

January 2006

HR&M - Human Resource and Management Services
presents

HUMAN RESOURCE EXCHANGE

Human resource issues and topics impacting employers

◆ **FROM CCH NETNEWS** ◆
“Ethical Misconduct Survey”

31% of U.S. workers have witnessed co-workers engage in ethical misconduct, according to a Hudson survey on workplace ethics. However, only half (52%) of those who witness unethical or illegal acts actually reported it to anyone in authority.

Interestingly, the survey also revealed that nearly eight in 10 U.S. workers (78%) state that their organizations clearly communicate what they consider to be unethical and ethical behavior in the workplace.

The survey, which is based on a national poll of 2,099 U.S. workers, also revealed that three in four workers (74%) express confidence in their leadership, indicating that senior leaders of their organization generally behave with honesty and integrity. This positive number decreases to 61% among those workers who have witnessed their colleagues' transgressions.

"Workplace ethics is not an abstract concept, but a critical part of a healthy company," said David Rhind, general counsel North America, Hudson Highland Group. "Even with clear ethics policies in place, companies must create a culture of integrity throughout the organization by providing both the means and the mandate to report concerns. When senior executives lead by example, employees are more likely to follow suit."

“Over 8% of Applicants have Criminal Records; 26% Inaccurately Report Past Employment”

The importance of applicant background checks and employment verification was made clear by a survey that revealed 8.3% of all job applicants

have criminal records, while 3.3% test positive for illegal drugs and 26.4% have discrepancies in their reported past employment. More than 40% of job applicants were found to have unreported DMV information.

The survey, which relates the percentage of job applicants, by industry, for whom negative or derogatory information was uncovered during the pre-employment screening process, was conducted by InfoLink Screening Services to analyze January through June 2005 "hit ratios" for job applicants. Background check areas range from criminal records and DMV violations to education and drug testing.

Industries in the study include: automotive, business services, construction, finance, food services, healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing, non-profit, real estate, retail, staffing, technology and transportation. Applicants in the automotive, retail and food services industries were found to have the highest criminal record percentages.

Further, applicants in the transportation, business services and automotive fields had the highest "hit ratios" for drug testing, while business services (10.9%) and automotive (8.9%) industry applicants had the highest "hit ratios" for previous workers' compensation claims.

◆ **FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION**
LAW BULLETIN ◆

“Free Resources on Drug and Alcohol Education”

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor's Working Partners for an Alcohol-and Drug-Free Workplace Program released new posters to advise employers about what types of drug- or alcohol-related symptoms to look for and offer practical intervention methods.

The free posters, as well as brochures, presentation materials, articles, and fact sheets can be found at www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/materials/materials.asp#posters.

◆ A REAL LIFE SITUATION ◆

Situation: Many calls have been received indicating that employees are spending too much time gossiping, socializing, talking on their cell phone, and in general, doing everything except working!

The majority of these calls are asking how to address these employees, especially if they cannot prove that the employee is talking about another employee, or cannot prove that the phone call was a personal phone call, or that the conversation with all of the other employees was not just a social visit.

Observation: The organization needs to focus on the real issue; and that issue is:

- Is the employee away from his/her desk?
- Is the employee not performing his/her duties?
- Is the employee bothering or interrupting the work of others?
- Is the employee being so loud or meddling that he/she is causing disruption?

If any of these are true, then that is the issue. And this is true whether the employee is constantly talking about other people, or is going to the bathroom or the soda machine every 15 minutes, or is going out for a smoke too many times, or is talking about a sick grandmother.

At some point, the employee became disruptive or non-productive, and that should be the focus of the discussion. The focus should not be in trying to prove that a phone call is personal, or that the conversations are inappropriate, or that the person is taking too many smoke breaks.

This focus is going to be a lot easier to address and a lot easier to apply disciplinary action if it becomes necessary.

FEATURED SERVICE Affirmative Action Plans (AAPs)

If you have 50 or more employees and:

- Have purchase orders or government contract(s) of \$50,000 or more
- Are a prime contractor or a first-tier government subcontractor
- Serve as a depository of government funds in any amount
- Serve as a financial institution that is an issuing or paying agent for U.S. Savings Bonds and savings notes in any amount
- Have government bills of lading, which, in any 12-month period, total \$50,000 or more
- Have federally assisted construction contracts exceeding \$10,000

then an AAP is required to show the sex and race of all applicants, employees, new hires, promotions, terminations, etc. and to also compare with the make-up of the surrounding recruiting area to determine if underutilization exists.

Most organizations use January as the start of their Plan year, however, any date is acceptable as long as that same date remains unchanged for the life of the Plan.

So if your organization

1. Is unsure if an AAP is necessary
2. Needs an AAP
3. Needs to have its AAP reviewed for completeness
4. Needs help on just part of the Plan

then HR&M can provide guidance on policies and procedures and can also help your organization streamline recordkeeping activities.

◆ REMEMBER! WE CAN HELP!! ◆

Consulting on employee problems is just one of the areas of our expertise.

We also provide:

- supervisory/management training, ranging from brown bag luncheon training to ½ or full day sessions
- employee handbook development, from creating to updating
- responses to discrimination charges and unemployment claims
- on-line performance review forms and processes
- guidance on coaching, counseling, and disciplining in employee relations matters