

Frequently Asked Questions

Random Drug Testing

Q: Why drug test?

A: Drug abuse in the workplace puts employers at a risk for increased accidents, more absenteeism, lower productivity and higher insurance costs. Workplace drug testing helps to mitigate risks by filtering out drug users from an employer's workforce as well as deterring drug use within it.

Q: What is random drug testing?

A: Random drug testing is a program where the employer, using a random selection process, selects one or more individuals from an employee pool to undergo drug testing. Federally-mandated, safety-sensitive workers – which include pilots, bus drivers, truck drivers and workers in nuclear power plants – are required to undergo random drug testing as mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Some non-regulated employers also elect to perform random drug testing on their employees in an effort to deter employee drug use.

Q: What are the benefits of random drug testing?

A: By using a random selection process, employers ensure that there is no bias and that all employees have an equal chance of being chosen – even those who may have recently undergone testing. Random drug testing can be more effective at detecting and deterring drug use than periodic or pre-employment testing because employees do not know when the drug testing will occur. According to the [U.S. Department of Labor](#), because this type of testing has no advance notice, it can act as a deterrent.

Q: How are employees selected for testing?

A: Random drug testing selections are based on the size of the employee pool, program period and frequency rate. A rigorous, comprehensive methodology helps to ensure that every eligible employee has an equal opportunity of being selected for testing during each selection period. The U.S. Department of Transportation recommends that, regardless of job titles, people should be chosen for testing based on their job function.

Q: What is an “employee pool”?

A: An employee pool refers to a group of employees subject to a specific set of random drug testing selection parameters.

Q: What is the difference between the “program period” and a “selection period”?

A: The program period is the length of time the random drug testing program will actively run. The simplest program period to use is one year. Testing activity may fluctuate during the course of the program period, but by the time the period closes, the number of completed tests should equal the random (frequency) rate.

The selection period is the interval within the program period for which a given number of random selections are performed and their corresponding tests completed. Typical selection periods are one month, one week or one quarter. For example, a monthly frequency indicates that each month is a new selection period.

Q: What is the “frequency rate” or “random rate”?

A: The frequency or random rate indicates the number of selections as a percentage of the pool size. For example, if there are 100 people in the pool, and the annual rate is 50%, then 50 selections will occur in a year’s time.

Q: What is “over-sampling”?

A: Over-sampling refers to the practice of selecting more people for testing than the rate requires. This is done in anticipation of some number of tests not being completed. Over - sampling is required in almost every random testing program because it is simply not possible to conduct a test on every person that is selected. People sometimes get sick, go on vacation, change responsibilities or are otherwise unavailable for testing. An over-sampling rate of 20% is quite common.

Q: How does the Quest Diagnostics system select individuals for random testing?

A: Random selection is driven by a thorough algorithm based on employee pool membership, the program period, rate and frequency (selection period). This algorithm assigns individual index numbers and QuestRandoms.com generates a random list of numbers, which is then matched up to the index numbers generated. As a result, a random list of employees (donors) is created for a given selection period.

Q: Can an individual be selected more than once during a selection period?

A: It is possible for individuals to be selected multiple times for testing as the algorithms used do not exclude individuals from selection unless they are purposefully removed from the employee pool. That said, an individual will not be selected twice on the same selection period, but could be selected more than once over the course of the program period. If the program covers 12 months, they could be selected more than once over that time.

Q: How often should random selections take place?

A: Random selections should be just that, random, where employees in a pool should be selected randomly based on the selection periods established within the program. They may know that within a certain period they will be drug tested, but will not be able to deduce exactly when they will be tested, leaving the drug-use-detering element of surprise intact.

Q: Does Quest Diagnostics offer different types of random selection programs?

A Yes, the following chart outlines the three available tiers, their benefits and features.

| Program | Features | Management Cost |
|----------|---|---|
| Platinum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our team of experts will analyze your resources, goals and requirements and will develop a random drug testing program tailored to meet your unique needs • We handle employer candidate pool(s) selections based on specific preferences, and emails you the list of employees to test each period • Fully customized notifications specifying which employees need to be tested each period | Quote based on the type of custom program developed* |
| Gold | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You provide us with a .CSV employee roster file each selection period and we run candidate pool selections based upon established preferences • An unlimited number of candidate pools are permitted for both DOT and Non-DOT testing • The designated employer contact is notified about employees to be tested via email, fax or online interface | A nominal, fixed fee which includes one candidate pool. Each additional candidate pool is \$50* |
| Silver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with the other tiers, drug test results are received by one of our online results interfaces • An unlimited number of Non-DOT candidate pools are permitted along with one DOT pool • You are responsible for setting up and maintaining candidate pools | No cost* |

* Program fees do not include specimen testing fees

Q: What are some best practices for maintaining a successful random drug testing program?

A: Document everything about the random drug testing process such as the numbers, employee names drawn, dates and times of notification, dates and times of drug test collections, reasons why an employee was not tested during a selection cycle, etc. Above all, maintain detailed drug testing records and accurate documentation for your drug-free workplace program.

Q: How successful are random drug testing programs at detecting drug use?

A: Results from the latest Quest Diagnostics [Drug Testing Index™](#) show that random urine drug test positivity rates are higher in the general U.S. workforce (5.7%) than they are in the federally-mandated workforce (1.5%). The latest report and analysis can be found at QuestDiagnostics.com/dti.

Q: Who do I contact for more information about random drug testing from Quest Diagnostics?

A: Contact your Sales or Account Management representative for more information or call our National Customer Support Center at 1.800.877.7484.