

MCLB ALBANY SAFETYGRAM

Worker Fatigue

Fatigue at work, often called workplace fatigue, is a state of exhaustion caused by various factors such as prolonged mental or physical exertion, insufficient rest, high-stress levels, or long working hours. It can manifest physically, mentally, or a combination of both, leading to decreased performance and productivity.

Physical Indicators

1. **Chronic Tiredness or Sleepiness:** An individual feeling constantly tired or sleepy during work hours, despite getting adequate sleep
2. **Decreased Energy Levels:** A noticeable decline in energy, resulting in slower movement or lethargy
3. **Frequent Yawning or Sighing:** These could be the body's attempts to take in more oxygen due to feeling tired
4. **Headaches:** Regular headaches, especially in the afternoon
5. **Dizziness:** Feeling lightheaded or unsteady

Mental and Emotional indicators

1. **Decreased Concentration:** Difficulty focusing on tasks at hand or being easily distracted
2. **Impaired Decision-Making Abilities:** Making errors in judgement, taking longer to make decisions, or avoiding decision-making
3. **Memory Lapses:** Forgetting important information, tasks, or meetings
4. **Decreased Alertness or Slower Reaction Times:** This could lead to an increased risk of incidents or mistakes at work
5. **Mood Changes:** Increased irritability, impatience, or lower tolerance levels
6. **Reduced Motivation or Commitment:** A lack of interest in work or a drop in performance levels.

Controlling Risks

1. **Work Scheduling:** Plan work schedules strategically to avoid safety-critical tasks during low body clock periods. These are periods when the human body naturally experiences decreased alertness and performance.
2. **Modifying Shift Work and Rosters:** Restrict the number of consecutive night shifts to prevent excessive tiredness.
3. **Managing Job Demands:** Structure the shifts such that the work demands peak mid-shift and decrease towards the end. This approach aligns with the natural energy levels of workers, reducing the risk of fatigue towards the end of the shift.
4. **Changing Environmental Conditions:** Eliminate working in physically strenuous conditions, such as extreme heat.
5. **Consulting Workers:** Engage with workers to manage non-work-related causes of fatigue. This could involve discussions about lifestyle factors like sleep habits and physical health.

For more information visit:

<https://safetydocs.safetyculture.com/blog/effective-strategies-for-fatigue-management-in-the-workplace/>



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