



## **Hair Testing FAQs**

**Why hair drug testing?** Drug abuse in the workplace puts employers at risk of increased accidents, increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher insurance costs. Hair testing, like all drug testing methodologies, helps to mitigate these risks by screening out applicants and employees who use drugs.

Hair testing for drugs of abuse is the only drug testing method available that provides up to a 90-day drug use history. Compared with urine testing, hair testing tends to provide more positives due to its longer detection window. Hair testing requires a small sample of hair collected under direct supervision without any privacy invasion. It is an excellent option for pre-employment and random drug testing programs.

**What drugs are tested with hair testing?** Quest Diagnostics tests for synthetic opioids like Fentanyl and methadone. Hair testing can also detect amphetamines (amphetamine, methamphetamine, MDMA and MDA), opiates (codeine, morphine and 6-monoacetylmorphine) or “expanded” opiates (which includes semi-synthetic opiates), cocaine (and cocaine metabolites), marijuana metabolite (THC carboxylic acid metabolite), and PCP (phencyclidine).

**How much hair is needed to perform the drug test?** Quest Diagnostics standard screen usually requires a cosmetically undetectable lock of hair preferably snipped from the back of the head, just below the crown. In general, the amount needed equates to a single row of hair approximately one (1) centimeter wide. If you are unable to give a sample of that size for medical or religious reasons, you may apply for an exemption with ICSA.

**Can a hair drug test be beaten or adulterated?** We have not found any adulterants that can beat a hair drug test yet. Moreover, the risk is minimized because every hair collection is observed.

**What is the difference between hair testing and hair follicle testing?** Hair follicle testing is not what we do! Calling a hair test a hair follicle test is a common misnomer. The hair follicle is the pocket, below the scalp, from which the hair strand grows. During a hair drug test collection, the hair is cut as close to the scalp as possible, so only the strands of hair above the scalp are tested and not the actual hair follicle. True hair follicle testing requires the hair to be “plucked” rather than cut which can lead to extreme donor discomfort.

**Where can I get a hair drug test?** ICSA has partnered with The Alcohol and Drug Testing Service (TADTS) to give members access to mandatory hair testing. TADTS was established in 1994 and has been an industry leader since, due to their best-in-class customer service and regulatory compliance. They currently have over 8,000 collection sites in all 50 states.

**What is included in the ICSA/TADTS partnership?** TADTS will give ICSA members savings on their hair drug tests. This gives the ability to perform pre-employment, random, post-accident, and other hair drug tests. TADTS also gives an option to participate in an FMCSA random management consortium, as well as FMCSA clearinghouse compliance. Finally, TADTS provides audit assistance to members.

**What is a random management consortium?** The FMCSA defines a [consortium](#) as “including, but not limited to, a group of employers who join together to administer DOT drug and alcohol testing programs.” A consortium takes on tasks related to managing random drug and alcohol testing within a company. It also can help the company remain compliant with DOT and FMCSA drug testing rules and regulations.

**Why join a random management consortium?** Making the choice to join a drug testing consortium benefits individual owner/operators, because the FMCSA requires at least two people to be in a drug testing pool. The other benefits for small fleets include reduced administrative burden, lower costs, and greater expertise. To reduce the administrative burden, a consortium can train personnel, maintain the collection process, procure services, and handle many other aspects pertaining to drug and alcohol testing. To lower costs, a consortium allows several small companies to group together and receive greater bulk discounts. Finally, to give greater expertise, a consortium takes on the knowledge related to all rules and regulations and becomes experts in a complicated topic so its members can focus on other aspects of safety.

**How often does the FMCSA require drug testing?** The FMCSA requires a 50% random drug testing rate and a 10% random alcohol testing rate.

**For answers to other questions on ICSA Membership, email [contact@safecarriers.org](mailto:contact@safecarriers.org)**