

FATIGUE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help manage workplace risks associated with fatigue and to provide guidelines for rostering employees. It is intended that this policy will provide guidance on how your workplace intends to reduce the risk of fatigue-related injuries and incidents in the workplace.

Scope

This policy covers all employees, managers and contractors of the organisation, especially those whose work involves shift work, driving, travelling, extended hours and on-call arrangements.

Policy Statement

This organisation is committed to providing and maintaining safe systems of work for all its employees, including those whose work involves shift-work, driving, travelling, extended hours or on-call arrangements. We recognise that these working requirements may contribute to fatigue and therefore its risks need to be managed appropriately.

Fatigue is a work health and safety issue. It can affect a person's performance at work and create a risk for public safety.

Fatigue can be caused by both work and non-work related factors. Non-work factors include family responsibilities, social or sporting activities, health issues such as sleep disorders, poor nutrition or study commitments. Work factors include shift work, night shift, working extended hours, fast paced or boring work.

While everyone doesn't respond to fatigue in the same way, fatigue can cause reduced concentration, impaired coordination, compromised judgement and slower reaction times, which can ultimately increase the risk of injuries and workplace incidents.

Definitions and Background

Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion which prevents people working within normal boundaries and can reduce a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively.

Signs/symptoms of fatigue may include: blurred vision, difficulty keeping eyes open, micro-sleeps, head nodding, headaches and/or dizziness, constant yawning, muscle weakness or low energy.

Immediate effects of fatigue may include: slower reaction times, poor concentration, poor coordination, increased error rates, reduced short-term memory, reduced vigilance, impaired decision-making and judgment.

Longer-term effects of fatigue may include: high blood pressure and/or heart disease, depression and/or anxiety, diabetes, and gastro-intestinal disorders.

Impairment / impaired describes a deterioration of an individual's judgment and decrease in their physical and mental ability and/or capability.

A reasonable belief is one which a reasonable person may have taking into account all the facts and circumstances of a particular matter. It is also an objective test in that there must also be reasonable grounds for the belief which has formed.

Procedures

Responsibilities

Fatigue management is a shared responsibility between managers and employees.

All employees are required to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety in the workplace including reducing risks associated with fatigue;
- comply with any reasonable instruction and cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure issued by their manager relating to preventing and managing fatigue;
- participate in education and training to gain an understanding of fatigue;
- ensure they are fit for duty and that they have obtained sufficient rest in order to fulfil their work requirements;
- Provide feedback on existing control effectiveness and suggestions for improved processes
- monitor their own levels of fatigue and take steps to manage them; and
- use a hazard reporting system to report any fatigue management hazards or incidents in their workplace.

Managers will:

- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their team members;
- manage work schedules, rostering arrangements, workloads, travel and other work demands in such a way that all employees have adequate opportunities for rest;
- consult with your employees when making decisions especially with regard to rostering and allocating tasks;
- gain and maintain their knowledge and skills in relation to managing and monitoring health and safety issues under their management or control that affect their workplace, including fatigue;
- understand the hazards and risks associated with fatigue in their workplace;
- ensure that there are processes in place in their workplace to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety connected with fatigue;
- ensure that support and advice on fatigue and rostering is available to all employees

Risk Management

Managers will adopt an ongoing risk management approach, in consultation with their employees, to identify hazards, assess risks and eliminate or minimise risks associated with fatigue. As part of this approach the following fatigue hazards will be considered:

- Work schedule
- Work hours
- Rostering arrangements
- Travel
- Mentally demanding work
- Emotionally demanding work
- Physically demanding work

- How the work is organised
- Cultural norms relating to work hours
- Environmental factors
- Personal factors, family demands or health factors

Systems and processes have been set up for review of incidents, near misses, illnesses and other unplanned absences and staff turnover rates to check if they could be attributed to fatigue, included as per your organisations ongoing risk management approach.

Once a fatigue hazard is identified a risk management approach must be taken, the risk of potential harm needs to be assessed in terms of its likelihood, and its impact on employees, their teams, the whole organisation and the public, identify ways to control the risks and put in place measurement and review processes. There are potentially significant consequences of fatigue in terms of individual health and increased potential for accidents and injuries to occur. Fatigue can make other risks to health and safety worse.

Managers will put in place appropriate risk controls to reduce or eliminate fatigue-related risks, in consultation with employees. These may include the following:

- Ensure workplaces are ergonomically safe, appropriate lighting for workplace environment and ventilated
- Complete annual risk assessments in collaboration with asset owners to ensure safe workplaces
- Ensure all employees take adequate and regular meal and rest breaks
- Task rotation where possible for particularly demanding jobs (mentally, emotionally or physically)
- Review rostering arrangements i.e after a change in work processes, if an incident has occurred
- Regularly survey staff for wellbeing and comfort
- Avoid work arrangements that include excessive work hours
- Introduce scheduled short breaks during longer tasks to change posture and refresh concentration
- Schedule high risk work during mid-morning or early evening times
- Avoid long travel times including travelling in the early morning or late at night
- Allocate staff to sites that are in as close proximity to their home as possible
- Avoid driving for extended periods without taking a break
- Ensure clear work processes and effective planning is in place to deal with workload changes due to absenteeism, staff on leave or seasonal work pressures

If a manager reasonably believes that an employee is displaying signs of fatigue and their performance poses risks, the manager must direct the employee to cease performing work, take a break to have an adequate rest or temporarily reallocate their work to reduce risk. They will also encourage the affected employee to seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program or speak to their relevant employee association.

Managers will encourage employees to report any concerns they may have about work-related fatigue directly to them or to Human Resource Department.

Managers will follow up and review the effectiveness of the implemented risk controls. Recurring problems relating to work performance may lead to disciplinary action if fatigue guidelines are not followed, which may include termination.

Rostering arrangements

The following principles will apply in our work schedule arrangements:

- All working hours and rosters will be designed so that they allow for good sleep opportunity and enough recovery time between work days or shifts for travelling and sleeping (>10 hours but considering allowance for 7-8 hours' sleep plus travel and time to unwind)
- There will be minimum agreed breaks between shifts and work cycles
- No employee will be required to work more than 2 weekends in a row
- Night shift rosters will allow for at least 2 to 3 full nights' sleep after the last night shift
- There will be access to on-call workers for unplanned leave, emergencies or where workload increases
- All vacant positions will be filled as soon as reasonably practicable and maintaining a relief pool of staff in high demand areas where fatigue is a risk
- Wherever possible, safety critical work will be scheduled outside the low body clock periods between 2am and 6am, and between 2pm and 4pm
- Split shifts will be avoided as far as possible
- There will be overlapping consecutive shifts to allow enough time for communication at shift handovers
- Wherever possible individual choice of shift times will be allowed to accommodate family commitments.

Recommended work hours and breaks

The following principles will apply for work hours and breaks arrangements:

- Each employee is expected to take adequate meal breaks and tea breaks.
- As a general rule, an employee's daily work hours will not exceed 10 hours/day and 50 hours/week
- All employees are expected to take their allocated annual leave during each year, without accumulating more than 6 weeks' leave

Related Policy Documents and References

- Integrated Management System Policy
- Integrated Management System Manual
- Cleaners Manual
- General Cleaning Safe Work Method Statement
- Incident management procedure
- Working alone, remotely or in isolation policy
- 36 Belladonia Gum Circuit Emergency Plan

A breach of this policy & procedure may have unintended and harmful consequences. Breaches of this policy & procedure may lead to disciplinary action being taken, including dismissal in serious cases.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. All employees will receive communication about the requirements of this policy and any changes arising from the reviews.