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## Department of transportation drug test

Posted by glucia On February 12th, 2025 Few entities hold as pivotal a role in regulatory oversight in the United States as the Department of Transportation (DOT). The DOT establishes stringent guidelines that govern various sectors, and drug testing is central to these. Understanding and adhering to DOT drug testing requirements is a matter of legal compliance, operational integrity, and employee and public welfare. Understanding DOT Drug Testing The DOT supervises industries integral to the safety and efficiency of the country's transportation systems. These industries include aviation, trucking, railroads, pipelines, and transit operations, among others. Within these sectors, the DOT oversees safety-sensitive positions — roles where inadequacy due to drugs or alcohol could pose significant risks. The Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 laid the foundation for DOT drug testing regulations, enacted in response to concerns about substance abuse among transportation workers. The primary objective of DOT drug testing is to uphold public well-being by ensuring that individuals entrusted with critical transportation roles are physically and mentally fit for their responsibilities. The testing program seeks to foster a culture of accountability, encouraging employees to prioritize sobriety as a condition of their employment. The DOT drug testing also provides employers with a clear framework for addressing substance abuse issues in the workplace. Who Must Comply? DOT drug testing requirements apply to individuals working in safety-sensitive positions within the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), which manages commercial truck drivers and bus operators for the goods and passenger transportation on the nation's roadways. Under the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), airline pilots, flight crew members, air traffic controllers, flight attendants, aircraft dispatchers, flight instructors, and flight operations control specialists are subject to drug testing to maintain the integrity of air travel. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) governs railroad safety, regulating train engineers, conductors, dispatchers, signallers, operators, and utility employees. Similarly, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) ensures that bus drivers and other transit operators meet standards in public transportation systems. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) mandates compliance from those working in the handling, maintaining, and operating of pipelines and hazardous materials, including emergency responders. For maritime security, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) enforces drug testing for service members to uphold the reliability of waterborne operations. Lastly, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) ensures conformity in drug testing by establishing standards for the DOT drug testing program. DOT Drug Testing Procedures The procedures for DOT drug testing point toward accuracy, fairness, and consistency. Let us outline the drugs included in the DOT's testing panel, provide a step-by-step explanation of conducting DOT drug tests, and highlight the types of tests required under federal regulations. 5-Panel Drug Testing The DOT mandates a 5-panel drug test to detect specific substances that can impair an individual's ability to perform safety-sensitive duties. The substances tested include marijuana (THCA), cocaine (benzoylecgonine), opiates like hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxycodone, and oxymorphone, amphetamines and methamphetamine, and phencyclidine (PCP). For marijuana, the initial test cut-off level is 50 ng/mL, with a confirmatory level of 15 ng/mL. Cocaine (benzoylecgonine) is screened with an initial cut-off level of 150 ng/mL and a confirmatory level of 100 ng/mL. Hydrocodone and hydromorphone are tested at an initial level of 300 ng/mL and confirmed at 100 ng/mL, while oxycodone and oxymorphone share both an initial and confirmatory cut-off level of 100 ng/mL. Amphetamines and methamphetamine have an initial cut-off level of 500 ng/mL, confirmed at 250 ng/mL. Phencyclidine (PCP) has both an initial and confirmatory cut-off level of 25 ng/mL. Step-By-Step DOT Drug Testing Process A DOT drug test involves the following steps: Notification: The employer notifies the employee of the mandated DOT drug test. Collection Site Arrival: The employee arrives at a certified collection site, where a trained collection agent guides the procedure. Identity Verification: The employee provides a valid form of identification to confirm their identity before the specimen collection. Specimen Collection: The collection agent explains the process, and the employee submits a urine sample, following specific protocols to prevent tampering. Chain of Custody Documentation: The collector completes the chain of custody form (CCF) to document the handling of the specimen. Sample Sealing and Labeling: The collector divides the specimen into two containers labeled as the primary and split samples. Both are sealed in the presence of the employee. Laboratory Shipping: The sealed samples and completed CCF are sent to a DOT-certified laboratory for analysis. Laboratory Testing: The primary sample is analyzed for the presence of drugs. If the primary sample tests positive, the split sample may be tested upon request. Medical Review Officer (MRO) Review: A certified MRO reviews the laboratory results. For positive tests, the MRO contacts the employee to verify if any legitimate medical explanations exist. Employer Notification: Once the MRO completes the review, they communicate the test results to the employer. Types of Required Tests Pre-employment DOT drug testing happens before an individual gets hired, confirming their drug-free status. This test helps employers verify the suitability of new hires for roles with significant responsibilities. Post-accident testing follows specific types of incidents, such as accidents resulting in fatalities or situations where a driver receives a citation, and there is vehicle damage or bodily injury. Random testing serves as a deterrent to drug use by introducing an element of unpredictability. Employees are selected randomly and without prior notice, so every individual has an equal chance of being tested at any time. Reasonable suspicion testing is for when a trained supervisor observes behaviors or physical signs that suggest drug or alcohol use. Return-to-duty testing applies to employees who have previously violated DOT drug and alcohol regulations or refused a test. Before resuming duties, these individuals must test negative in a supervised setting as part of the requalification process. Follow-up testing is for employees returning to roles after completing a substance abuse treatment program. Partner With AMC Drug Testing for DOT Drug Testing DOT drug testing is a cornerstone of the government's commitment to maintaining safe, reliable, and drug-free transportation systems nationwide. At AMC Drug Testing, we offer comprehensive drug testing and screening services, supporting organizations under DOT regulations to fulfill compliance requirements. We strive to provide accurate, timely, and confidential results, understanding the importance of every drug testing program. Call (800) 339-9993 or contact us online to learn more about our DOT drug testing services. Employers regulated by a DOT agency are required to conduct DOT drug tests at specific times before and after hiring. These tests are designed to protect public safety and prevent accidents caused by dangerous employees in safety-sensitive jobs. At iProspectcheck, we coordinate DOT drug tests for regulated employers in all states including California, Florida, and Texas. Here's what you need to know about DOT drug tests and how they should be conducted. What is a DOT Drug Test? A DOT drug test is a five-panel drug screen administered to employees in safety-sensitive positions who are employed by companies regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). These tests must be taken prior to employment, at other specific intervals, and after certain events that take place during the duration of employment. What Does a DOT Drug Test For? Under DOT regulations, DOT drug tests must screen for the following substances to detect whether an applicant or employee has recently used some or more of them: Marijuana (THC) Phencyclidine (PCP) Amphetamines Opiates (heroin, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxycodone, and oxymorphone) Cocaine Who is Required to Take a DOT Drug Test? Employers regulated by the following DOT agencies are required to send applicants and employees for DOT drug tests: The following safety-sensitive employees and applicants for these positions must take DOT drug tests: Air traffic controllers Aircraft dispatchers Airline flight crew members Airline pilots Bus drivers Commercial truck drivers Flight attendants Flight instructors Flight operations control specialists Pipeline/hazardous materials emergency responders Pipeline/hazardous materials maintenance workers Pipeline/hazardous materials operators Train conductors Train dispatchers Train engineers Train signalmen Train utility employees U.S. Coast Guard service members DOT Drug Test Requirements DOT drug tests are required in the following circumstances: 1. Pre-Employment Drug Tests All prospective candidates who apply to safety-sensitive jobs for employers regulated by the FMCSA must take pre-employment DOT drug tests before they can begin their jobs. If they fail a pre-employment drug test, their conditional job offers will be withdrawn. 2. Post-Accident Drug Tests For FMCSA-regulated employers, post-accident drug testing will be required under the following conditions: Fatal accidents regardless of whether the driver was cited Injury accidents when the driver was cited that required emergency medical treatment Property-damage-only accidents when the driver was cited that required towing Employers regulated by other DOT agencies have similar requirements. 3. Random Drug Testing Rates 2025 Drivers with CDLs who work for FMCSA-regulated employers must undergo random drug tests during the year. Owner-operators must complete random drug tests through a program involving two or more employees in a testing pool comprised of members of a consortium. Random Drug Testing Rates 2025 DOT agencies have established the following random drug testing rates for regulated employers in 2024 with included links to the most recent notices in the Federal Register: 4. Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing Regulated employers must conduct reasonable suspicion drug tests on employees in safety-sensitive positions who are suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They should inform the employee in private of their suspicions and immediately send them for testing. However, they should not allow the employee to drive to the testing center and should either drive them or have the test administered on-site. 5. Return-to-Duty Drug Testing If a regulated employer wants to return an employee to their safety-sensitive job after the employee has refused a drug test or submitted a positive result, they must undergo the return-to-duty process. The employee must successfully complete an alcohol and drug education and treatment program to the satisfaction of a DOT-approved substance abuse professional (SAP). Once the employer has received the SAP report, they can then send the employee for return-to-duty testing (RTD). The employee must submit a negative result before they can be returned to their job. 6. Follow-up Drug Testing If an employee is returned to their job following an RTD test, they must undergo a minimum of six follow-up drug tests during the initial 12 months after their return. Follow-up drug tests are in addition to any random or reasonable suspicion drug tests the employee might also have to submit during the same period. The Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 is enforced by the U.S. Department of Transportation and includes drug testing requirements for all DOT-regulated agencies. Under current regulations, all DOT drug tests must be conducted only with urine specimens. In Feb. 2022, the DOT issued a proposed rule that would allow the addition of saliva testing. However, a final rule has not been implemented, so DOT drug tests still only include urine screens. In addition to DOT's regulations, individual agencies have promulgated their own regulations for DOT drug tests. Federal Aviation Administration The FAA's drug testing regulations are found in 14 CFR, part 120. Under § 120.109, employees in safety-sensitive jobs must undergo the following types of tests: Pre-employment drug tests Random drug tests Post-accident drug tests Reasonable cause drug tests Return-to-duty drug tests Follow-up drug tests The FAA's regulations have specific procedures for how and when each of these types of tests should be conducted. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration FMCSA-regulated employers must conduct DOT drug tests on CDL drivers under 49 CFR, part 382. This part includes multiple rules for the procedures that must be used, the types of tests and when they should be administered, and the employees who are subject to testing. FMCSA-regulated drivers form the bulk of employees who undergo DOT drug tests. Federal Railroad Administration Safety-sensitive railroad employees are required to undergo DOT drug tests under 49 CFR, part 219. The FRA has numerous rules under this part, including some with some key differences. When there is a fatal accident, for example, FRA rules mandate the collection of specimens from deceased safety-sensitive employees to test for the presence of drugs or alcohol. Similarly, while other DOT-regulated agencies provide a testing window of between 12 and 32 hours following an accident, the FRA indicates that testing should be conducted within four hours whenever possible. The FRA also has specific rules for pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, return-to-duty, and follow-up tests. Federal Transit Administration The FTA includes its DOT drug testing regulations in 49 CFR, part 655. The types of tests and their required procedures are found in subpart E. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) The PHMSA includes drug testing regulations for employers under 49 CFR, part 199. The types of tests that must be administered and their procedures are found in § 199.105. Change to Drug and Alcohol Test Reporting for All DOT-Regulated Employers Under 49 CFR Part 40, all DOT-regulated employers are now required to submit annual drug and alcohol test data on Login.gov as of Jan. 1, 2024. Login.gov is free and is a secure service. Regulated employers that do not have Login.gov accounts should have received a letter or email sent to their designated employer representative listed with the U.S. Department of Transportation containing a code the employer must enter on the Management Information Systems (MIS) website. Employers will then create accounts on Login.gov. Upon accessing MIS, employers can then enter their annual testing data. Those with pre-existing Login.gov accounts can sign in, as usual, to access the MIS and enter the data. Saliva Testing Now Allowed The DOT published a final rule in the Federal Register on May 2, 2023, which was effective on June 1, 2023. This rule allows employers to use saliva or oral fluid tests instead of urine tests to complete DOT drug testing. Previously, only five-panel urine tests were allowed. Update to Return to Duty and Loss of State CDL Privileges Under a final rule issued in 2021 and guidance published by the DOT on June 27, 2023, CDL drivers who test positive for drugs or alcohol or refuse chemical testing and receive a prohibited status will face a new obstacle beginning in late 2024. Beginning Nov. 18, 2024, CDL drivers who receive a prohibited status in the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse will automatically lose their commercial driving privileges in their states. This means that when a regulated CDL driver refuses to submit to testing or submits a confirmed positive drug or alcohol test result, they will have their state-issued CDL license suspended or revoked and be excluded from operating a commercial motor vehicle. Before a driver can resume their duties, they will have to complete the return to duty process under the supervision of an approved substance abuse professional (SAP). The Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse maintains records of violations for five years from the date the violation occurred or until the individual completes the return to duty process, whichever occurs later. What are the DOT Drug Test Cut-off Levels for 2025? The drug test cut-off levels are found in 49 CFR, part 40, § 40.87 as follows: Initial Test Analyte Initial Test Cut-Off Confirmatory Test Cut-Off Marijuana (THCA) 50 ng/mL 15 ng/mL Cocaine (Benzoylecgonine) 150 ng/mL 100 ng/mL Codeine/morphine 2000 ng/mL 2000 ng/mL Hydrocodone/hydromorphone 300 ng/mL 100 ng/mL Oxycodone/oxymorphone 100 ng/mL 100 ng/mL 6-Acetylmorphone 10 ng/mL 10 ng/mL Phencyclidine 25 ng/mL 25 ng/mL Amphetamine/methamphetamine 500 ng/mL 250 ng/mL MDMA/MDA 500 ng/mL 250 ng/mL Special Caution About CBD Use Cannabidiol (CBD) is a popular, non-psychoactive component of cannabis plants typically harvested from hemp and containing less than 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana that produces a high. Unlike THC, CBD does not produce a high and is widely used for some purported health benefits. While the DOT has not prohibited the use of CBD by regulated workers in safety-sensitive roles, it has issued cautionary guidance. According to the notice, many CBD products could contain higher levels of THC than advertised and result in impairment. Despite that marijuana has been legalized in multiple states, regulated safety-sensitive workers are still prohibited from using it. iProspectcheck Your Partner for Reliable Employment Drug Testing DOT-regulated employers must conduct DOT drug tests on applicants and employees under specific conditions. At iProspectcheck, we offer a variety of drug testing services, including pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, post-accident, return-to-duty, and follow-up DOT drug tests. Call today to learn more about our DOT drug testing and background check services: (888) 509-1979 DISCLAIMER: The resources provided here are for educational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. Consult your counsel if you have legal questions related to your specific practices and compliance with applicable laws. What will happen if someone fails a DOT drug test depends on the type of test and their employer. If an applicant fails a pre-employment DOT drug test, their conditional job offer will be withdrawn. The employer will report the failed drug test to the Clearinghouse. If an employee fails a random, reasonable suspicion, or post-accident drug test, the employer will provide them with a list of DOT-approved SAPs for the return-to-duty process. However, the employer is not required to return the employee to their job if they complete the return-to-duty process successfully. If an employee fails a return-to-duty or follow-up drug test, they won't be returned to their job and will lose their employment. A DOT drug test checks for recent use of illicit substances. Each drug has a different detection window in urine tests as follows: Marijuana – Less than 3 days for one-time use to 30 days for chronic users Amphetamines – Two to three days Cocaine – Up to 1.5 days for one time use to two-three days for chronic users Opioids – Two to five days based on the substance Phencyclidine – Eight days The results of negative DOT drug tests are typically available within 24 to 48 hours. Results of positive DOT drug tests typically take between three and five days to reach the employers. A non-DOT test is a drug screen a non-regulated employer might choose to administer to employees under its drug- and alcohol-free drug-testing policy. Non-DOT tests might test for more or fewer substances than a DOT drug test and could involve other testing methods, including saliva testing. DOT drug tests are required by the DOT for regulated employers and are five-panel urine screens that must be administered under specific conditions. Your employer should disclose the fact that it performs drug testing and the circumstances under which the tests will be administered. Applicants and employees who will undergo testing will sign written authorizations consenting to the test. When an applicant or employee is sent for a DOT drug test at an approved facility, they will have to show their photo ID. The testing facility will provide a written explanation of the testing procedure. The collector will provide the individual with two sealed collection bottles. The individual will then take the bottles into the testing area and must leave items outside of the area, including purses, coats, jackets, etc. Most DOT drug tests are not observed. However, return-to-duty and follow-up drug tests must be directly observed. The collector will also observe a test if there are signs of tampering. The individual will produce a specimen into the bottle and should observe the bottle until it has been sealed and placed in the sealed bag for shipment to the laboratory.