

Workplace Drug Tests – Saliva or Urine Testing?



Employers have a legal obligation under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) to provide a safe work environment for all employees. Illicit drugs can compromise ability on the job, such as lower reaction time, hinder cognitive ability, or impaired judgement.

Industries such as transportation, mining, building and construction, manufacturing, or oil and gas fields all require employees to be drug-free. Serious accidents, injuries, or death can occur as a result, so it is a standard practice to put a drug testing policy in place.

Drug testing employees help navigate and prevent health and safety risks, deter potential drug use, and ensure companies comply with state regulations. Urine and saliva drug testing stands out as the most popular testing methods, but how do they compare accuracy and detection windows? This article will explain the difference between both testing methods, how these tests work, and why they are so effective. After all, a drug-free workspace reduces absenteeism, maintains a productive workflow, and keeps employers on track.

What is Saliva Testing?

Also known as oral fluid testing, this is a non-invasive drug testing method for detecting drugs within an individual's system, using a special swab to collect saliva. If an immediate or recent substance use needs to be identified, saliva swabs are a comfortable testing method for everyone involved.

Saliva drug kits can detect marijuana, cocaine, opiates, methamphetamine, and alcohol, making it an effective tool for the workplace. The sample cannot be tampered with as it is conducted under direct supervision.

What is Urine Testing?

Urine sample collection—often called a urinalysis—is a urine sample provided by an employee in a secure environment. This sample is sealed, labelled, and prepared for fast analysis.

These test kits can identify common drugs like marijuana, prescription medication, cocaine, methamphetamines, and alcohol use. If drugs have been misused over time, urine tests are excellent ways to monitor employee behaviour. Although reliable, hydration levels and timing of drug use can alter results.

How Is A Urine Test Performed?

The donor will be asked to provide a urine sample using a self-contained [Urine Drug Test Eco Cup](#). A trained sample collector will prepare a suitable area for the individual to use, preparing the area and facilities to reduce the chances of contamination or sample tampering.

After the test completion, the sample collector will view the strips on the side of the urine pot, assessing whether substances have been detected.

A **negative result** will show coloured lines, ensuring no drugs were detected. A **positive result** will show no lines on the testing strips, indicating a substance has been picked up. The [Pathtech](#) team will then perform a comprehensive analysis.

How Is A Saliva Test Performed?

A self-contained oral fluid device will be used for the sample, and a tester will take a sample of a person's saliva. Often equipped with an absorbent sample collector, this will be rubbed around the inside of the donor's mouth. The sample is then inserted into a test cassette.

A **negative result** will show a line next to each device, whereas a **positive result** will show lines failing to appear on the device. In this case, another sample will be collected and sent to the Pathtech lab for analysis.

Seeking a high-quality drug testing kit for your workplace? At [Pathtech](#), we can distribute a trusted alcohol test kit in Melbourne for your convenience.

How Are Drugs Detected in Urine and Oral Fluid?



If a person consumes a drug, this is broken down by the liver, and metabolites are released into the bloodstream. In this case, a small testing device such as an oral fluid device or urine sample pot can detect these metabolite substances.

In comparison to hair or blood drug testing, urine and saliva provide a narrow window of detection for drugs of abuse. Both can pick up on substances for a short time after drugs are taken.

When an employee has provided a sample, any non-negative samples are sent back to a laboratory for in-depth analysis. This can further confirm what was initially detected.

When Are Drug Tests Performed?

When it comes to the safety of critical industries, saliva and urine lab testing is important for preventing dangerous incidents. Drug use can affect businesses of all sizes, so when can drug tests be implemented to protect the health and welfare of employees?

- **Random drug testing.** Also known as unannounced testing, this involves selecting random employees for tests throughout the year. This can reduce accidents and absenteeism, encouraging employees to be responsible.
- **Pre-employment drug testing.** As a common part of the recruitment process, pre-employment testing is a prerequisite for joining a business, such as scaffolding in the construction industry.
- **For-cause drug testing.** Also called reasonable suspicion drug testing, this is performed where an employee has reasonable grounds to suspect an employee of drug abuse. This may be a contributing factor if an employee shows signs of unusual behaviour, absence, or reduced productivity.
- **Post-accident drug testing.** If a workplace accident occurs, an employee can recommend a drug test to determine if this is the cause.
- **Return-to-work drug testing.** If an employee has recently entered rehab for drug misuse, this drug test - called abstinence or follow-up testing - can facilitate an employee's return to the workplace.

If you're looking for trustworthy kits for your next round of employee testing, we distribute [drug test kits](#) across Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane so you can have peace of mind for your business.

Benefits of Urine Testing

There are many benefits to urine testing in the workplace, and this isn't limited to fast and efficient results.

1. Accurate results

Urine drug screening has demonstrated accuracy and reliability when detecting a wide range of drugs. Certified by Australian standards, urine kits will always be validated for pre-employment testing.

2. Lower-cost testing kits

Looking to test a larger workplace? Compared to a mouth swab drug test, urine kits don't need specialised materials; they are produced to a higher volume, making them more cost-effective.

3. Fast results

As you don't need to wait for a lab to confirm, results are available to employee testers within minutes. Employers can make business decisions faster without the waiting times.

4. Easy storage

Are you concerned about storage space? With a shelf life of 2-3 years and compact design, work environments can easily store urine fluid testing kits at room temperature.

5. Wider detection window

Often, the drug detection window for urine drug test kits is 1 to 30+ days, depending on the type of drug. These kits providing a broader detection period are useful for testing longer-term drug users.

Benefits of Saliva Testing

Saliva testing is reliable for any employer wanting an accurate result.

1. Convenient samples

Saliva drug tests don't require employees to use the restroom. Unlike urine testing, saliva samples can be taken anytime and anywhere. This is a quick and straightforward process, further adding to its convenience as a testing option.

2. Non-invasive

As a swab collection, saliva testing kits are non-invasive. A small sponge or swab is placed briefly in the mouth, reducing discomfort and offering a quick alternative to employers when screening potential job candidates.

3. On-site results

Fluid drug tests that abide by Australian standards (**AS/NZS 4760:2019**), such as the [Saliva Detection Device](#), can provide fast results on the work site. Saliva testing is ideal for post-accident testing, making the decision process for employers smoother.

4. Cost-effective

Do you often implement random testing? Saliva drug testing kits are a cost-effective option for many workplaces. Due to ease of use and rapid results, these tests can be performed on many employees.

5. Immediate drug detection

Saliva oral fluid tests can detect recent drug compounds within minutes of ingestion. If your workplace wants to identify drugs at the time of testing, fluid drug tests are an excellent choice.

Urine and Saliva Drug Tests – A Comparison

Although both drug test kits have pros and cons, neither method is superior. Both are reliable. The choice for your workplace will depend on your policies and objectives, such as pre-screening tests during the hiring process.

Urine testing kits are extremely accurate, with a much wider window for targeting chronic drug and alcohol users, up to a week prior to testing. However, it is considered more invasive to employees and uncomfortable for many.

Saliva oral fluid testing offers ease of use, isn't invasive, is essential for immediate screening, and can detect recent use within the past few days.

Either way, all companies need to create a comprehensive alcohol and other drugs (AOD) testing policy that aligns with workplace safety considerations. As an employer, is your end goal to catch recent drug use, or to get the bigger picture regarding an employee's substance abuse issues? Whichever method you choose it must comply with local regulations as drug testing laws differ which each industry.

Request Accurate Workplace Drug Testing in Australia

At [Pathtech](#), we support the supply and service of high-quality drug and alcohol detection devices. If you're unsure what testing kit is right for your workplace, [contact us](#) today for ethical and innovative options.

Committed to understanding your business needs, our staff provide training, and guidance, and offers you access to skilled technicians who always provide ongoing support.

As Australia's first choice in drug detection and a successful distributor of 4,000 high-quality products, we help you put the health and safety of your employees and business first. We are your next best business partner.