

## The Science Behind the Buzz

When alcohol is consumed, the liver immediately starts breaking it down into smaller components to get rid of it. This process, and its side effects, are part of what causes a hangover.

The feel-good effects of alcohol are caused by an increase in dopamine and serotonin, which are the neurotransmitters involved in feeling happy and calm.

Finally, alcohol increases the production of GABA, the primary neurotransmitter that tells other neurotransmitters to slow down their processing and signaling speed. This is what causes delayed reactions and slurred speech.

## Substance Abuse Help

A recent study by the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that 1 in 8 US adults fit the criteria for having alcohol use disorder. That rate doubles to 1 in 4 for blue-collar workers.

If you think you need help, don't wait in asking for it. There are many anonymous assistance programs available. Call the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA) at 800-662-HELP, or visit:

<https://www.samhsa.gov>



Alcohol goes great with many things: celebrations, parties, tailgates, and relaxation to name a few. It does not go great with the job site, and by "not great" we mean not at all.

The U.S. Department of Labor has reported that drug and alcohol abuse corresponds to **65%** of on-the-job accidents and that 38 – 50% percent of all workers' compensation claims are related to the abuse of alcohol or drugs in the workplace.

We all know that drinking on the job is not safe. But, do you know why?

Alcohol is a sedative. This means that it slows down the body's ability to take in, process, decide, and ultimately react to the environment around us. Alcohol also slows down the body's ability to regulate balance and coordination. Lastly, alcohol impairs good judgment and decision-making ability.

Having a quick reaction time to events, adequate coordination and balance, and good judgment are all necessary components of a safe and productive workplace. A decrease in just one of these areas will make the average employee less useful and more accident prone. But, a decrease in all three areas at once is a disaster waiting to happen.

### **How long do the effects of alcohol last?**

Longer than you think.

## *Alcohol & The Job A Recipe for Disaster*

Most people do not know how long it takes their bodies to metabolize alcohol. On average, it takes approximately one hour for the body to process (return to 0.0 blood alcohol concentration) one standard drink. This time is affected by age, weight, sex, health, and quantity consumed. The more you drink, and the shorter the amount of time you drink it in, the longer it takes to process.

This means that it is easily possible to still be intoxicated the next morning after a heavy night of drinking. Especially if you have an early alarm clock!

Hangovers, and more specifically hangover cures are legendary. Everyone has a story about one, and a surefire way to prevent or cure one.

However, did you know that a severe hangover can be just as impairing as being intoxicated, even if your BAC is 0? It's true. While the body may not have any more alcohol in the bloodstream, its normal processes may not be working at full capacity which can have the same effect as a BAC of 0.05, just under the legal limit.

Remember, 65% of workplace accidents can be attributed to drug and alcohol use, whether being used on the job or not. Don't be another statistic.