Free Workplace Program (DFWP)

**Q. Why does NASA have a DFWP?**

A. Executive Order (EO) 12564, Drug-Free Federal Workplace, signed by President Reagan on September 15, 1986, established the goal of a drug-free workplace and made it a condition of employment for all Federal employees to refrain from using illegal drugs whether on or off duty. In addition, the Civil Space Employee Testing Act of 1991 directed NASA to establish a drug testing program. NASA's plan for providing a drug-free workplace is contained in the NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3792.1, NASA's Plan for a Drug Free Workplace.

**Q. What drugs does NASA test for?**

A. NASA tests for marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates, and phencyclidine (PCP).

**Q. What types of drug testing are included in the NASA DFWP?**

A. NASA conducts: **Pre-employment Testing.** As a condition of employment, testing of any applicant tentatively selected for a Testing Designated Position (TDP), including current NASA employees who, prior to selection for the TDP, had not been subject to random drug testing. A negative test result is required prior to entering on duty, **Random Testing.** Unannounced testing of employees in TDPs who have been randomly selected, **Reasonable Suspicion Testing.** Testing of any employee based on observable phenomena, an arrest or conviction for a drug-related offense or criminal investigation, information provided by a reliable/credible source or independently corroborated, or on new evidence that an employee tampered with a previous test result, **Accident or Unsafe Practice Testing.** Testing of an employee due to an accident or unsafe practice that occurred on the job and caused, or may have contributed to, serious injury or death or damage to Government or personal property, **Follow-up Testing.** Unannounced testing of an employee who successfully completes rehabilitation for illegal drug use. These employees are subject to a minimum of four unannounced tests for a period of at least one year, **Voluntary Testing.** Unannounced random testing of an employee who is not in a TDP but who has volunteered to be included in the pool from which employees are selected for random testing.

**Q. What is a TDP?**

A. A TDP is a position that has been identified as such based on the duties of the position. This determination is made by the supervisor and the Center Human Resources Office using specific criteria described in the appendices of NPR 3792.1, NASA's Plan for a Drug Free Workplace. NASA's TDP criteria are consistent with Federal guidance. This guidance established a core group of TDP positions to be included in all Federal agency plans, such as those which require the carrying of (or access to) firearms or those which allow access to sensitive information requiring a security clearance of secret or higher. In addition, NASA has identified certain NASA-specific functions as TDPs such as those which require working with explosives or those requiring hands-on maintenance of major mission-critical equipment.

**Q. How many employees in TDPs are tested annually?**

A. Approximately 6,000 positions, or one-third of NASA's total civil service workforce, have been identified as TDPs and are subject to random drug testing. Approximately 1,500 employees, or 25% of the total TDP population, will be randomly tested for illegal drug use annually. Random testing of a percentage of each Center's TDP population will be conducted at least four times per year.

**Q. If I'm in a TDP, how often can I be selected for random testing?**

A. Employees are randomly tested only when they are selected by NASA's random sampling software program. This program has been certified and incorporates a comprehensive audit trail. You have an equal chance of being selected from your Center's TDPs every time a random selection is made. There is no weight given to the fact that an employee has previously been tested. It is possible that you could be selected for two or more consecutive tests or to not be selected for any test.

**Q. How is my privacy protected if I am tested?**

A. NASA's DFWP emphasizes that employees should be treated with personal dignity and respect for their privacy whenever drug testing is conducted. Your privacy will be protected in two ways:

1. **Personal Privacy and Dignity.** You will have the opportunity to provide your urine specimen in private (i.e., in a restroom stall); however, there could be an exception to this, such as: At the scene of an accident when there is no way to provide for privacy, If the collector has reason to believe that you have or will attempt to alter or substitute the specimen (subject to Agency approval), or When the Medical Review Officer (MRO) directs the Agency to observe the collection due to the result of a previous test (e.g., invalid or negative and dilute). When observation is required, the observer will be someone of the same gender.

2. **Confidentiality of Records.** Drug testing results are protected in accordance with Privacy Act safeguards. Therefore, only Agency management personnel with a "need to know" will have access to your test results. These officials include the MRO, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Coordinator, the Drug Program Coordinator, and the management officials empowered to recommend or take disciplinary action. In addition, records of the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or drug-abuse treatment of an employee are subject to the physician-patient privilege.

**Q. If I am not in a TDP, will I ever be subject to drug testing?**

A. Generally, no; however, you could be subject to testing: Based on reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use, As a part of an investigation into an accident or unsafe practice, After rehabilitation as a result of a finding of or admittance to illegal drug use (i.e., follow-up testing), or If you volunteer to be included in the pool of employees subject to random testing.

**Q. What assurances are there that my drug test results are really mine?**

A. NASA's DFWP adheres to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs. These guidelines mandate strict "chain of custody" procedures for collecting, transferring, analyzing, and storing a specimen. Each will be tracked by a Federal Custody and Control Form (CCF) which will be dated, signed, and annotated with each transfer of possession of a specimen. Bar-coded seals on the specimen bottles match the number on the CCF and must be intact when received at the lab or the specimen will not be tested. Likewise, if there is any break in the chain of custody, processing of a specimen will not continue.

**Q. I take prescription medication. If my test result is positive, will I be given an opportunity to provide an explanation of the results?**

A. Yes. If your test result is positive, the MRO will provide you with an opportunity to offer an explanation or justification for the result.

**Q. What are the consequences if a test result is positive, substituted, adulterated, or invalid?**

A. NASA is committed to providing an employee who has a drug problem with the opportunity to overcome the problem without jeopardizing his/her career, except when doing so might compromise public safety. Therefore, an employee will be offered an opportunity for counseling and rehabilitation; however, the employee will be subject to some form of disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include any of the following: written reprimand, placement in an enforced leave status, suspension for 14 days or less, suspension for 15 days or more, suspension until successful completion of rehabilitation or until NASA determines what action other than suspension is more appropriate, or removal from Federal service.

**Q. Can an employee voluntarily admit illegal drug use, obtain assistance, and avoid discipline for such use?**

A. Yes. NASA's DFWP has a "Safe Harbor" provision for an employee who voluntarily admits illegal drug use to his/her supervisor or Human Resources Office (HRO) prior to being directed to take a drug test, attends and successfully completes an appropriate counseling or rehabilitation/treatment program, and thereafter refrains from illegal drug use. However, an employee who invokes "Safe Harbor" is subject to review of their eligibility to occupy a sensitive position or hold a security clearance (if applicable), based on the admission of drug use.

**Q. Is a supervisor informed of a test result that is positive, substituted, or adulterated?**

A. Yes. A supervisor must know the test result to approve an employee's leave for counseling and treatment and to initiate disciplinary action.

**Q. Will I be notified of a negative test result?**

A. Yes. You will be notified of any type of test result.

**Q. Who pays for rehabilitation?**

A. An employee found to be using illegal drugs, either by voluntary admission or as a result of a drug test, will be referred to the EAP for assistance. The EAP offers appropriate prevention, short-term counseling, referral for treatment, and rehabilitation services to employees for a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems, including alcohol and drug abuse. Short-term counseling is available at no cost to the employee. All Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) carriers offer some type of substance abuse care coverage. Long-term rehabilitation treatment will be the employee's responsibility.

**Q. Where can I obtain more information on NASA's DFWP?**

A. Additional information regarding NASA's DFWP can be found on the NSSC Drug Testing Web site at: [www.nssc.nasa.gov/drugtesting](http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/drugtesting). This site also contains a link to NPR 3792.1, Plan for a Drug Free Workplace.

Questions should be directed to the:  
**NASA Shared Services Center**  
at 1-877-677-2123 (1-877-NSSC-123)  
or by e-mail at:  
[nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov](mailto:nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov)