

Reasonable Suspicion Training for Supervisors



Reasonable Suspicion Training for Supervisors is National RTAP's newest online training course. It is available on the National RTAP eLearning portal, or online learning management system (LMS).

This technical brief describes the objectives, topics, and format of the course, and explains how to access the training.

November 2019

Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulations

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulation 49 CFR Part 655, mandates the testing of safety-sensitive employees to prevent prohibited drug use and alcohol misuse in transit operations. Reasonable suspicion testing must be performed when a trained supervisor observes signs and symptoms of probable prohibited drug use and/or possible alcohol misuse exhibited by a safety-sensitive employee. Referrals for reasonable suspicion testing must be based on specific, contemporaneous and articulable observations concerning an employee's behavior, speech and/or body odor.

Supervisors and other company officials who frequently interact with safety-sensitive employees should be trained and authorized to make reasonable suspicion testing referrals. History has demonstrated that when a trained supervisor observes signs of potential impairment in a safety-sensitive employee, their intervention may save lives.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to train supervisors on how to make reasonable suspicion determinations. Reasonable Suspicion training is for supervisors and other company officials who are in charge of making reasonable suspicion referrals of safety-sensitive employees.

To be authorized to make reasonable suspicion testing referrals, FTA requires at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use, and at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, speech, and performance indicators of probable alcohol misuse.

By taking this training, supervisors take on a crucial responsibility – making sure employees who show signs of probable impairment are immediately removed from safety-sensitive duty. When a supervisor completes the training, he or she will both have the authority and the obligation to carry out this responsibility.

Audience

This course is for transit supervisors and other company officials who are authorized to make reasonable suspicion testing referrals.

Training Content

1. **Introduction (9 min)**
2. **Drug and Alcohol Testing Rules (25 min)**
What supervisors need to know about applicable alcohol and drug testing regulations
3. **Focus on Prohibited Drugs (40 min)**
A closer look at the five prohibited drug classes and the signs of use
4. **Focus on Alcohol (40 min)**
A closer look at alcohol in the workplace and signs of misuse
5. **Reasonable Suspicion and Referral (30 min)**
Detailed instruction on the reasonable suspicion process and real-world scenarios
6. **Conclusion (1 min)**
Summary and concluding thoughts

Upon completion, the learner will:

- Be familiar with the regulations governing alcohol and drug testing
- Be able to define reasonable suspicion
- Known the signs of impairment
- Understand the do's and don'ts of the reasonable suspicion referral process

Safety Sensitive Employees:

FTA regulations designate certain functions, such as driving or maintaining vehicles as “safety sensitive.”

An employee who is impaired while performing a safety-sensitive function is a danger to themselves, their fellow employees, and the traveling public.

Because the risk is so high, employees who perform safety-sensitive functions are strictly prohibited from using alcohol within 4 hours of reporting for duty. These employees are also prohibited from using prohibited drugs any time, whether at the workplace or outside of work.

Strictly prohibited for safety-sensitive employees:

- Using alcohol on duty or within four hours of reporting for duty.
- Using any drug in the five prohibited classes at any time:
 - Marijuana
 - Cocaine
 - Amphetamines
 - Opioids
 - PCP

How to Access the Training Course

Reasonable Suspicion Training for Supervisors is available online in the National RTAP eLearning LMS at elearning.nationalrtap.org. For more information about how to set up a transit agency learning team in the LMS, visit the National RTAP eLearning page on the National RTAP website at nationalrtap.org/eLearning-Portal.

Further Information

FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulations

transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/drugandalcohol/regulations/Regulations/default.aspx

FTA Reasonable Suspicion Cards

transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/Publications/DocumentInfo.aspx?DocID=1243

FTA Drug and Alcohol Publications

transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/Publications/Default.aspx

Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) Prescription for Safety Video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2y9n8jOVRQ

FTA Drug Awareness Video

transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/Tools/DrugAwarenessVideo/Default.aspx

FTA Reasonable Suspicion Documentation Form

transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/drugandalcohol/training/NatConf/2016/Presentations/handouts/Reasonable-Suspicion-Determination-Chart-and-Form.pdf

National RTAP Transit Managers' Toolkit Section on Drug and Alcohol

www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Transit-Managers-Toolkit/Compliance/Drug-and-Alcohol-Programs

National RTAP Drug and Alcohol Topic Guide

www.nationalrtap.org/Resource-Center/Topic-Guides/Drug-and-Alcohol

A program of the Federal Transit Administration administered by the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association

