



SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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FEB. 23, 2024

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WORKPLACE FATIGUE

OBJECTIVE To provide information about the hazards of workplace fatigue.

Fatigue increases the risk of injuries or other accidents, even though someone's fatigue may be the result of work or outside of work factors. Management and individuals need to work together to reduce the risk and impact of fatigue. The only cure for fatigue is sleep, but it is best not to get fatigued in the first place.

WHAT IS FATIGUE?

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, exhausted, weary, or sleepy. Fatigue results from a lack of sleep and can be heightened from prolonged mental activity or long periods of stress or anxiety. Boring or repetitive tasks can also increase feelings of tiredness.

Train supervisors and workers to recognize the immediate signs and symptoms of fatigue, such as:

- Tiredness or sleepiness
- Memory lapses
- Difficulty concentrating
- Slower reaction times





TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

At work:

- Vary work tasks so you stay alert.
- Take regular breaks.
- Tell your supervisor or manager if you are feeling fatigued.

Outside of work:

- Make sleep a priority.
- Improve the quality and quantity of your sleep: have a regular bedtime routine; make sure your bedroom is dark, cool, and comfortable; get treatment for sleep disorders.
- Choose what you eat and drink carefully: eat light nutritious meals (heavy meals make you drowsy); drink plenty of water; minimize your caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Learn the warning signs of fatigue and to recognize them in yourself, so that you can take a break or have a power nap.

Fatigue can result in:

- Increased sick time, absenteeism, and rate of turnover
- Increased medical costs
- Reduced ability to make decisions and communicate clearly
- Reduced attention and reaction time
- Reduced ability to handle stress
- Reduced productivity and performance

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Fatigue is a workplace hazard, and it needs to be managed in the same way as other hazards. Employers can:

- Manage the workplace environment and practices to minimize the factors that could contribute to fatigue.
- Make sure employees understand why they need to manage the risk of fatigue and how to minimize their fatigue level.
- Encourage staff to manage their outside-of-work fatigue risk factors.



This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

