

Fatigue Prevention Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, or volunteers working with or for EPS.

Policy

It is the policy of EPS that Employees have a right to a safe and healthy workplace environment and to perform their work without health risks from fatigue.

EPS will meet their obligations under OHS legislation by, so far as is reasonably practicable, providing and maintaining a working environment that is free from fatigue through the use of this policy.

Definition

WorkSafe Victoria defines fatigue as:

'an acute and/or ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental or physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries'

Fatigue can occur because of prolonged mental or physical activity, sleep loss and/or disruption of the internal body clock.

Fatigue can be caused by factors which may be work related, non-work related or a combination of both and can accumulate over time.

How can you tell if someone is fatigued?

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.

A fatigued worker may also experience symptoms not obvious to others including:

- feeling drowsy
- headaches
- dizziness
- difficulty concentrating
- blurred vision or impaired visual perception
- a need for extended sleep during days off work.

What are the effects of fatigue?

Fatigue Prevention Policy

Short term effects of fatigue include a reduced ability to:

- concentrate and avoid distractions
- think laterally and analytically
- make decisions
- remember and recall events and their sequences
- maintain vigilance
- control emotions
- appreciate complex situations
- recognise risks
- coordinate hand-eye movements, and
- communicate effectively.

Fatigue can also:

- increase error rates
- slow reaction times
- increase the likelihood of accidents and injuries, and
- cause microsleeps.

Long-term effects on health that are associated with shiftwork and chronic sleep loss may include:

- heart disease
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- gastrointestinal disorders
- depression, and
- anxiety.

What factors can cause fatigue?

Fatigue can be caused by both Work related factors and Personal related factors which may be interrelated.

Work related factors can include:

- Roster patterns
- Length of shifts
- Workload Employing levels, and skills mix
- Work scheduling and planning
- Length of time worked
- Rest breaks

Fatigue Prevention Policy

- Timing of shifts
- Recovery time between shifts
- Long periods of time awake
- Mentally or physically demanding work
- Environmental conditions
- Work-related travel
- Lack of management and employee awareness of assessment and control of fatigue On-call requirements.

Personal related factors can include:

- Poor quality of sleep
- Sleep loss
- Social life
- Family needs
- Other employment
- Travel time.

How do you minimise risks caused by fatigue?

EPS supports a risk management approach to fatigue which involves identifying if fatigue is a hazard caused by:

- Mental and physical demands of work, such as concentration for extended periods of time, excessive workload, inappropriate skills mix
- Work scheduling and planning, such as inadequate time to recover from work
- Working time, such as working at a time when workers are biologically programmed to sleep
- Environmental conditions, such as working in uncomfortable environmental conditions
- Interaction with other hazards, such as the cumulative effects of muscle fatigue, strains and sprains
- Work-related travel
- Factors outside of work, such as caring responsibilities; and
- Workplace bullying.

EPS will reduce the risks associated with fatigue by completing a Fatigue Hazards Identification Checklist and then use Fatigue Risk Assessment Chart to review on a regular basis as per EPS WH&S Management Plan.

Consultation

In addition to completing the Fatigue Hazards Identification Checklist and reviewing the Fatigue Risk Assessment Chart, EPS recognises that a large part of fatigue prevention involves consultation between the General & Operations Managers and employees through the HR Manager acting as a liaison for all Employees.

Consultation should occur on an ongoing basis and must occur:

Fatigue Prevention Policy

- when the organisation identifies fatigue is a hazard in the workplace
- when the organisation checks how fatigue is currently managed
- when changes are proposed to work schedules and working procedures
- prior to new work schedules and working procedures being introduced
- each step of the risk management approach
- when there are indications of fatigue affecting the health and safety of workers; and
- after an incident (or near miss) occurs.

Employees are encouraged to assist in the prevention of fatigue through:

- a) Reporting fatigue issues to the HR Manager or other relevant line manager, including but not limited to where a colleague is showing signs of fatigue; and
- b) Ongoing consultation with EPS through its dedicated Human Resources team and HR Manager.

Ongoing Education

EPS will provide ongoing training to all Employee on fatigue prevention including this policy.

Additional Information

Additional information in relation to Fatigue Prevention in the Workplace can be found in WorkSafe Victoria's 'Your Health and Safety Guide to Fatigue Prevention in the Workplace' available [here](#).