



Film and TV:

What you need to know about testing for steroids and other drugs

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Introduction

Like many workplaces, TV and film production companies must have strict drug and alcohol testing policies in place – to protect the health and safety of production crew, talent, the contestants and the general public (not forgetting your insurance and the shoot itself).

Cansford has worked with many production companies over the years. In that time, we've undertaken testing across the UK on location and prior to shooting and for a wide variety of drugs.

We have also seen the rise in testing of anabolic steroids for reality TV shows, particularly when at the pre-production, hiring and casting stage, but testing can also be used as an effective monitoring tool.

Yet Steroids are not the whole picture, as we also get asked to test for a whole range of such as cannabis, cocaine and others (which is known as the Cansford 6-drug panel).

There are also different methods of collecting a sample for these drugs whether that is urine, hair, nails, PEth blood testing or oral fluid.

It pays to know which method you need to fit your pre or post-production or shooting requirements. The last thing you need is bad publicity, a halt in shooting or an accident on set/location.

We hope you find this information useful when considering drug and alcohol testing. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

“We understand how important it is to have reliable and accurate information when co-ordinating and planning productions - regardless of the size and budget”



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The types of drugs we test for

Cansford has a 6-drug panel available for testing, which includes half a dozen of the most common or popular drugs:

- **Amphetamine**
- **Methamphetamine**
- **Cannabis (THC)**
- **Cocaine**
- **Benzodiazepines**
- **Opiates**



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Types of testing #1

Laboratories like Cansford use different tests depending on the purpose of the test and the detection window required. These include:



PEth blood test

Phosphatidylethanol (PEth) is a very specific alcohol biomarker and provides the highest sensitivity for the detection of current regular alcohol consumption. PEth testing is particularly effective for detecting chronic and heavy drinking. PEth requires only a few drops of blood in the form of 'dry blood spots' that are taken for analysis at a laboratory.



Hair strand test

A hair strand test is among the most accurate laboratory tests for drugs and alcohol – and is almost impossible to cheat. The method can be used to detect virtually all drug and alcohol substances, between seven days and six months after their use. Test results also indicate the month in which a donor ingested a substance and can therefore be used to build a 'picture' of substance use over time.



Breathalyser

Canford also provides this service, to test in the moment alcohol use, which can be used in conjunction with other methods of testing. One method might be to use a breathalyser and a hair sample or with a PEth blood test to determine the window of detection and use over a period of time. The model Cansford uses is Ministry of Justice approved, meaning any test results are legally admissible in court or at a tribunal hearing.

Collecting a hair sample from an artist wouldn't cause continuity issues with hair and make-up, as we take hair strand tests in a way which is hidden on the scalp

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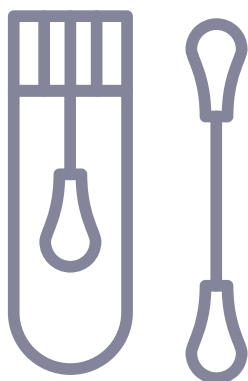
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Types of testing #2



Nails

Nail testing offers a sensitive, versatile alternative to hair testing, when the latter is not possible. Like hair testing, nail testing can be used to detect drug and alcohol use across long detection windows. This is approximately between six and 12 months – according to whether the sample is a fingernail or toenail. We take a small sliver of nail, which wouldn't affect the overall look of the nail or compromise the work of the MUA or costume department.

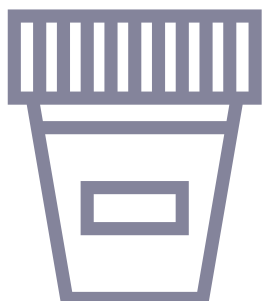


Oral fluid (Saliva)

Oral fluid test results can be offered instantly, using point-of-care tests. Alternatively, samples can be sent to our laboratory and tested with greater accuracy. For this reason, point-of-care saliva testing is typically used to support other test methods.

Oral fluid testing has many advantages over urine testing – which is why we choose to not to offer the latter.

Oral fluid samples can be collected under supervision and observation which isn't the case with workplace urine testing, making it almost impossible to tamper with any saliva samples provided.



Point of care testing

We can undertake point-of-care testing anywhere on set in the UK – whether that is at the pre-production stage, during filming or between shows and series. While urine used to be a commonly used and requested test, there are other tests which can be used that are cleaner, and less invasive or embarrassing for the donor.

Cansford prefers to use an oral fluid 'instant point-of-care' cube, which has a very short window of detection of up to 48 hours. It's confirmation 'in the moment' but can also be used in conjunction with other testing methods to establish a longer timeframe of drug or alcohol use by the donor.

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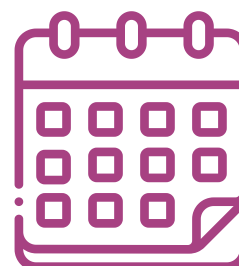
Speed and accreditation

The time it takes to test a sample varies from laboratory to laboratory. It can be either 'in the moment' or take from three working days to 30 days after the sample is received. The cost of a hair test is more complicated and can be affected by factors including:

The **number** of substances being tested for



The **window** of detection being tested for



A longer period with multiple required testing points will be most expensive. Depending on the factors, a hair test can cost between £262 per section, and go to £500.

Of more importance is that the test is accurate, reliably conducted to professional standards and produces results - and speed. At Cansford, we pride ourselves on a back-to-lab-test results ready within three working days. So order on a Monday, get your results by Friday of the same week.

"It's no secret that the misuse of anabolic steroids has rocketed over the past few years. With an increase in TV shows and films requiring peak physical performance of stars and contestants, plus the increasing pressure to 'look good' on screen, testing for steroids is a growing trend"

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Choosing your laboratory

It's essential you choose the right lab with the right credentials and experience testing in your industry – and ask them questions:



Are they a genuine, established, and reputable company?



Do they carry out tests in the UK (not overseas)?



Do they comply to the Society of Hair Testing (SoHT) guidelines?



Do they have an ISO/IEC 17025 standard rating?



Do they have experience with chain of custody?



Do they have dedicated reporting scientists who can help you understand the results? And appear at hearings such as panel or tribunal hearings?

“Top five factors when choosing the right lab: Proficiency, Speed, Cost, Accuracy, Accreditation.”

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Cansford Labs accreditation (and why we are trusted within the industry)

We are **discreet, trustworthy and our work is done with the upmost confidentiality.**

We **adhere strictly to GDPR law and NDAs at all times**, protecting you and the donor (regardless of whether they are crew or talent).

We are the **only laboratory in the UK testing for steroids in hair**, where 99% of the results are returned to you within three days or less.

We pride ourselves on a **3 working day turnaround time with back-to-lab testing.** Order Monday, get results Friday the same week...

We are **UKAS accredited for drugs and alcohol markers** to ISO 17025:2017 standards.

We are **leading members** of the Society of Hair Testing (SoHT), and The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists (TIAFT.)





Cansford Laboratories

Pioneering drug and alcohol testing

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