

## Many Workers Drink Before or During Work

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By: [Business and Legal Reports](#)

An estimated 2.3 million workers (1.8 percent of the workforce) have consumed alcohol at least once before coming to work, and 8.9 million workers (7.1 percent of the workforce) have drunk alcohol at least once during the workday, according to a recent study conducted at the University at Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions (RIA) and reported in the current issue of the Journal of Studies on Alcohol.

Most workers who drink during the workday do so during lunch breaks, though some drink while working or during other breaks, according to the study.

The research included telephone interviews from January 2002 to June 2003 with 2,805 employed adults residing in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

The interviewers asked participants how often during the previous year they drank alcohol within two hours of reporting to work, drank during the workday, worked under the influence, or worked with a hangover.

Michael R. Frone, principal investigator on the study, estimates that 2.1 million workers (1.7 percent of the workforce) worked under the influence of alcohol and 11.6 million workers (9.2 percent of the workforce) worked with a hangover.

Nonetheless, the study, funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, suggests that most workplace alcohol use and impairment does not occur frequently. Among those employees who report drinking before work, 71 percent reported doing so less than monthly, 25 percent monthly, and only four percent weekly. For those who drank during the workday, 62 percent did so less than monthly, 24 percent monthly, and 14 percent weekly.

The study found that workplace alcohol use and impairment was more prevalent among men. Also, working under the influence of alcohol or with a hangover was more prevalent among younger workers compared with older workers and among unmarried workers compared to married workers.

Among the broad occupation groups showing the highest rates of workplace alcohol use and impairment were the management occupations, sales occupations, arts/entertainment/sports/media occupations, food preparation and serving occupations, and building and grounds maintenance occupations.

Workers on the evening shift and night shift and those working a nonstandard shift involving irregular or flexible work hours were more likely to report drinking before coming to work compared to workers on a regular day shift. Those working a nonstandard shift were also more likely to use alcohol during the workday and report being at work under the influence of alcohol.