

Fatigue Quiz



QUESTION

What are the signs and symptoms of fatigue in workers'

ANSWER

Supervisors and workers must be trained to recognize signs and symptoms of fatigue that include:

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

WHY IS IT RIGHT

PREVENTION

Fatigue ' A Safety Hazard

Fatigue is more than simply sleepiness. It's the body's response to sleep loss and/or prolonged physical or mental exertion, e.g., as a result of working nights or rotating shifts. Over time, this can result in physical and mental damage.

But it's the immediate effects of fatigue that make it such a significant safety risk. Fatigue does things to workers' minds and bodies that make them more likely to get hurt on the job, such as:

- Slowing their reaction time;
- Reducing their level of vigilance;
- Impairing their judgment and ability to make decisions;
- Making them more distractible; and
- Causing them to lose awareness in critical situations.

MANAGING FATIGUE

Progressive companies have been quick to grasp the danger and develop systems to manage fatigue.

Fatigue Risk Management Systems

Such systems are similar to OHS systems and can be incorporated into an organization's existing OHS system. The guide lists the key elements of a Fatigue Risk Management System, Including:

Fatigue risk management which involves collecting and analyzing relevant data to assess fatigue hazards and implementing controls to minimize identified risks. The ACOEM identifies 5 types of controls:

1. Balancing workload and staffing;
2. Shift scheduling;
3. Worker fatigue training and sleep disorder management;
4. Workplace environment design; and
5. Fatigue monitoring and alertness for duty.

Fatigue reporting system that workers can use to report when they feel unfit to work safely as a result of fatigue or report workplace incidents caused by fatigue.

Fatigue incident investigation which should basically parallel standard incident investigation but also focus on the role played by fatigue, why the worker was fatigued and why any fatigue-control mechanisms in place failed.

Fatigue management training and education of both management and workers on the fatigue risk management system, including:

- Hazards of working while fatigued and the benefits of being well rested;
- Impact of chronic fatigue on personal relationships, mental/physical well-being and general happiness;
- Recognition that while fatigue can't be eliminated, it can be managed;
- The key role quantity and quality of sleep play in managing fatigue;
- Basics of sleep physiology and circadian rhythms;
- Sleep hygiene, i.e., how to get adequate sleep;
- The potential results of sleep disorders and how to manage them;
- Importance of diet, exercise, stress management and management of other health conditions;
- How to recognize fatigue in themselves or co-workers; and
- Alertness strategies to use at work, e.g., caffeine, rest or exercise breaks.

Sleep disorder management programs that screen workers for sleep disorders and help them get appropriate treatment.

System auditing on a regular basis to ensure that it's effective, identify weaknesses and implement corrections or improvements.

WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG

EMPLOYER'S ROLE IN FATIGUE REDUCTION

Optimize Schedules

Employees with rotating shift schedules or frequent night shift schedules face high risks for fatigue, but employer actions can help avoid this risk. Employers should:

- Avoid assigning permanent night-shift schedules if possible
- Assign regular, predictable schedules
- Avoid long shift lengths (no longer than 12 hours, 8-10 hours is better)
- Provide adequate time to recover between shifts
- Give employees a voice in their schedules
- Rotate shifts forward when regularly rotating shifts
- Provide frequent breaks within shifts
- Allow Napping Where Feasible

Educate Employees About the Importance of Sleep

The more your employees know about the importance of getting the recommended amount of sleep, the more they can do to make sure they avoid the risks of fatigue. On top of making changes to schedules, employers can:

- Promote in-person and online programs focused on sleep
- Offer sleep disorder screening programs
- Make sleep a part of corporate wellness programs

Adopt a Culture That Promotes Sleep Health

Train your managers and supervisors to recognize the signs of fatigued workers, including:

- excessive yawning;
- irritability;
- bloodshot eyes;
- poor performance;
- lack of focus

If you have identified any fatigued workers in your workplace, discuss the issue of fatigue with them as soon as practicable. You may also choose to discuss the issue with other workers who could be at risk of fatigue.

Direct a worker to take leave

Following discussion with a fatigued worker, you may:

- direct a worker to take paid personal or annual leave if they have any paid leave entitlements;
- allow a worker to take unpaid leave if they wish to do so; or
- choose to grant a worker paid leave if they have exhausted all of their leave entitlements.

Better Recommendations

It's also recommended that you include a clause in your workers' employment contracts that states that you reserve the right to send a worker home from work if you believe that the worker is not fit to perform their duties.

Employee Buy ' In

As employers adopt programs and policies to reduce employee fatigue, their workers must feel supported in taking advantage of these sleep programs. Employers should:

- Discourage employees from sacrificing sleep for work-related activities
- Provide accommodations if early or late hours are required
- Provide safe transportation and/or nap facilities to help employees stay alert while driving to or from work
- Adopt policies that discourage work-related activities (like email) during off hours

EMPLOYEE'S ROLE IN FATIGUE REDUCTION

Sleep

One of the most important ways to protect against fatigue is to get enough rest. For most people that means seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

Tips for getting a good night's sleep:

1. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
2. Don't eat too close to bedtime, as doing so can cause heartburn and just generally make it hard to fall asleep. Do eat a balanced diet of fruits, veggies, healthy fats, proteins and whole grains.
3. Turn off your cell phone or tablet at least one hour before you go to sleep and don't watch TV in bed.
4. Exercise regularly, but not too close to bed time. Exercising an hour or so before bed can make it hard to fall asleep.
5. Avoid caffeine, tobacco and alcohol before bed as well. Stay away from foods and drinks that contain caffeine for at least five hours before bedtime.
6. Keep your room dark and cool. Most of us sleep better in a cooler room.
7. If you can't sleep, get up and go into another room and read or perform some other quiet activity that doesn't involve staring at a screen until you feel sleepy.

At work, remember these fatigue-triggering factors and try to avoid them:

1. Dim lighting.
2. High temperatures, high noise, and high comfort, such as sitting for long periods in a very comfortable chair.
3. Repetitive, long, boring and monotonous tasks.

Tips for staying alert:

1. If you can, take breaks or break up tasks and keep the lights bright.
2. On longer breaks or lunch time go for a run, bicycle ride or brisk walk in every kind of weather.
3. Perform the most boring tasks at the start of your shift if permitted.
4. Eat light, healthy snacks throughout your shift instead of heavy, fatty snacks.
5. If you're driving, be sure to take breaks at least every few hours and change drivers if you can.