

Fatigue is mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces your ability to perform your work safely and effectively. Fatigue in the workplace doesn't only impact on workers' mental and physical health, it can also impact on the health and safety of those around them. Fatigue can significantly affect an individual's capacity to function. Its side-effects include decreased performance and productivity, and increased potential for errors of judgement and injuries to occur.

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy. This is often because of:

- Too little or inadequate sleep,
- Prolonged mental or physical work without time to rest and recover.
- Extended periods of stress or anxiety
- Boring or repetitive tasks which can intensify feelings of fatigue.

Most of the time fatigue can be traced to one or more of your habits or routines, particularly lack of exercise. It's also commonly related to depression.

#### Signs of fatigue include:

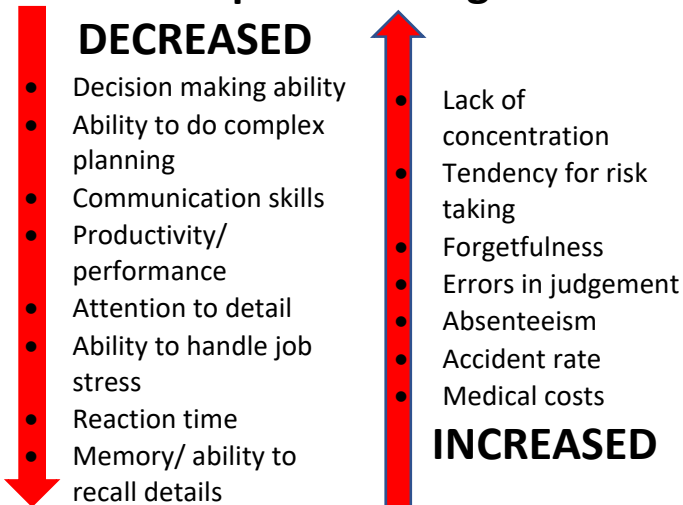
- tiredness even after sleep
- reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes
- short term memory problems and an inability to concentrate
- blurred vision or impaired visual perception
- a need for extended sleep during days off work.
- feeling drowsy
- headaches
- dizziness
- difficulty concentrating

#### The following signs or symptoms may indicate a worker is fatigued:

- excessive yawning or falling asleep at work
- short term memory problems and an inability to concentrate
- noticeably reduced capacity to engage in effective interpersonal communication
- impaired decision-making and judgment
- reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes
- other changes in behaviour, for example repeatedly arriving late for work
- increased rates of unplanned absence.

If you are experiencing fatigue it is important to identify the factors that are contributing to the fatigue, discuss the issue with your employer, make changes as required (including sleeping patterns, workload, roster and lifestyle behaviours), and seek professional help if necessary.

## Impacts of fatigue



### Safety Tips – For Workers

- Try to get at least 7.5-8.5 hours of sleep per night
- Eat a healthy diet that promotes longer lasting energy
- Adopt a regular exercise routine
- Stay positive. Make a conscious effort not to be overwhelmed by negative circumstances
- Assess your own fitness for work before starting.
- Avoid driving or operating machinery if you are tired
- Monitor your level of alertness and concentration
- Talk to your supervisor if you think you're at risk of fatigue

### Safety Tips – For Employers

- Ensure the work environment does not promote fatigue
- Introduce shorter shifts and rotate particularly in hot conditions
- Vary job tasks to eliminate repetitive or long periods of boring, monotonous work
- Incorporate and encourage taking breaks
- Train workers on the importance of getting enough rest



# TOOLBOX TALK

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