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Drug-safe mining workplaces

ACCORDING to Frontline Diagnostics, the mining industry is at the forefront of Australian workplace safety, with about 70% of the nation's 380 mines having a drug-safe workplace program in place.

The drug and alcohol testing and screening company has worked with 80 to 100 mines since its founding in 1999.

The 2004 Mine Health and Safety Act prompted mines to introduce a policy to address drugs in the workplace.

According to the company, those mines which have introduced a drug-safe workplace program have had a significant decline in the rates of people testing positive.

Statistics from the company indicate mines with a drug policy have around 4% of staff testing positive to drug and alcohol, as opposed to 17 to 20% for mines without.

Drug users who test positive on multiple occasions can request counselling and quit consuming or leave the workplace.

Frontline said the first step in implementing a drug-safe workplace policy is to make it user-friendly and open to all staff. Testing methods should also be discussed and agreed to by all levels of the company.