

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDY – PICKFORDS

Pickfords is a removal and storage company with 579 commercial vehicles and 185 company cars. It has about 1,200 UK employees.

Pickfords is part of parent company SIRVA, which uses a Substance Misuse Policy to cover drink and drug-driving, introduced in December 2004.

The company stresses in the policy that it does not want to interfere with employees' personal lives, but there is a need to actively encourage colleagues to manage their lives so that safety at work is not jeopardised.

The policy covers both drugs and alcohol, including:

- Information on the need for the policy (including relevant statistics).
- A statement that the use or misuse of drugs is prohibited, the company is a drugs-free zone and employees must be in a fit condition for work, free from traces of illegal drugs.
- A statement about legal medication and the need to inform managers if taking medication that can cause drowsiness.
- How the policy will be enforced (details of testing).
- Possible questions and answers relating to the policy.
- Advice on where to get help in relation to alcohol and drugs.

Testing is written into the policy and employee contracts. It is carried out in the following situations:

- Pre-employment (and sometimes during an employee's probation period).
- After a collision where an employee is suspected as being to blame.
- If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee has been drug-driving. In these cases, every employee in their depot will be tested, not just the employee suspected.
- Follow-up (colleagues who have tested positive for drugs are subject to periodic testing to ensure compliance with any prescribed treatment).

Drug testing is carried out on-site by an independent company using a urine test, which tests for six types of drugs. If positive, the sample is sent to a laboratory for confirmation. While awaiting the results, the employee is suspended with pay. Results usually take about five days and if positive, the employee is subject to a disciplinary hearing.

In most cases the hearing would result in dismissal but cases would be judged individually. For example, in some cases the company might immediately take the employee off driving duties but continue their employment while helping them find suitable treatment.

The policy states that employees may be dismissed from the company if they:

- Consume drugs while on company premises or company business.
- Are in possession of illegal drugs.
- Screen positive for illegal drugs following laboratory analysis.
- Refuse to give a sample for testing.
- Decline to take or miss an approved course of treatment related to a drug problem if advised to do this by the company.

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Sources of further information

Fleet Safety Forum – subscribers receive monthly mailings with information, research and resources plus discounted invitations to conferences and workshops. Subscription costs from £105 (+VAT) per year.

Resources: *Drink-driving* – an information sheet for fleet managers.

Sober up! – a leaflet for young drivers on the risks of drink and drug-driving.

The FedEx and Brake Road Safety Academy – free training for fleet managers on delivering presentations to drivers to help create a safe driving culture.

The training covers a range of issues including drug-driving.

T: 01484 559909 E: fleetsafetyforum@brake.org.uk W: www.brake.org.uk

Dtec International Ltd – helps companies create alcohol and drugs policies and offers awareness training. It helps implement in-house testing through the use of Drugwipe and can arrange external laboratory testing.

T: 0800 371898 E: dteinfo@aol.com W: www.dtecinternational.com

Hampton Knight – offers assistance with policy development, training, awareness, screening, testing and counselling.

Resources: *The complete guide to a substance misuse policy in the workplace booklet* (£34.99 +p&p).

T: 01827 65999 W: www.hamptonknight.co.uk

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) – offers an awareness course for managers and drivers on 'Understanding Driver Impairment', covering drink and drug-driving. It can be delivered in-house.

Resources: *Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs Policy* (Free to download and in hard copy)

T: 0870 777 2105 E: fleetsolutions@rospa.com W: www.rospa.org.uk

Medscreen – carries out urine testing in-house and offers guidance on policy, education and testing.

T: 020 7712 8000 E: Sales@medscreen.com W: www.medscreen.com

Avoidd – trains managers to administer Field Impairment Testing, helps companies implement policies and drug-testing.

T: 0870 609 4562 E: avoidd_ltd@drinkdrive.co.uk

W: www.drinkdrive.co.uk

TTC Group – offers drug awareness training for drivers and managers, plus guidance on developing drink and drug-driving policies.

T: 0845 270 4380 E: train@ttc-uk.com W: www.ttc-uk.com

Screensafe – carries out hair-testing, can help develop policies and offers software for random-testing selection.

T: 08450 505590 E: enquiries@screensafeuk.co.uk

W: www.screensafeuk.co.uk

JMJ Laboratories – accredited lab that carries out urine-testing.

T: 01873 856688 E-mail info@jmjlab.com W: www.jmjlab.com

Health and Safety Executive – the government body responsible for ensuring health and safety in the workplace.

Resources: *Drug misuse at work: a guide for employers* (free to download)

T: 0845 345 0055 W: www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs

THINK! website – Government website with information on drug driving.

Resources: www.drugdrive.com - Government website about the effects of drugs on driving aimed at 17-35 year olds, but relevant for all age groups.

T: 0870 122 6236 W: www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

Road Safety Scotland – launched a poster campaign on the dangers of driving on medication. PDF and text versions of the poster can be downloaded at http://www.road-safety.org.uk/publicity/medicines_and_driving.asp

End Notes

- ¹ *The Incidence of Drugs and Alcohol in Road Accident Fatalities, (TRL, 2000)*
- ² *Drugs in Oral Fluid. Part II. Investigation of Drugs in Drivers, (Impaired Motorists, Methods of Roadside Testing and Assessment for Licensing, 2005)*
- ³ *The Green Flag Report on Safe Driving Part One (Brake, 2000)*
- ⁴ *The Green Flag Report on Safe Driving Part Six: Young drivers (Brake, 2007)*
- ⁵ *The Green Flag Report on Safe Driving Part One (Brake, 2000)*
- ⁶ *The British Crime Survey 2005/06 (The Home Office, 2006)*
- ⁷ *Jail for stoned driver who ploughed into lorry, (Herts and Essex Observer, 3 August 2006)*
- ⁸ *Cannabis doubles the risk of fatal crashes, (New Scientist, 2 December 2005)*
- ⁹ *A-Z of Drugs, Talk to Frank (www.talktofrank.com, Home Office) and www.drugdrive.com (Think! campaign)*
- ¹⁰ *Using medicines correctly: OTC Medicines and Drowsiness Consumer Health Information Centre (www.chic.org.uk) and Antidepressants and Fitness to Drive (Hindmarch, Surrey University, 1999)*
- ¹¹ *Drug misuse at work: a guide for employers (HSE)*
- ¹² *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*
- ¹³ *Press releases from Victoria Police and the Minister for Police & Emergency Services, 28 February 2006*
- ¹⁴ *Monitoring the Effectiveness of UK Field Impairment Tests, (Department for Transport, 2006)*
- ¹⁵ *Monitoring the Effectiveness of UK Field Impairment Tests, (Department for Transport, 2006)*

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS

Illegal drugs and driving

Illegal drugs impair driving, and increase your chances of killing yourself and others on the road.

You might think that what you choose to do at the weekend is up to you, but some drugs can remain in your system for days or even weeks and cause impairment from fatigue, so if you take drugs at the weekend it could impact on your safety behind the wheel and at work during the week.



The Facts

Nearly one in five drivers who die have illegal drugs in their system and if you kill someone through drug-driving, you face up to 14 years in prison.

- **Cannabis** slows reaction times, causes drowsiness and affects co-ordination for up to five days.
- **Ecstasy, speed and cocaine** distort perceptions and cause over-confidence and confusion.
- **Heroin and other opiates** cause sleepiness, slow reaction times and impair co-ordination.

What to do

- If you feel you have a problem with illegal drugs, speak to your manager. They should be able to help you find suitable treatment and take you off driving duties.
- If you fail to speak to your manager and continue to drive while impaired through drugs you are putting yourself at risk of a crash and being sacked.

Sober up! I pledge to follow the above advice and stay drug-free at the wheel.

Signed:

To make the **Pledge to Drive Safely** online, go to www.brake.org.uk and click on 'driver'

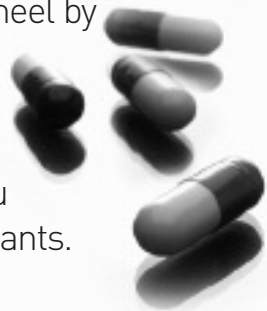
Make the Pledge to Drive Safely

Whether you're driving for work or in your own time, you can take simple steps to reduce your chances of causing a serious or fatal crash.

 **Pledge**
to drive safely

Legal medicines and driving

Driving after taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicines can seriously impair your ability at the wheel by causing drowsiness and slowing reaction times. This includes painkillers, antihistamines, cold and flu remedies and anti-depressants.



What to do

- Always ask your doctor or pharmacist for medication that doesn't cause drowsiness.
- If this is not possible, you must inform your manager that you are taking medication. Your manager should take you off driving duties while you are taking it.
- Check the labels of medicines carefully. Some labels may advise you not to drive if you feel drowsy. If you're taking a medicine with a warning like this, do not drive, even if you feel okay. It's hard to judge whether or not you feel drowsy, and you could start to feel tired midway through your journey.

Drug testing

The purpose of drug-testing is not to catch people out but to ensure that all members of staff are fit for the job and not impaired. Co-operation with drug-testing procedures will ensure anyone who is putting their life and others' lives at risk by drug-driving can be identified quickly and easily.

Look out for others

Nobody wants to snitch on their work colleagues. However, there is a difference between snitching on them and looking out for their safety. You might not feel it is your business if your colleague is taking drugs and driving, but how would you feel if their actions led to them or someone else being killed or seriously injured?

If you suspect a colleague is taking drugs and driving you should advise them to speak to their manager or speak to a manager about it yourself. You could save their life or someone else's.

Drug-driving:

an information sheet for fleet managers



Driving on drugs is increasingly prevalent. Illegal drugs and some medicinal drugs can severely affect a driver's ability to stay alert, react to hazards, and make safe judgements, possibly with lethal consequences. It's essential for fleet managers to be aware of the dangers of drug-driving and take steps to prevent it among their workforce.

Extent of the problem

- Almost one in five (18%) people killed in road crashes in 2000 had traces of illegal drugs in their blood, most commonly cannabis, compared to 3% in the 1980s.¹
- Of 1,396 drivers randomly tested by University of Glasgow researchers, one in seven had taken illegal substances in the last 48 hours. The testing used saliva and participation was voluntary.²
- Brake and Green Flag surveys of UK drivers found: 6% admit taking illegal drugs and driving;³ young drivers are more likely to take illegal drugs and drive than older drivers – 9% of 17-24 year-olds admit driving on illegal drugs, compared to 3% of over-25s;⁴ 17% admit driving after taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicine they knew would make them drowsy.⁵
- In 2005-06 one in six British 17-24 year-olds admitted taking drugs at least once in the last month.⁶

CANNABIS TRUCK DRIVER JAILED

A truck driver who had smoked cannabis smashed into a broken-down truck on the M11 on 14 March 2005, killing its driver as he carried out repairs. Chelmsford Crown Court heard that Downes, 37, was a heavy cannabis user and had cannabis in his system at the time of the crash. Downes was jailed for five-and-a-half years and banned from driving for 10 years.⁷

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How do drugs affect driving?

Illegal drugs

Illegal drugs affect people in different and unpredictable ways. In some cases, the effects of drugs can last for days, either through direct impairment or through tiredness resulting from disrupted sleep patterns.

Research has shown a direct link between some illegal drugs and crash risk. For example, researchers at the Université Claude Bernard in France found drivers with cannabis in their systems are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash than those with no drugs or alcohol in their system.⁸

Listed below are effects associated with some of the most common illegal drugs, which can impair driving.



Cannabis

- Slows reactions.
- Hinders concentration and co-ordination for up to five days.
- Has a sedative-like effect, resulting in fatigue.



Cocaine

- Can cause over-confidence, erratic behaviour and risk-taking.
- Can hinder concentration and coordination and cause tiredness in the 'come down' period, a day or two after taking the drug.



Ecstasy

- Increases heart-rate and causes adrenaline surges, which can result in over-confidence and increased risk-taking.
- Can cause distorted perception, confusion and blurred vision.
- Can disrupt sleep, resulting in tiredness and slower reaction times.



Speed

- Makes people feel over-excited or panicky.
- Can disrupt sleep, resulting in tiredness and slower reaction times.



Heroin

- Impairs co-ordination and slows reaction times.
- Dulls perception, which can impair awareness of road signs and surroundings.
- Can make the user sleepy.⁹

Medicines

Some examples of prescription and over-the-counter medicines that can affect driving by causing drowsiness or slowing reaction times are cough medicines, hayfever medicines, anti-depressants, anti-nausea treatments and painkillers such as codeine, which have the same base as heroin (opium).¹⁰

All medicines that can affect driving should carry warnings of some kind. However, these can be worded in a misleading or unclear way. For example, they may say 'Do not drive or operate machinery if you feel drowsy after taking'. Drivers taking medicines with these labels should never risk driving. It is hard to judge whether or not you feel drowsy, especially if you are already impaired by a medicine. Drivers may also think they are not impaired and then start to feel drowsy midway through their journey.

Drug addiction

Some illegal and legal drugs are highly addictive. There are some symptoms you can look out for that may indicate an employee has a drug addiction:

- Sudden mood changes, irritability or aggression.
- A tendency to become confused.
- Fluctuations in concentration and energy.
- Impaired job performance, poor time-keeping, increased short-term sickness absence.
- A deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or management.

All the above can also be caused by other factors, such as stress, and should be regarded only as indications that an employee *may* be misusing drugs.¹¹

DRUG-DRIVER SERIOUSLY INJURES TEACHER AND KILLS HIMSELF

Teacher Barbara Pearce suffered life-changing serious injuries including severe burns and shattered bones in her pelvis, legs and feet when the car she was driving was smashed into by a driver who had taken a cocktail of drugs including cocaine and ecstasy. The 21 year-old driver who crashed into Barbara was heading the wrong way up a dual carriageway. He and his passenger died instantly.

The law

The penalties for driving while impaired by drugs are the same as for drink-driving - a minimum one-year driving ban, a fine of up to £5,000 and up to six months in jail.

Causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs carries a maximum prison sentence of 14 years.

Currently UK law only allows police to charge someone driving on illegal drugs if they can prove that their driving was impaired. Brake, the road safety charity, is campaigning for the law to be changed to allow drivers registering any level of illegal drugs in their system to be prosecuted without proving impairment.

Employers have a 'duty of care' under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. To meet this 'duty of care' employers must take steps to ensure employees do not drive on drugs that could affect their ability to drive safely.

What can companies do?

Introduce an anti-drug-drive policy

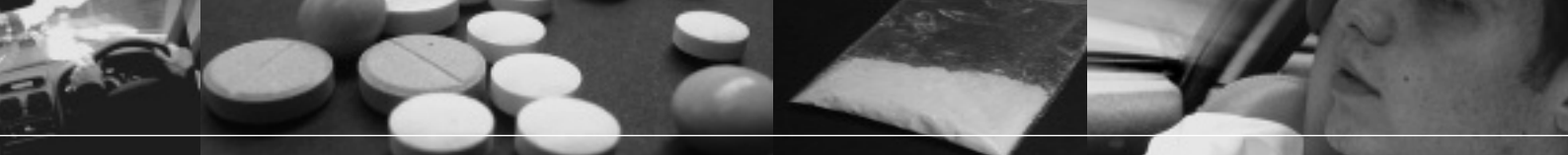
Ensure your company has a robust policy stating that drug-driving will not be tolerated. As with all fleet safety policies, it is advisable to consult your employees before developing or changing the policy, and to review your policies regularly (once a year or more often if necessary).

The company's stance on drug-driving should be written into the terms of employment, explaining that it is a disciplinary offence to be impaired through drug use while at work, including while driving for work.

The policy should make it clear that:

- Employees must never drive with drugs in their system.
- If they take drugs in their own time, this can impact on their capability at work. Some drugs can stay in your system for days or even weeks and can cause tiredness and slower reaction times through disrupted sleep patterns.
- If taking medicines that can cause drowsiness, employees must declare this to their manager as they may need to be taken off driving duties - your policy should make it clear that alternative arrangements will be made where necessary.
- Employees must declare any drug or alcohol problems to their manager at interview stage or as and when problems arise not just before being tested.
- Employees must co-operate with training and testing procedures in the workplace.
- Failure to comply with the policy will be regarded as gross misconduct and a serious disciplinary matter which may result in employment being terminated.

If you want to carry out random drug-testing, you should write it into employees' contracts with details of how and how often it will take place. However, you can carry out tests if you have reason to suspect drug-taking even if you do not have it written into a policy or employee contracts.¹²



Education and communication

Educating employees on the dangers of drug driving is crucial and helps employees understand the need for the policy.

Employees should be educated on:

- How different illegal drugs can affect the body and driving ability and how long effects can last.
- Which legal medicines can impair driving and their effects. Train staff to ask their doctor for non-drowsy versions of medicines. These are often available but are not always prescribed unless specifically requested.
- The importance of avoiding driving altogether if the label on a medicine warns about possible drowsiness.
- The possible consequences of drug-driving, including loss of employment, causing death and injury to themselves and others, heavy fines, driving bans and jail sentences. Use statistics and examples of crashes such as those in this sheet.
- The company stance on drug driving and the associated disciplinary procedures.
- What actions drivers should take if they are taking illegal or medicinal drugs and what action they should take if they suspect a colleague of drug-driving (see the 'Advice for drivers' page at the back of this sheet).

Methods of educating drivers include:

- Communicating the company policy to prospective employees at interview stage. Testing at this stage can be an appropriate time to explain the policy.
- Including company policy in driver handbooks and on your intranet. Testing drivers on handbook contents helps ensure they have understood it.
- Issuing leaflets to drivers. You could start by photocopying and distributing the 'Advice for drivers' page at the back of this sheet.
- Including reminders of the policy and the dangers of drug-driving in employee briefings, the company newsletter, e-bulletins, wage slips etc.
- Holding presentations and discussion-based sessions in regional offices or depots.
- Bringing in experts to deliver workshops (see 'Sources of further information' for organisations that can do this).

Certain employees should not be made to feel they have been singled out, so a drug-drive policy should apply to all employees, including top managers and directors.

Managers should have an 'open door' policy and encourage employees to communicate with them about any concerns relating to drug-driving or other safety issues.

→ A separate information sheet on 'Developing a safety culture' is available free from the Fleet Safety Forum. Call 01484 559909 or email fleetsafetyforum@brake.org.uk.

Carry out drugs tests

Testing your drivers for the presence of drugs in their system or for levels of impairment from drug-taking should be seen as a way of checking that your policy and education is working. If testing is included in the policy, it should be made clear it is for the safety of all employees and members of the public and not just to 'catch them out'.

Testing can be done at several stages:

- Pre-employment
- During a probationary period of employment
- At random
- Following a crash, bump, scrape or near-miss
- On suspicion that an employee has driven on drugs
- On promotion (before entering a job with different duties)

The testing process

There are several methods of drug-testing available:

- Testing sweat, saliva, urine, hair or blood for the presence of drugs via a detection device and/or laboratory test
- Testing for impairment from drugs rather than the presence of drugs

Testing for the presence of drugs

Urine-testing

Some companies use urine-testing to detect the presence of drugs in a person's system. This involves an employee providing a urine sample which is collected by a laboratory and taken away for analysis. Analysis usually takes a couple of days to process. (See 'Sources of further information' for organisations that carry out urine tests).

Sweat-testing

Most companies that carry out drug tests use sweat-testing with a drug detection device in-house, which staff can be trained to administer. This method is cheaper and quicker to carry out than urine-testing and can be done in front of witnesses. This involves taking a swab of sweat and waiting a few minutes for it to show the presence of drugs.

Although these devices are widely available, companies using this method must have the results verified by urine-testing at an accredited laboratory in order for it to be legally defensible. Some service providers such as those listed in the 'Sources of further information' section can arrange this.

Drugwipe

Drugwipe is an instant drug detection device used to test sweat. Different versions of Drugwipe test for individual drugs or multiple drugs including cannabis, cocaine and crack cocaine, heroin and morphine, amphetamines (speed), methamphetamines (ecstasy) and benzodiazepines (such as Valium or Temazepam). The device is wiped on the skin. A drop of water is added. After three minutes, the devices indicate which drugs, if any, are present in the system. Drugs will be detected if they were taken up to a few days before.

The company that markets the product in the UK, Dtec International Ltd, provides a comprehensive service including training on using the device and guidance on developing a drugs policy.

If the device gives a positive result, Dtec arranges for a urine sample to be taken on site and passed to an accredited laboratory for testing by a medical drug specialist. Drugwipe will also show a positive result if it detects high levels of some legal medicines, such as painkillers, which have the same 'base' as heroin (opium). The laboratory tests show if this was the case and if the person is taking the medicine excessively.

Drugwipe is a reliable method of detecting drugs. Of 13,000 drivers in Victoria, Australia, randomly tested by police for cannabis and methamphetamines using Drugwipe, 2% tested positive. 100% of these were confirmed by a laboratory as having drugs in their system.¹³

Hair, saliva and blood-testing

Hair-testing allows drugs taken up to 12 months ago to be detected, but is rarely used by fleet operators as it can be quite invasive, expensive and difficult to carry out. Saliva and blood-testing is not widely used among companies because drugs are only detectable within these fluids for a couple of hours after being taken.

Testing for impairment by drugs

Field Impairment Testing (FIT), used by several UK police forces in roadside enforcement checks, can help determine whether a person is impaired by drugs, rather than detect the presence of drugs in a person's system. It tests a person's ability to carry out tasks which may be affected by drugs. A study by Glasgow University found 64% of drivers with drugs in their system would be detected by police carrying out FIT. Therefore a third of drivers with drugs in their system could pass. 26% of drivers who had not taken drugs were incorrectly suspected of being impaired using FIT.¹⁴

The five elements of FIT tests are:

- **Pupil examination**
The pupil of the person's eye is checked to see if it is dilated or constricted.
- **Romberg test**
The person closes their eyes and counts thirty seconds. Some drugs can alter perception of time. Between 20 and 40 seconds is considered normal. The person's balance during the task is also observed.
- **Walk and turn test**
The person take nine steps along a line, turn and walk back while counting out loud and looking at their feet. The person's ability to keep balance and count the steps is observed.
- **One leg stand test**
The person's ability to stand on one leg for 30 seconds and counts out loud is observed.
- **Finger to nose test**
The person is required to extend their hands, close their eyes, then touch the tip of their nose.¹⁵

If impairment is suspected, laboratory testing can then be used to determine the presence of drugs.

Several UK organisations offer assistance to companies in the development of a drug-driving policy, driver education and training plus the implementation of in-house testing, whether you choose to test for the presence of drugs or for impairment. Details can be found in the 'Sources of further information' section on page 5.

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDY – LOTHIAN BUSES, EDINBURGH

Lothian Buses, based in Edinburgh, has 2,000 employees. About three-quarters are bus drivers. The company's 650 vehicles carry more than 100 million passengers per year.

The company has separate drugs and alcohol policies, communicated to employees through a booklet, which is signed for on receipt. The booklet details company drug policy and testing procedure. It outlines the dangers of illegal drugs and some prescription medicines and states that employees must inform their doctor of the nature of their job before any medicines are issued. The policies are reviewed annually with the input of managers and trade unions.

The company has carried out random drug and alcohol testing since 2005. Employees selected are tested before their shift begins. Each test takes less than 10 minutes. About 25 bus drivers and eight administrative and management staff are randomly tested each month. Lothian Buses uses Drugwipe to test for cannabis in all cases, plus one of the following selected at random: amphetamines (such as speed); methamphetamines (such as ecstasy); cocaine; or opiates.

Trained supervisors and managers carry out the tests. If an employee fails a random drug test they will be suspended with pay and must take a urine test with an approved laboratory, conducted on-site within an hour. If this test is positive, the employee continues to be suspended on full pay pending a disciplinary interview. The employee will then be dismissed on grounds of gross misconduct.

Lothian's drug policy encourages anyone who feels they have a drug problem to approach their manager in confidence. The individual is normally suspended on full pay pending referral to the company doctor for assessment. The company doctor will then assess whether the individual is fit for work and make recommendations for treatment. The employee would still be required to pass a drugs test and be subject to the same disciplinary procedure as other employees.

Since introducing the policy at the beginning of 2005, Lothian Buses has tested more than 350 employees. 10 showed positive and follow-up urine tests showed this was due to prescribed medication in each case. In these cases, the employees were reminded of the company policy on medicines.

Lothian Buses also carries out pre-employment drugs testing for cannabis, amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine and opiates with Drugwipes during the interview process. About 27 potential new employees out of 800 annually tested show positive. They are removed from the recruitment process with an explanation why. If a potential recruit tested positive and could prove this was from a legal medicine, they may be reconsidered for employment after the course of medicine is finished.

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