

The theme this month is Fatigue Prevention

BACKGROUND

Fatigue, or a “feeling of weariness, tiredness, or lack of energy,” can affect any worker in any role with serious consequences for worker safety and health. Being overly tired makes it difficult to concentrate, which increases the possibility of errors or accidents. Fatigue can reduce focus, slow reaction time, and impair decision-making skills and since fatigue has many sources, it can be hard to detect on job sites. Learning the risks for fatigue-related events, identifying the sources of fatigue, and using strategies to manage fatigue will help keep you and your coworkers safe and healthy.

An example of a more recent event of fatigue leading to a worker injury is provided in the link below. You will hear how worker fatigue affected the quality of communication during maintenance on a piece of rotating equipment.

<https://toolbox.energyinst.org/c/videos/worker-injured-during-routine-maintenance-on-fin-fan>

Supervisors and Managers must ALWAYS be observant and look for signs of fatigue in their teams. The behaviors and expectations of Leadership significantly impact team culture and can unintentionally discourage workers from reporting when fatigue has begun to set in. Recognition for “going the extra mile” must be tempered so that taking unnecessary risk to achieve a result is not inadvertently encouraged. Before assigning procedures or tasks that contain critical steps, make sure workers are alert, and have the strength, energy, and focus to be able to complete the work with excellence and to be able to recognize and respond to abnormal conditions if needed.



GOOD QUESTIONS

- If your co-worker mentioned “I was up late last night, one of my kids was ill.” What could you do to verify they were not compromised and put you or themselves at risk?
- How comfortable do you feel in reporting your own fatigue?
- How do you think that might be influencing others you work with?
- What would improve the likelihood that you or your co-workers will report signs of fatigue when they occur?

SAFETY BULLETIN – OCTOBER 2022

Message for the Moment: People often joke about how little sleep they get on a regular basis but each of us is responsible for monitoring our health and recognizing when the onset of fatigue occurs, especially when safety-critical tasks are involved. ALWAYS exercise Stop Work Responsibility when you or a co-worker show signs of fatigue. Failure to do so could lead to an injury, or worse, to yourself or your coworkers.

Additional Resource: OSHA Fatigue Prevention link: <https://www.osha.gov/worker-fatigue/prevention>

FATIGUE AT WORK

Are you at risk?



SIGNS OF FATIGUE

- ✓ Sleepiness
- ✓ Loss of appetite
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Digestive problems
- ✓ Increased vulnerability to illness

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, shift work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety.

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. ENSURE the work environment does not promote fatigue. Try to avoid dim lighting, toasty temperatures, excessive noise.
2. INCORPORATE and encourage taking breaks.
3. TRAIN workers on the importance of getting enough rest and how to achieve work-life balance.
4. INTRODUCE shorter shifts, and rotate shifts in the direction of the sun (morning, afternoon, night, in that order).

TIPS FOR WORKERS



1. EAT a healthy diet that promotes longer-lasting energy. Prefer complex carbohydrates. Avoid fatty foods and junk food.
2. Adopt a steady EXERCISE routine that includes cardiovascular, muscle strengthening and flexibility workouts.
3. Stay POSITIVE. Make a conscious effort not to be overwhelmed by negative circumstances.
4. Try to get at least 7.5-8.5 hours of SLEEP per night.
5. Avoid excessive NOISE.

FATIGUE IS REGARDED AS HAVING AN IMPACT ON WORK PERFORMANCE. MOST ACCIDENTS OCCUR WHEN PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO WANT SLEEP – BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 6 AM, AND BETWEEN 1-3 PM.





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