

HSR ASSIST

MANAGING THE RISK OF FATIGUE AT WORK

As a Health and Safety Representative (HSR), you are elected to represent your work group in health and safety matters. It is not your duty to fix work health and safety (WHS) issues in the workplace, nor are you expected to be a WHS expert, however understanding the risks your work group face will better enable you to effectively represent them.

Further information on your role as a HSR can be found in SafeWork SA's [Health and Safety Representative Handbook](#).

This factsheet does not contain every circumstance you may encounter but is designed to give you some ideas about what you can do, and where to find further information.

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is a state of physical, mental or emotional impairment, which can develop over the short or long term, can prevent people from functioning safely and can have health effects.

Causes of fatigue in the workplace

Fatigue can be caused by a range of hazards broadly grouped as:

- **Work hours and shift design** including working long hours, working during some or all of the natural time to sleep, not allowing sufficient opportunity for sleep or rest, and rotating shifts
- **Tasks, equipment or environments** including high concentration work, new tasks or technology the worker is learning, physically or emotionally demanding work, prolonged exposure to loud noise, extreme temperatures, and vibration, and worker accommodation that does not allow for sleep and recovery
- **Individual** workers level of fatigue tolerance and vulnerability will differ, influenced by factors such as age, general health status, sleep disorders and natural sleep-wake preferences

What can I do?

As a HSR, you could:

- consult with workers to identify fatigue hazards and their prevalence in the workplace
- discuss findings with management so they can address the issues

Whilst work related fatigue issues may take some time to resolve there are ways that workers may manage fatigue risks at work. Encourage workers to:

- take scheduled breaks
- maintain hydration and healthy nutrition
- stretch or do light exercise
- adopt healthy sleep habits
- discuss with management about work adjustments for personal commitments
- ask for additional support and supervision
- raise concerns related to their work which contribute to fatigue
- if there is immediate or imminent risks, a trained HSR can direct unsafe work to cease
- trained HSRs may issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) if appropriate
- undertake issue resolution process to resolve WHS issues identified
- contact SafeWork SA for further guidance

Additional resources



[SafeWork SA](#)



[Safe Work Australia](#)

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FATIGUE HAZARDS CHECKLIST

Is your workplace safe? Use the checklist below as a quick assessment.

If you say yes to any of the questions below, it is recommended that a risk assessment be undertaken to identify and mitigate any risks to workers.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of considerations and should be used as a starting point when assessing risks in the workplace.



Mental and physical work demands

Does anyone carry out work for long periods which is physically demanding? (e.g. bricklaying, process work, moving heavy loads)	Yes	No
Does anyone carry out work for long periods which is mentally and emotionally demanding? (e.g. work requiring continuous concentration, high pressure, tight deadlines, emergency call outs and traumatic situations)	Yes	No
Do workers regularly work without the necessary tools to perform their work?	Yes	No



Work time and scheduling

Does anyone consistently work or travel overnight?	Yes	No
Does rostering or work requirements prevent workers having at least one full day off per week?	Yes	No
Does rostering or work requirements make it difficult for workers to consistently have at least two consecutive nights sleep per week?	Yes	No
Do shifts include infrequent or no opportunity for breaks?	Yes	No
Does the roster ever differ from the hours worked?	Yes	No
Do rostered shifts change with less than 24 hours notice?	Yes	No
Does anyone have to travel more than one hour to get to their job?	Yes	No
Does anyone work more than 10 hours regularly or double shifts (including overtime)?	Yes	No
Does anyone have less than 12 hours break between each shift? (for example, split shifts, quick shift changeovers)	Yes	No
Is work performed at low body clock times (between midnight and 6 am)?	Yes	No



Environmental Conditions

Is work carried out in harsh or uncomfortable conditions? (e.g. hot/humid/cold temperatures or poor air quality)	Yes	No
Does anyone work with plant or machinery that vibrates?	Yes	No
Is anyone working with hazardous chemicals?	Yes	No
Is anyone consistently exposed to loud noise?	Yes	No
Are healthy food options, or facilities to store and heat food, restricted?	Yes	No