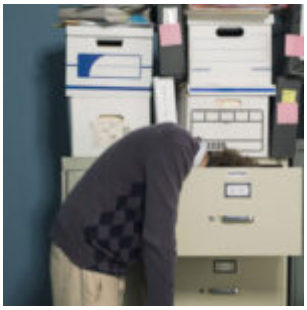
Second Study Confirms that Night & Shift Workers Most Likely to Get Injured



We'd previously written about a study by researchers at the University of British Columbia who found that Canadians who work night and rotating shifts are almost twice as likely to be injured on the job than those working regular day shifts.

A recent study by researchers from the Institute for Work & Health (IWH) confirmed these findings.

The study, which was published in the January 2013 issue of *Occupational & Environmental Medicine*,found that about 12% of workplace injuries experienced by women and 6% of work injuries suffered by men were attributed to the higher risk of injury during evening, night and early morning hours.

In addition, the elevated risk of injury during non-daytime work hours was consistently observed across manual, mixed and non-manual occupational groups.

Thus, the study confirms that there's an elevated risk of workplace injury associated with evening or night work schedules. This elevated risk comes from:

- Worker fatigue
- Typically lower levels of supervision and co-worker support during non-daytime work schedules.

Why are these findings important for safety professionals' Because more than 25% of full-time workers in Canada work some form of shift schedule, working in the evening, night or early morning hours. So a substantial segment of many workforces is especially vulnerable to getting injured on the job.

So what are safety professionals to do' Consider adding supervisors to night and shift schedules. Addressing worker fatigue is another way to reduce the risk of injury for night and shift workers. You can do that through a fatigue risk management system that includes a fatigue management policy.

It's also a good idea to encourage workers to report fatigue on the job (here's a model reporting form you can adapt and use). Such reports will help you identify factors contributing to worker fatigue so you can take appropriate steps to address them.