

Stimulants



What Are Stimulants?

Stimulants are drugs that speed up the central nervous system, increasing alertness, energy and concentration. Some, like Adderall, Ritalin and Vyvanse, are prescribed to treat conditions like ADHD. Others, like cocaine and methamphetamine, are illegal. **Whether legal or illegal, misusing these substances - whether to "work harder" or for recreational purposes – can put your health at serious risk.**

Why Are Construction Workers at Higher Risk for Substance Misuse?

Long hours and tough physical labor can lead to stress, pain and injuries. Managing this pain sometimes involves prescription medications, which could result in dependency or misuse. The mental strain from job stress – such as safety risks and unpredictable work conditions – combined with financial or family pressures, may also push workers to use substances to cope.

Did You Know?

15% of construction workers have a substance use disorder, compared to 8.5% of the general population

The Danger of Stimulants on the Job

While some workers may turn to stimulants to stay alert or improve their performance, these substances can put you and your coworkers at serious risk and affect safety on site:

Overconfidence

- ▶ **What it looks like:** You might feel invincible, taking on tasks without proper precautions or ignoring safety protocols because you feel "in control."
- ▶ **The danger:** Overconfidence can cause you to skip essential safety procedures, increasing the likelihood of accidents and injuries. In construction, following safety protocols is critical to keeping yourself and others around you safe.

Poor Decision-Making

- ▶ **What it looks like:** Stimulants can make you impulsive, causing you to rush through tasks or make split-second decisions without considering the consequences.
- ▶ **The danger:** Quick, risky decisions can lead to dangerous situations, such as skipping safety checks or working in hazardous areas without the right protection.

Physical Crashes

- ▶ **What it looks like:** After the initial high from a stimulant wears off, your body crashes, leaving you feeling exhausted and unable to focus on the job.
- ▶ **The danger:** Fatigue makes you less alert and more prone to mistakes, which increases the risk of accidents, especially when operating heavy machinery or working at heights.

Aggression

- ▶ **What it looks like:** Stimulants can make you irritable or even aggressive, which can lead to conflicts with coworkers.
- ▶ **The danger:** Aggressive or erratic behavior puts you and your colleagues at risk. Construction sites require teamwork and focus, and hostility can create a tense and unsafe work environment.

Health Risks of Stimulant Misuse

SUBSTANCE	SHORT-TERM EFFECTS	LONG-TERM EFFECTS
PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS	▶ Increased blood pressure and heart rate ▶ Extended wakefulness and insomnia, restlessness ▶ Loss of appetite ▶ Irritability	▶ Convulsions ▶ Hypertension ▶ Heart failure
COCAINE	▶ Restlessness, irritability and paranoia ▶ Insomnia ▶ Irregular heartbeat ▶ Loss of appetite ▶ Intense comedown ▶ Overdose ▶ Dilated pupils	▶ Addiction ▶ Headaches ▶ Moodswings ▶ Severe paranoia ▶ Loss of smell and, in extreme cases, erosion of the upper nasal cavity ▶ Lack of ability to feel enjoyment ▶ Extreme weight loss
METHAMPHETAMINE	▶ Increased wakefulness ▶ Increased physical activity ▶ Decreased appetite ▶ Rapid breathing and heart rate ▶ Irregular heartbeat ▶ Increased blood pressure ▶ Elevated body temperature ▶ Overdose (which can lead to stroke, heart attack and even death)	▶ Violent behavior ▶ Insomnia ▶ Psychotic behaviors (paranoia, aggression and hallucinations) ▶ Severe scratching, which leads to sores and scabs ▶ Extreme anorexia ▶ Memory loss ▶ Severe dental problems <i>Chronic meth use can change a person's brain chemistry and make it increasingly difficult to experience pleasure without the drug. In some cases, this brain damage is irreversible.</i>

Stay Informed About Your Drug-Free Workplace Policy

Even if you're not using drugs on the job, many substances stay in your system long after you've used them. This means currently you can still test positive during a random or scheduled drug test – even if you used them in your free time. Testing positive can lead to serious consequences, including disciplinary actions or job loss. Common substances tested include amphetamines, cocaine, opiates, THC (marijuana), benzodiazepines and alcohol.

Where to Get Help

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, contact:

- ▶ **Laborers' Member Assistance Program** (MAP) or **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP) through your LIUNA Health & Welfare Fund benefits
- ▶ **SAMHSA's National Helpline**: Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for free, confidential substance use support
- ▶ **FindTreatment.gov**: A tool for finding nearby treatment options
- ▶ **Narcotics Anonymous** (NA): Visit na.org or call **818-773-9999** for drug addiction support
- ▶ **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**: Call or text 988 if you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis – help is available.