



THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(Force Management Policy)

March 2

To Vice Admiral Tracey
Colonel Taylor ~~as~~
Lt Colonel Taylor

SUBJECT: ARMY Drug Testing

As a follow-on to your conversation
with LTC Ostroski, Mike prepared the
attached answers to your questions.

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ST BE TESTED AFTER REPOF
NCE?

QUENTLY TEST POSITIVE IN

LES41

One final question Steve
Answers with the policy
memo replying to
Army's request. Address
Navy's DEP question
separately.
ps

Sellman

KAT/18 Feb

INFORMATION PAPER

FOR USE BY:

Vice Admiral P. A. Tracey, DASD (MPP)
Prepared by LTC Michael Ostroski, OASD(FMP)(MPP)/AP, 695-5529
Date Prepared: February 16, 2000

SUBJECT:

Decrease the retesting period for applicants who test positive for Marijuana (THC)

DISCUSSION

The Army has requested that the retest time for applicants who test positive for THC be decreased from 180 days to 45 days. The Army Recruiting Command believes that the current six-month timeframe causes applicants to lose interest in military service and contributes to a significant decline in re-applications.

The number of applicants for the Army testing positive for THC in fiscal year 1999 was 5,672. If this population were allowed to retest within a 45-day period, the initial cost of retesting at Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) would increase by approximately \$12,000.

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Why?
Show the
analysis.*

Since the Army does not routinely test recruits at the recruit training centers (RTC), as do the other Services, any change to the current policy should require that recruits covered by the new policy be retested for THC within 30 days of their entry to active duty. Additionally, the Army should be required to track these recruits, with reports to DMDC, in order to determine that the new policy has not adversely impacted recruit attrition rates.

*Is this current
OSD policy?*

Further modification of the current retesting periods for applicants testing positive for THC should not be changed. Applicants who fail a second test will automatically be disqualified for one year and permanently disqualified after the third. Applicants who test positive at RTCs and have already tested positive at MEPSs should be discharged from the Service and not given the same opportunities as individuals who have tested positive for the first time at the RTCs.

*What issues
do they actually
have a say in?*

Coordination of this issue is ongoing between the Army, MPP and ~~OASD(SOLIC)~~. SOLIC is reviewing the requirements for additional drug testing of this population. The Navy has reviewed and supports the current Army proposal.

The new policy, if approved, must not be viewed as a decrease in quality standards for initial entry but as a tool to assist both recruiters and applicants. Applicants will be taken out of their environments sooner and will therefore be given the opportunity to correct their drug use.

*What is the
COA to
ensure
this*

INFORMATION PAPER

FOR USE BY: Vice Admiral P. A. Tracey, DASD (MPP)
Prepared by: LTC Michael Ostroski, OASD(FMP)(MPP)/AP, 695-5529 *AV*
Date Prepared: February 28, 2000

SUBJECT: Answers to questions on decreasing the retesting period for applicants who test positive for Marijuana (THC)

QUESTION **Why? Show the analysis and what is the COA to insure this?**

ANSWER There are no data available on the attrition rates of recruits who initially test positive for THC and then 45 days later test negative. In order to assure that DoD has made the appropriate decision about decreasing the THC retesting period, we initially believed that requiring such individuals to take an additional drug test during basic training would have been beneficial. It also would show that we have not decreased our standards. However, the Army does not routinely test recruits during basic training as do the other Services. The THC positive rates for the other Services at basic training range from one to three percent.

The Army performs 100-percent drug testing once soldiers report to their advanced individual training site (AIT). Drug testing is completed on a random basis thereafter. The Army does not and will not test recruits at basic training. Since our earlier paper, we have received and reviewed the following information to confirm the total amounts of drug testing in the Army and to validate the less than two percent positive rate as accurate. The average AIT discharge rate for THC use is .53 percent. The premise of allowing the soldier to complete basic training and adapting to a new life style, prior to testing, may have some validity.

COA: If a recruit is discharged from AIT the cost for basic training, pay, etc. is estimated at \$8,000. MEPCOM reports that in FY 1999, 5,700 Army applicants tested positive at the MEPS a 1st time. Next, assume 50 percent of these applicants (2,850) will pass the second test within the 45-days and be accepted for enlistment. If 0.53 percent of these recruits (143) test positive at AIT, the COA will be \$1.1M (143 recruits X \$8,000).

The Army performs annual drug testing on all its soldiers as demonstrated by the following statistics. The end strength of the Active Army is 470,000, the number of drug tests performed in FY 1998 was 1,076,361 with a positive THC rate of 5,121 or 0.48 percent. The Army's overall positive rate for all drugs was less than two percent.

QUESTION

Is this OSD Policy?

ANSWER

Yes. Current DoD policy states that an applicant who tests positive for THC will not be retested for 180 days. If retested positive, they are not eligible for military service for a period of one year from the date of the second test. Each Service has its own policies and regulations regarding drug and alcohol abuse to include recommendations for discharge or appropriate disciplinary action.

Retesting recruits at RTCs is a Service responsibility and their disposition if found positive varies with individual Service policy.

QUESTION

What issues does SOLIC actually have a say in?

ANSWER

OASD (Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict)(SOLIC) - Col Smith, in the Science and Testing Programs Office, is responsible for the drug demand and reduction programs instituted by the Services. SOLIC provides the funding for initial entry level, recruit training center, and all other drug testing programs offered by the Services. They are not involved in DoD policy regarding enlistment eligibility of those individuals found to test positive for illegal drugs. The policy resides in FMP and has since the promulgation of the drug testing policy since 1988. Each Service augments the DoD policy with its own regulations on illegal drug or alcohol use. Normally, SOLIC coordinates on proposed changes to drug testing policy to ensure that adequate funding is available for additional testing.

QUESTION

What is the answer on the DEP question the Navy raised?

ANSWER

Questions have arisen to the language in USC Title 10 and the ability to enroll applicants in the DEP who test positive for THC. A request for legal interpretation has been sent to General Counsel concerning the Navy's request.

QUESTION

Where did 180 days for retesting come from?

QUESTION

In 1988, once drug testing was mandated by Congress, AP created the time frames for retesting applicants who tested positive for drugs on initial entry for service. This was done in conjunction with Health Affairs and the Services.

Based on what?

I.E. Does the 180 day interval represent some scientific based decision?