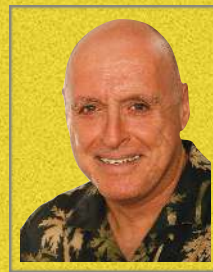


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



293 How Will Marijuana Impact Guam's Workplaces?

With recreational marijuana use now legal in Guam, what does it mean for employers? I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's chew that over, next, on The Extra Point.

What will happen in Guam workplaces now that recreational marijuana use has been signed into law? How will employers react? Some people feel that a general policy describing any kind of impairment, such as alcohol and other drugs, is sufficient. Others have spoken out, saying that employers who do not have a well-documented cannabis policy could expose themselves to allegations of discrimination. Does your employee manual have specific language regarding marijuana?

The Guam Chamber of Commerce has been a strong opponent of the recreational cannabis bill. I would expect they will now get to work, along with other groups such as the Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association, Guam Contractors' Association, the local branch of the Society for Human Resource Management, and others, to help members adjust language in their employee policies. The question is what should those policies be?

If you're an employer you will be impacted by this. Colorado reported about a 15% usage rate among the general population in 2017. Varying surveys have pegged between 10% and 20% of workers have been under the influence of pot at work.

The state of Illinois is now considering legalizing recreational use. In a recent article in the Chicago Tribune, Bryna Dahlin, a Chicago cannabis attorney, said: "Every employer is going to have to consider how they want to deal with this in their workplace." Every employer. Restaurants, telecom companies, car dealers, retailers from the largest grocery outlets to each mom and pop store. If you have employees, it's going to be an issue.

Will you test employees? Will you discipline and even terminate those who fail those tests? Chicago-based Relativity, a legal technology company with more than 850 employees globally, doesn't test anyone. Their position is that they trust their employees will make the appropriate decisions in order to be productive. Will that be how you see it? According to Markie Davis, director of employee benefits and risk management for the state of Colorado, many private companies in Colorado don't test for drugs and most Colorado restaurants have stopped drug testing entirely.

Let's flip the coin. Dr. Barry Sample, senior director of science and technology for Quest Diagnostics, a drug testing service in the mainland, says, "Marijuana still has a negative impact on performance. It's not perhaps as benign as some people may believe." Will you be able to tell if your workers are less productive if under the influence of marijuana? I can hear the punchlines forming already. All other issues aside, most Guam employers are focused on productivity and they're wondering if this law is going to end up costing them money.

Chicago lawyer Stephanie Gournis added a different twist. She said some employers might even advertise their lack of marijuana testing as a strategy to attract workers. One thing is certain. As it is in other places where marijuana use is legal, local managers and business owners have work to do to get ready for changes that are on the way.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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