Fact sheet

PRACTICAL WAYS TO MANAGE FATIGUE

As with most safety aspects, managing fatigue starts with the right workplace culture. This is a culture where:

- It is ok to ask for time off when feeling fatigued and not fit for work
- There is situational management of fatigue
- The symptoms of fatigue are monitored, recognised and appropriate action taken
- There is flexibility in management of work around adverse weather, weekends and peak workloads, like harvest
- It is ok to talk about fatigue and its risks to both human and machinery assets
- Rosters for peak periods are developed and executed to meet personnel, equipment, season and market requirements.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS OF FATIGUE

Fatigue is more than feeling drowsy; signs include:

- Tiredness even after sleep
- Reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes
- Short-term memory problems and an inability to concentrate
- Blurred vision or impaired visual perception
- A need for extended sleep during days off work.

Shift, seasonal, night and on-call emergency workers are all at higher risk of fatigue. Shift, seasonal and night workers can be found on farms.

HOW MANY HOURS IS TOO MANY?

The answer is...it depends.

Key components here are risks, tasks involved, time already worked, time of day the task is performed, and non-work factors (such as second jobs, volunteer involvement or new babies). See Safe Work Australia, Managing the Risk of Fatigue information provided at the rear of this fact sheet.

When setting work hours, consider these guidelines from Safe Work Australia:

- If a 12-hour shift is worked then no overtime worked in addition
- Avoid long working hours (more than 50 hours per week)
- Limit consecutive work days to a maximum of 5–7 days
- Allow minimum of 12 hours between shifts and avoid ‘quick return’ of 8 hours if possible. Rest period between shifts should permit enough time for commuting, meals and sleep
- Build regular free weekends into the schedule, advisably at least every 3 weeks
- Shifts involving an early start should be shorter in length to counter the impact of fatigue later in the shift.

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MANAGING FATIGUE

Everyone in the workplace has a work health and safety responsibility and can help to ensure fatigue doesn't create a risk to health and safety at work. Examples of management practices for fatigue risks that could be considered include:

- Work scheduling
- Shift work and rosters
- Review and, if required, adjusting job demands
- Environmental conditions
- Review and consideration non-work related factors
- Workplace fatigue policy.

Undertake a fatigue review:

- Where, which and how many workers (including contractors and subcontractors) are likely to be at risk of becoming fatigued
- How often fatigue is likely to occur
- The degree of harm which may result from fatigue
- Whether existing control measures are effective
- What action should be taken to control the risk of fatigue
- How urgently action to control the risk needs to be taken.

Resource: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workers/health-and-wellbeing/fatigue

PRINCIPLES FOR FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

The principles below can be adopted as you develop a fatigue policy for your business.

1. All employees of the business are to have a minimum of 1 rest day in every 7.
    - Implement a roster structure during peak times to allow breaks to manage fatigue of the whole team.
2. Have regular time off using your annual leave entitlements as they are intended; a break from work.
3. Working Sundays and public holidays will not be required during the non-peak periods. During peak periods, some Sundays and/or public holidays may be worked.
4. A discussion of fatigue management is to occur prior to peak periods, including (but not limited to) seeding and harvest.
    - These meetings are to include discussion points around employee availability/flexibility to help manage requirements of both work and home life.
5. No employee who has clearly communicated that fatigue levels are elevated shall face discrimination and/or pressure to perform operations that are considered high risk. This particularly relates to the operation of machinery of any kind.

For more information
contact us on **1300 746 466**
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APPENDIX C – RISK MANAGEMENT CHART

This chart can be used to consider potential factors that contribute to the risk of fatigue. It outlines some control measures which can be implemented to manage the risk of fatigue in the workplace.

Step 1: Hazard identification
Identify potential hazards and risks at the workplace. Examples of some factors that contribute to fatigue are listed below. Consider these factors in the context of your specific workplace or industry.

Step 2: Risk Assessment
To assist risk assessment, a general level of risk for each hazard is indicated along arrow guides. In assessing risk consider interaction between hazard factors that could influence the level of risk. Also take into account specific workplace/ industry circumstances that may influence it.

Step 3 Risk Control
Where a hazard factor is assessed as medium/ higher risk, consider implementing control measures, such as those outlined in section 2 of this code.

Factors that contribute to Fatigue	General risk indicator for factors that contribute to fatigue			Control measures
Work Scheduling and Planning	Lower risk → Higher risk			**The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:**
Hours				
■ Average weekly hours (other than FIFO)	35-40 hours (working week)		48 hours (working week) / 56 hours (working week)	■ Scheduling safety critical work outside low body clock periods (i.e. between 2am and 6am)
■ Total hours over a three month period (other than FIFO)			624 working hours	■ Structure shifts and work plans so that demands are highest towards the middle of the shift and decrease towards the end
■ Daily work hours		9 working hours	12 working hours	■ Use forward rotation roster systems (day-evening-night)
■ Daily work hours and work-related travel, including commute			10 working hours / 13 working hours	■ Designing working hours and rosters to provide for adequate sleep opportunity (considering time for eating, washing, personal commitments etc)
■ Scheduling of work	Regular, predictable hours		Irregular and unpredictable hours, short notice of schedule, extended overtime, on call across shift cycle	■ Monitor actual time worked against the allocated roster and indentify if excessive hours are being worked
Shiftwork	Lower risk → Higher risk			**Additional control measures should be implemented for special work arrangements and can include:**
■ Length of shift (other than FIFO)			10 hours / 13 hours	■ Considering sleep opportunity and recovery in instances where workers are required to work on call after a normal shift or on days off
■ Time of shift	Day shift		Afternoon shift / Night shift	■ Avoiding quick shift changeovers, such as finishing at 11pm and starting again at 7am
■ Speed and direction of shift	Forward rotation (morning/afternoon/night		Backward rotation (night/evening/ morning) / slower rotation (i.e. weekly/3-4 weekly rotation)	■ Use forward rotation roster systems (day-evening-night)
■ Split shifts and variable shifts			13 hour period	■ Allocate shift and night workers consecutive days off to allow for at least two full nights rest including some weekends

Source: Safe Work Australia, Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work, November 2013

APPENDIX C - RISK MANAGEMENT CHART

Step 1: Hazard identification	Step 2: Risk Assessment			Step 3: Risk Control
Hazards that contribute to fatigue	**General risk indicator for hazards that contribute to fatigue**			**Control measures**
Night Work ■ Shift end (for those working 8 hrs or more between 10pm and 6am) ■ Sequential night shifts	Lower risk → Higher risk			**The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:** ■ Planning into work schedules enough workers and other resources to do the job without placing excessive demands on workers. ■ Keeping sequential night shifts to a minimum ■ Avoiding overtime allocation after afternoon or night shifts
	8 hours	10 hours 6 or more 8 hour shifts 5 or more 10 hour shifts 4 or more 12 hour shifts	After 10pm and before 6am 12 hours	
Breaks ■ Period of non-working following a sequence of night shifts ■ Frequency of breaks during work ■ Recovery time / sleep opportunity between work periods	Lower risk → Higher risk			**The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:** ■ Ensuring that workers have and take adequate and regular breaks so that they can rest, eat and rehydrate ■ Including rest periods in the work schedule and allow time for controlled sleeping and napping if necessary ■ Designing working hours and rosters to allow for good quality sleep and enough recovery time between work days or shifts for travelling, eating, washing and sleeping
	48 hours	Less than 48 hours		
	Adequate and regular breaks	Infrequent or no breaks		
	Adequate time for sleep, travel, meals, etc	Inadequate time for sleep, travel, meals etc		
Job demands ■ Repetition (physical and/or mental) ■ Physical ■ Mental	Lower risk → Higher risk			**The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:** ■ Install fit for purpose plant machinery and equipment for use at the workplace ■ Redesign jobs to limit periods of excessive mental or physical demands ■ Introduce job rotation to limit build up of mental and physical fatigue
	Varying task demands	Highly repetitive work and or high concentration work, with high demands over an extended period of time		
	Minimal physically demanding work	Highly physically demanding work that results in muscle fatigue		

Source: Safe Work Australia, Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work, November 2013

APPENDIX C - RISK MANAGEMENT CHART

Step 1: Hazard identification	Step 2: Risk Assessment		Step 3: Risk Control
Hazards that contribute to fatigue	**General risk indicator for hazard factors**		**Control measures**
Environmental Conditions	Lower risk	Higher risk	**The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:**
■ Exposure to hazardous substances and atmospheric contaminants	hazardous substances, low risk calculated using relevant exposure standard	For hazardous substances, high risk calculated using relevant exposure standard	■ Avoid working during periods of extreme temperature
■ Exposure to noise	- exposure for short duration - low noise levels	– exposure for long duration - high noise levels	■ Install heating devices in cold work environments or provide access to cooled areas
■ Exposure to extreme temperatures	Short period of exposure	Long period of exposure	■ Install fit for purpose machinery (low noise)
■ Exposure to vibration	Short period of exposure	Long period of exposure	■ Install cooling devices in hot work environments like truck cabins and ensure shelters for shade are available in hot work environments
			■ Installation of adjustable, low vibration seats in appropriate machinery and vehicles and provide low vibration hand held equipment
			■ Taking reasonable steps to ensure the workplace and surroundings are well lit, safe and secure

Source: Safe Work Australia, Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work, November 2013

APPENDIX C - RISK MANAGEMENT CHART

Step 1: Hazard identification

Factors that contribute to fatigue

Individual and lifestyle

- Sleep (amount and quality)
- Health and wellbeing
- Social life
- Family responsibilities
- Other work commitments (for example having a second job)

Step 2: Risk Assessment

General risk indicator for factors that contribute to fatigue

Lower risk → Higher risk

Night sleep 8 hours sleep in 24 hours	Day sleep 6 hours sleep in 24 hours Poor diet Recent illness/injury Sleep disorders Influence of alcohol drugs or amount of sleep
Adequate time to fulfil family responsibilities	Inadequate time to fulfil family responsibilities
No other work commitments	Additional work commitments (second job)

Step 3: Risk Control

Control measures

The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified risk factor. Control measures may include:

- Consulting with workers and designing shift rosters that enable workers to meet work and personal commitments
- Develop a fitness for work policy and consider implementing health and fitness programs

Source: Safe Work Australia, Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work, November 2013