

Sleep Well, Work Well

# A Guide to Fatigue Management at Work

Staying awake for **24 hours** straight affects the human body almost exactly like a blood alcohol level of **0,05 g per 100 ml**, which exceeds South Africa's legal limit for drivers<sup>[1]</sup>.

## Impacts of Fatigue

### DECREASED

- Decision-making ability
- Ability to do complex planning
- Communication skills
- Productivity/performance
- Attention and vigilance
- Ability to handle job stress
- Reaction time
- Memory/ability to recall details

### INCREASED

- Tendency for risk-taking
- Forgetfulness
- Errors in judgment
- Sick time & absenteeism
- Medical costs
- Accident rates
- Fatalities

Fatigue: feeling very **tired, weary, irritable**, resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, shift work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety.



One shift worker in **five** dozes off during a shift

**Extended working hours, shift work, physically demanding work, environmental stressors, and commuting fatigue** are associated with an increased risk for occupational injuries due to **worker fatigue, less supervision during night shift, muscle fatigue, increased strain** on workers bodies and reduced time for rest and recovery<sup>[2]</sup>.

## Fatigue is increased by...



Dark working areas



Poor ventilation



High temperatures



High noise



Long laborious repetitive tasks



Insufficient sleep



Mental and emotional stress



Negative safety culture and workload

Fatigue can impact work performance. Highest number of fatalities is recorded from **October to December** yearly<sup>[3]</sup>. Most accidents occur between **8 am – 2 pm**<sup>[3]</sup>

### References

- [1] Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Health Promotion/Wellness/Psychosocial [www.ccohs.ca/osh/works/psyc/psyc\\_basics/fatigue.pdf](http://www.ccohs.ca/osh/works/psyc/psyc_basics/fatigue.pdf)
- [2] Mine Health and Safety Act. Guideline for a mandatory code of practice for risk-based fatigue management of mines, 2014. [www.gov.za/documents/notices/mine-health-and-safety-act-guideline-mandatory-code-practice-risk-based-fatigue](http://www.gov.za/documents/notices/mine-health-and-safety-act-guideline-mandatory-code-practice-risk-based-fatigue)
- [3] Department of Mineral Resources and Energy Safety Statistics, 2023

## SIGNS of FATIGUE



## Tips for workers

**Prioritise sleep** aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each day. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, even on days off.  
**Manage stress** practice relaxation techniques. Talk to colleagues or supervisors about work-related stress to prevent burnout.  
**Report fatigue** don't push through exhaustion-this can lead to dangerous mistakes.  
**Exercise regularly** engage in physical activity outside of work. Simple exercise like walking or stretching can help reduce muscle fatigue.

## Advice for employers

**Promote a fatigue-friendly culture** encourage workers to report fatigue. Incorporate fatigue risk management in health and safety programs  
**Monitor workload**  
**Incorporate** and encourage frequent breaks  
**Include fatigue assessments** as part of Health and safety check-ups for employees



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