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Three Types of Employee Screening to Lower Workers' Comp Costs

With the current economy, a significant number of people have been out of work for a very long time. This leads to general de-conditioning, and since they are a new hire they want to work as hard as possible to gain your trust and acceptance. Often times these people who join the workforce again are the first to be injured, since they are physically unable to perform the job at the pace required without injuring themselves. Monitor your loss runs, and if new hires are accountable for the majority of your injuries, then you have identified a problem that needs immediate correcting, and this can be corrected through modifying your new hire screening by implementing a physical exam before they are hired and start work. The following screenings should be considered:

1. Have all applicants complete a pre-employment physical before they can be accepted as new hire.

This should be standard for any position. Whether it is a sedentary desk job, or a job out on the production floor, having a physician do a physical exam on your candidate can save you a lot of aggravation down the road. This potential new hire may carry a lot of baggage medically that could become your responsibility after their first day of work. Physicians can spot surgical scars or other objective findings on exam that this person may not have indicated to you during their interview. Often it is thought that only workers performing heavy tasks should be considered for physicals. However, sedentary jobs can lead to back pain, neck pain, and repetitive injuries that may have been prevented if a physician noticed it during a physical exam before they were accepted as a new hire within your workforce.

2. Have a detailed job description for your physician to review while performing the physical.

Just saying that a worker will spend 90% of their time at a desk and 10% of their time walking to the printer and back is not a fantastic job description. Consider what goes in to a particular job day after day. Whatever it may be, the more detailed you are in your job description the better the doctor can assess your candidate and decide if they can physically do this job on a long-term basis and in a safe manner. In the end, nobody knows the jobs within a workplace better than you as the employer do. In addition, the more detailed and elaborate you are in your job description, the safer your workforce will be because you will be hiring qualified, fit workers than can safely perform their job tasks day after day.

3. Make passing a drug screen mandatory for all new hires.

This should go without saying. With prescription drug use on the rise, even though a potential new hire looks on the outside to be healthy and responsible, there could be a lot internally that is physically wrong with them. I recently heard of a claim where a worker sustained a back strain, and during the interview, he said that he did not go to the doctor right away because he had muscle relaxers and just took those. How did this person get the muscle relaxers? Did he take them every day? Did this potential new hire call his/her MD and then the doctor just called in an RX for him without actually doing an exam? If this new hire already has some type of injury before even starting at your jobsite, how can you safely protect yourself and your fellow employees from being injured by someone under the influence of narcotics prescribed to them either legally or obtained illegally?

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