

MODEL FATIGUE MANAGEMENT POLICY

THE PROBLEM: Although it might not seem all that menacing, fatigue has been shown to be a major contributor to workplace injuries. Fatigue slows reaction time, impairs judgement and heightens distractibility.

HOW TOOL HELPS SOLVE THE PROBLEM: Although the dangers of workplace fatigue are only beginning to be fully understood, progressive companies have achieved success by implementing a fatigue risk management system. A written policy stating the organization's commitment to manage fatigue risks and laying out the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in fatigue risk management is one of the central elements in such systems. Here's a Model Fatigue Management Policy you can adapt for your own organization.

ABC COMPANY MODEL FATIGUE MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

The purpose of this policy is to establish the requirements for managing fatigue. It is intended that this policy will reduce the risk of fatigue-related injuries and incidents in the workplace.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This policy applies to all staff—especially those whose work involves shift work, extended hours and on-call arrangements.

DEFINITIONS

Employee Assistance: The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential counselling and support to staff and their families on a range of issues, such as alcohol and drug related problems, emotional stress, and relationship difficulties. It should not be used for counselling relating to an injury that is the subject of a workers' compensation claim or as post-incident counselling following a traumatic incident in the workplace. Refer to the EAP policy for further details.

Extended hours: Hours that are an extension of the standard working week, as a result of overtime, on-call arrangements or secondary employment.

Fatigue: A mental or physical exhaustion that prevents a person from functioning normally. In the work environment this can mean that a person is also unable to function safely. It has many causes, but is usually related to inadequate restorative sleep.

Restorative sleep: The process by which the body overcomes fatigue. It involves cycles of deep sleep that allow a person to recuperate and wake up refreshed.

Shift work: Work performed outside the hours between 0600 and 1800 hours, Monday to Friday.

Sleep cycles: Sleep cycles are determined by the body's natural biological rhythms (also known as circadian rhythms or the 'body clock'), which are repeated every 24 hours. As well as regulating sleep cycles, biological rhythms also regulate body temperature, digestion and hormone levels.

POLICY STATEMENT

ABC Company is committed to providing and maintaining safe systems of work for all its workers, including those whose work involves shifts work, extended hours or on-call arrangements.

ABC Company's operations are sometimes undertaken outside ordinary working hours. Activities such as [*insert examples*] often involve shift work, extended hours and on-call arrangements. These working arrangements may contribute to fatigue if not managed appropriately.

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

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 ultimately increase the risk of incidents and injuries.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers and workers of ABC Company have a responsibility to ensure that fatigue does not impact the safety, health and well-being of themselves and others.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- Applying risk management in consultation with staff and in accordance with the fatigue risk management system.
- Ensuring systems of work that minimize the risk of fatigue—for example, reasonable rosters, reasonable overtime practices and adequate recuperation between shifts.
- Providing opportunities for workers to obtain adequate rest from work.
- Monitoring workloads, work patterns and rostering arrangements to ensure workers are not placed at risk from fatigue.
- Consulting with workers when introducing shift work or new rostering systems.
- Providing information, instruction and training about risks to health, safety or welfare of workers involved with shift work, extended hours and on-call arrangements.
- Ensuring workers performing shift work are properly supervised and that tasks are undertaken safely.
- Referring workers with non-work fatigue related issues to the EAP.

Workers are responsible for:

- Participating in risk management processes.
- Using time off from work to recuperate to be fit and able for the next shift.
- Participating in education and training to gain an understanding of fatigue.
- Avoiding behaviors and practices that contribute to fatigue and which could place themselves and others at risk—for example, secondary employment or not using time off work to recuperate.
- Recognizing signs of fatigue that could place the health, safety and well-being of themselves or others at risk and reporting this to their manager or supervisor.

RESULTS OF BREACHES OF POLICY

Breaches of this policy and/or any of its associated procedures may result in disciplinary action being initiated in accordance with ABC Company's Discipline Policy.