



**ZERO TOLERANCE...** More than one-fifth of employers conduct tests.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

## Testing times ahead as firms step up checks

More companies are checking on potential employees by carrying out drug and alcohol tests on their hair, according to a supplier of testing products.

Trimega Laboratories has signed a deal with the Nursing & Midwifery Council to provide its testing services in misconduct cases where drug or alcohol dependency is thought to be an issue.

Hair testing is said to be a more accurate method of determining someone's alcohol and drug history. Safety critical sectors such as aviation and rail have traditionally been the main users of such tests. But Trimega managing director Avi Lasarow said employers in other sectors were increasingly calling on his company's services.

"More and more corporates employing high-profile executives are looking to test potential employees," he said. "If an individual has nothing to hide, then what is the problem?"

Research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) last year revealed that more than one-fifth of employers carried out some form of drug or alcohol testing, but only 12% undertook pre-employment screening.

CIPD employee relations adviser Ben Willmott said employers should be mindful of applicant attitudes towards testing. "Where employees feel they are under excessive surveillance they are more likely to have negative attitudes towards employment," he said.