



Drug & Alcohol Testing

Ensuring a safer workplace

Drug & alcohol testing

Australian workplaces experience significant financial impacts from alcohol and other drug use, with productivity losses estimated at around \$6 billion each year.¹ In addition, alcohol-related absenteeism contributes an estimated \$3.6 billion² in annual costs, while illicit drug use adds a further \$1.5 billion in workplace-related expenses each year.²

Australian Clinical Labs is pleased to provide employers the opportunity to be proactive in identifying and managing the risks associated with the use of recreational drugs and alcohol amongst employees and contractors.

Drug and alcohol testing has been incorporated into the workplace health and safety policies of companies in the transport, construction, engineering and mining industries for many years. It is also an essential requirement for other safety-sensitive jobs where workers are handling hazardous chemicals, operating heavy machinery, driving vehicles for work, or caring for people or animals (e.g. doctors, nurses, vets or other medical personnel).

Through workplace health and safety legislation, employers have a responsibility to:

- Provide a healthy and safe working environment
- Identify and manage hazards in the workplace

Identifying potential risk behaviours

Behaviours that may lead an employer to suspect drug or alcohol misuse can include:

- Frequent sick leave, especially one or two days following a weekend
- Tardiness
- Frequent, longer or unexplained breaks during work
- Drop in performance
- Behavioural changes
- Frequent workplace accidents and incidents
- Theft
- Frequent requests for pay advance
- Presence of drug-taking paraphernalia in the workplace

References

1. Australian Drug Foundation. Impact of AOD in the workplace. Available at: <https://adf.org.au/talking-about-drugs/impact-aod-workplace/> (Accessed 27/01/26).

2. Australian Drug Foundation. AOD and workplace safety. Available at: <https://adf.org.au/insights/aod-workplace-safety/> (Accessed 27/01/26).



Why conduct drug & alcohol testing?

Workers under the influence of drugs or alcohol significantly increase the risk of workplace accidents and incidents. Alcohol and drug abuse can also often result in decreased productivity and poor employee morale. Workplace drug testing is effective in both detecting and deterring the use of drugs.

Together with you, Clinical Labs can arrange for random drug testing to occur at your workplace. Many companies test for drugs after a critical incident occurs, however, here at Clinical Labs we believe the best solution lies in prevention.

Drug and alcohol testing is also beneficial in pre-employment assessment, preventing the hiring of employees who may pose a potential safety problem.

Many companies implement drug and alcohol testing into their workplace health and safety policies in order to gain the benefits listed below.

Benefits of drug & alcohol testing

Improves workplace safety

- Fewer accidents and disciplinary actions
- Reduces potential workplace conflict and violence
- Assists employees to overcome their patterns of drug use

Improves productivity

- Reduction in absenteeism and tardiness
- Earlier detection and resolution of problems affecting job performance
- Stable workforce

Cost savings

- Reduction in product/service defects
- Reduction in theft/fraud
- Reduction in health, property and liability insurance costs
- Reduction in workers compensation claims
- Decreased costs in the hiring and training of new employees

Other benefits

- Enhances the reputation of your company
- Improved employee morale due to a better and safer workplace

Clinical Labs offers specialist and medical advice from industry professionals, and support in the case of a legal challenge, ensuring additional peace of mind.



On-site drug testing with Clinical Labs

On-site drug testing is both time-saving and efficient, allowing greater integration of a drug-free workplace program. With no travel time or queues, implementing this program will not interfere with daily operations. Most importantly, it allows for earlier detection of affected employees, reducing the risk to other employees and the workplace.

For on-site drug testing Clinical Labs can provide:

- ✓ Point of Care (POC) testing devices (urine and saliva) for on-the-spot drug testing
- ✓ Tamper evident Urine Collection Kits
- ✓ Alcohol testing and breath alcohol, AS 3547:2019 accredited equipment
- ✓ Laboratory screening and confirmation of all drug classes included in AS/NZS 4308:2023
 - Cannabinoids (i.e. marijuana)
 - Amphetamine-type substances (i.e. speed, ecstasy)
 - Benzodiazepines (i.e. valium)
 - Cocaine
 - Opiates (i.e. heroin, morphine)
- ✓ Laboratory testing for other drugs upon request (barbiturates, oxycodone, buprenorphine, methadone metabolite, alcohol, synthetic cannabis, 3,4-dimethoxyphenethylamine, GHB [gamma-hydroxybutyrate], EtG [ethyl glucuronide]).
- ✓ Audit of work site, focusing on collection facilities to ensure AS/NZS 4308:2023 collection requirements are met
- ✓ Specimen collection arrangements to suit individual company needs

Our on-site drug-testing collection procedures are AS/NZS 4308:2023 compliant and provide assurance that all samples collected are unadulterated, of human origin and provided by the employee in question.

Where an on-the-spot test produces a non-negative result, the sample will be sent via a strict chain of custody process to our secure central toxicology labs for further analysis and confirmation of results. If confirmation test results are positive, Clinical Labs provides you access to the guidance of our expert pathologists and toxicologists.

Collection at one of our accredited collection centres

Employees may attend a dedicated Clinical Labs Accredited Collection Centre using a referral form.

All urine drug screens collected at an ACC are supervised collections and tested in our secure, NATA-accredited toxicology laboratories in accordance with AS/NZS 4308:2023.

Breath alcohol testing is available at selected ACCs and is conducted using AS 3547:2019 compliant devices.



Drug testing – samples

The presence of drugs in an employee's system may be detected via the analysis of urine, saliva or hair samples. Urine is the most common and is considered the gold standard, being the most reliable and easiest to collect.

Differences between using urine and saliva samples for drug testing are highlighted in the table below.

	Urine	Saliva
Price	Urine testing remains the most cost-effective way to test in the workplace for drugs of abuse	Saliva testing is more expensive per test than urine testing, for both screening and confirmation testing
Drugs Detected	Cannabis, amphetamine-type substances, benzodiazepines, cocaine, opiates	Cannabis, amphetamine-type substances, oxycodone, cocaine, opiates
Approximate Drug Detection Time	1–2 days or more. Can generally detect drugs taken > 24 hrs ago	Can generally only detect drugs taken < 24 hrs ago
Results Time Frame	Provides a result within 5–10 minutes	Provides a result in 5–15 minutes
Accuracy	Clinical Labs supplies and uses AS/NZS 4308: 2023 compliant urine-testing kits	Clinical Labs supplies devices accredited to AS/NZS 4760:2019
Confirmations	The sample can be sent to one of many accredited toxicology laboratories. Clinical Labs owns and operates laboratories to this standard	Only a limited number of laboratories in Australia offer oral fluid confirmation analysis
Ease of Sample Collection	Some people find this method intrusive and embarrassing	Samples are easily collected. Sample kits may leave an unpleasant taste and can take up to 20 minutes
Australian Standard	AS/NZS 4308:2023. This standard has been tested rigorously in court	AS/NZS 4760:2019. Due to the low number of accredited screening devices in Australia and the lack of adequate validation and correlation of drug cut-off values, this standard may be open to dispute in a legal forum
Ease of Use	Easy to use and read	Easy to use and read
Adulteration Possibility	If collection is performed according to AS/NZS 4308:2023, or if the collection is supervised, there should be very little opportunity for sample adulteration	There is very little chance of sample adulteration during saliva collection due to the tests being 100% observable

Urine drug detection time

Drug	Detectability
Alcohol	Up to 1 day
Amphetamines	Up to 2–3 days
Benzodiazepines	Up to 2–3 days (longer with chronic use)
Cannabinoids	Single use 2–7 days, light use up to 20 days, chronic use up to 90 days
Cocaine	Single use up to 3 days, (longer with chronic use)
Opiates	Up to 4 days



Results & confidentiality

There are several options for receiving your reports, including our convenient and secure online result portal, eResults. Hardcopy and faxed results are also available upon request. Results are sent directly to the company, usually the HR or OH&S representative.

Clinical Labs has rigorous security measures in place as required by National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), which provides comfort to all our clients, medical practitioners and patients that information received or created by Clinical Labs will be treated in a highly confidential manner.

Clinical Labs has instituted strict standard operating procedures for release of patient information, ensuring patient confidentiality is maintained and results are released only to authorised parties.

- Fully accredited collection staff for on-site collection and laboratory based testing
- Collection, labelling and transport of samples are carried out according to strict chain of custody protocols in line with NATA guidelines for AS/NZS 4308:2023 and AS/NZS 4760-2019
- Provision for pre-employment drug and alcohol testing as well as comprehensive, random, for cause, post incident and return to work testing
- Fully accredited laboratories for screening and confirmation utilising mass spectrometry (MS)
- Staff training to AS/NZS 4308:2023 and AS/NZS 4760-2019
- On-site and laboratory adulteration testing
- Education and advice on policy development and implementation

Contact Clinical Labs Today

For a tailored drug-testing solution to suit the needs of your business, please email the Clinical Labs Commercial Team today (see back page for contacts).



About Australian Clinical Labs

At Australian Clinical Labs, we combine pathology leadership, ground-breaking technology and the best scientists in the field to bring better outcomes for doctors and patients alike.

We are one of the largest pathology providers in Australia with our laboratories performing close to 9 million episodes a year for a range of referrers including doctors, specialists, patients, hospitals and corporate clients.

Along with providing routine and specialised pathology tests for our GP and specialist referrers, we also offer commercial pathology services for companies, occupational health and safety providers, consultants and government bodies.

Commercial Pathology Services:

- **Drug and Alcohol Testing**
- Pre-employment Screening
- Insurance/Superannuation Related Testing
- Biological Monitoring
- Environmental Water Testing
- Employee Health Screens
- Clinical Trials



50 NATA-accredited laboratories



Our expert team of RCPA-accredited pathologists



1,200+ Conveniently located collection centres





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Contact Clinical Labs Today

For a tailored drug-testing solution to suit the needs of your business,
please email the Clinical Labs Commercial Team using the relevant contact above.