

Substances of Dependence/Abuse FAQs

(Updated 09/27/2017)

1. Is there a difference in a regulatory requirement vs a clinical diagnosis? Which one must an airman meet?

Yes. Airmen must meet the regulatory requirements of [14 CFR Part 67](#), which are not the same criteria used for a clinical (DSM) diagnosis.

2. What is the FAA regulatory definition of Substance Dependence?

“Substance dependence” means a condition in which a person is dependent on a substance other than tobacco or ordinary xanthine containing (e.g., caffeine) beverages, as evidence by:

- A. Increased tolerance;
- B. Manifestation of withdrawal symptoms;
- C. Impaired control of use; or
- D. Continued use despite damage to physical health or impairment of social, personal, or occupational functioning.

3. What is the FAA regulatory definition of Substance abuse?

(1) Use of a substance in a situation in which that use was physically hazardous, if there has been at any other time an instance of the use of a substance also in a situation in which that use was physically hazardous;

(2) A verified positive drug test result, an alcohol test result of 0.04 or greater alcohol concentration, or a refusal to submit to a drug or alcohol test required by the U.S. Department of Transportation or an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation; or

(3) Misuse of a substance that the Federal Air Surgeon, based on case history and appropriate, qualified medical judgment relating to the substance involved, finds:

- (i) Makes the person unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the privileges of the airman certificate applied for or held; or
- (ii) May reasonably be expected, for the maximum duration of the airman medical certificate applied for or held, to make the person unable to perform those duties or exercise those privileges.

4. What type of drug or alcohol related events are asked for on the 8500-8?

- A. Arrests;
- B. Convictions; or
- C. Administrative actions - such as if the airman attended an **educational or rehabilitation program** in lieu of conviction or was given a lesser charge after being arrested (ex: an arrest for DUI that was reduced to reckless driving after court proceedings).

5. Does an airman need to report a DUI from years ago?

Yes. The 8500-8 specifically asks the airman to report if they “**ever in their life** have been diagnosed with, had, or presently have...”

The AME should inquire about *each event, no matter how long ago*, and follow the appropriate disposition table instructions.

6. What should the AME do when an airman has a positive answer to 18.n, 18.o., or 18.v.?

The AME should obtain additional history and follow the correct [disposition table](#). In some cases, additional information will be required before a medical certificate may be issued.

7. Must the airman continue to mark “yes” on all subsequent exams?

Yes. If the airman has reported the event to the FAA, they must continue to report it on *ALL* subsequent 8500-8 applications. This applies even when the FAA has reviewed documentation and sent the airman a letter saying no further monitoring or information is needed for that event.

If the applicant/airman documented the information on previous exams AND there are no new arrest(s), conviction(s), and/or administrative action(s) since the last application, the **Applicant** may enter **PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, NO CHANGE**. The AME should add notes in Block 60, per the [disposition table](#).

The AME should verify there have been no additional drug or alcohol events/offense(s). If none have occurred, that should be noted in Block 60. If any additional events have occurred, the AME should refer to the instructions on the correct disposition table.

8. How does an airman report a Drug and/or Alcohol event to the FAA?

Airmen must report alcohol and drug events under both Part 67 and Part 61. This requires **two separate actions by the airman**:

1. Notify the FAA Medical Division (Part 67).
 2. Notify the FAA Security Division (Part 61).
1. The airman should notify the FAA Medical department regarding any new arrest, convictions or administrative actions as soon as possible after the event.
 - a. If a new exam is performed, the AME should follow the disposition table.
 - b. If the airman is on a Special Issuance for drug or alcohol condition(s) and they have a new event, they should not fly under 61.53 until their case is reviewed.
 2. Under [14 CFR 61.15](#), all pilots must send a [Notification Letter](#) (MS Word) to FAA's Security and Investigations Division, within **60 calendar days** of the effective date of an alcohol and/or drug related **conviction or administrative action**.

Federal Aviation Administration
Security and Investigations Division AMC-700;
P.O. Box 25810
Oklahoma City, OK 73125-0810

For additional information see [Security](#).

9. If the airman reports his/her DUI or any alcohol or drug offense (i.e., motor vehicle violation) to the AME or on an 8500-8/MedXPress, will that take the place of reporting it to legal/security?

No. The airman must take a separate action to report a conviction or administrative action to security.