

## WHS08 Fatigue Management Procedure

The Organisation is committed to its duty under the relevant health and safety legislation (the “Legislation”) to prevent and/or minimise fatigue in the workplace, as far as reasonably practicable. This will be achieved through adequate consultation and risk management.

### What is fatigue?

Fatigue is an acute, ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental or physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries. It is more than feeling tired and drowsy, it is a physical condition that can occur when a person’s physical or mental limits are reached. Fatigue may include feeling sleepy, physically or mentally tired, weary or drowsy, feeling exhausted or lacking energy. Fatigue prevents a person from being able to function normally. It decreases alertness and affects a person’s ability to think clearly, therefore increasing the potential for accidents or injury. Fatigue may be a serious risk to the health and safety of workers and others.

### Who is responsible for managing fatigue?

Fatigue management is a shared responsibility between the Organisation, its workers and other persons conducting a business or undertaking (“PCBU’s”) affecting or connected with the Organisations’ workplaces as it involves factors that occur both in and outside of the workplace. Workers are reminded that they are required under the Legislation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety as well as that of others in the workplace.

### What factors may lead to fatigue?

There are a number of different factors which may contribute to fatigue, lack of sleep being the most common. These factors may arise from the workplace, from a person’s lifestyle, or a combination of both.

#### Workplace and environmental factors

Some key factors related to the workplace which may contribute to fatigue include, but are not limited to:

- Workloads.  
*This includes timeframes, deadlines and work completed outside normal hours.*
- Previous hours and days worked.
- Time of day or night worked.
- Inadequate work breaks.
- Lengthy periods of time without sleep.
- Type of work being performed: physically or mentally demanding; repetitive or monotonous in nature.
- Workplace conditions (eg light, noise, climate, workstation design).
- A company’s culture (eg a culture of working long hours; lack of flexible work practices; incentive schemes and lack of training or information).

The Organisation will consider the above factors in its management of fatigue.

#### Lifestyle factors

Some lifestyle factors which may contribute to fatigue are:

- social life
- family responsibilities
- inadequate sleep due to sleep disorders
- general health (including diet, exercise, illness)

Employees are required, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that their lifestyle does not increase the risk of fatigue at the workplace.

### **What are the indicators of fatigue?**

A person may exhibit various signs which indicate that they may be fatigued. It is important to identify these signs. Some examples may be:

- A lack of alertness.
- Lack of concentration, daydreaming.
- Low motivation.
- Slowed reflexes and responses.
- Poor judgement or poor memory.
- Making more mistakes than usual.
- Drowsiness, or falling asleep, at work (including micro sleeps).
- Finding it difficult to keep the eyes open.
- Needing more sleep than usual during days off work.
- Not feeling refreshed after sleep.
- Excessive head nodding or yawning.
- Blurred vision.
- Mood changes, increased irritability or other changes to the person's mental health.
- Changes to the person's general health or fitness.

See Appendix A for Fatigue Management Work Start Guide.

### **Managing fatigue in the workplace**

To effectively manage fatigue the Organisation will adopt the following strategies:-

#### **1. Identify contributing factors of fatigue**

The Organisation will identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards that could contribute to fatigue. When undertaking a risk identification process in the workplace, the Organisation may need to consider the following factors when applying the Risk Management Procedure:

- Working time.
- Breaks during working time.
- Leave management.
- Absenteeism.
- Emergencies and unexpected events.

The identification process may involve:

- Inspecting timesheets.
- Examining records to determine if excessive hours have been worked.
- Examining the times at which work has been performed.
- Observing work practices and systems of work. Consultation with workers and health and safety representatives.
- Internal reviews.
- Analysis of incident reports.
- Workplace surveys
- Obtaining information on fatigue from materials and data published by industry associations, regulators, unions and other sources.

The Legislation requires that as a PCBU, the Organisation must consult with its employees or others carrying out work who are or likely to be affected by the fatigue factor identified as a risk, as far as reasonably practicable. If there are health and safety representatives then they must be involved in the consultation.

Consultation must occur in the following instances:

- When fatigue is identified as a hazard in the workplace.
- When the Organisation is reviewing its management procedures for fatigue.

- When the Organisation introduces new, or alters existing hours of work, work schedules and working procedures.
- Where there are indications that fatigue is affecting the health and safety of workers.
- If an incident, or near miss, occurs.

## 2. Assess the contributing factors identified

As part of the risk management process, the Organisation will assess the likelihood of a risk of injury from the fatigue factors it has identified. The Organisation will consider which workers are at risk, where they are located and how likely they are to be affected and the seriousness of the potential harm, if it should occur.

The assessment process may involve consulting with industry associations concerned with similar workplaces; consulting with at risk workers and health and safety representatives regarding workloads and schedules; comparing planned working hours to those actually worked and reviewing workplace incident reports.

The aim of any risk assessment should be to reveal the likelihood of the identified risk occurring and to identify the affected workers. Applying this to a review of incident reports, the following questions should be asked:

- What is the likelihood that fatigue is contributing to the incidents?
- What time of day do the incidents occur?
- How long had the workers been working when the incident occurred?

## 3. Decide, agree and implement appropriate risk control measures

The Organisation will, as far as reasonably practicable, eliminate the factors that contribute to fatigue. If this is not reasonably practicable then the Organisation will adopt the risk control measures based on the hierarchy of hazard control WHS05 Risk Management Procedure.

When deciding on control measures to implement, refer to any relevant codes of practice or guidelines.

## 4. Training Program

The Organisation will provide specific training programs on fatigue to both management and employees. The training should include information on:

- The health and safety responsibilities of everyone in the workplace.
- Risk factors for fatigue.
- Symptoms of fatigue.
- Potential health and safety effects of fatigue.
- Effective control measures for fatigue, for example, scheduling shift work.
- Procedures for preventing fatigue, for example, incident reporting procedures.
- Effects of medication, drugs and alcohol.
- Diet and general health issue relating to fatigue.
- Balancing work-life and personal life.

Training will be arranged so that all employees are able to attend.

### **Driving**

Employees should be aware of the effects of fatigue when driving to and from work or as part of their work activities. Precautions whilst driving include:

- Taking regular and adequate rest breaks, for example, taking 10 minute breaks every two hours.
- Stopping when tired.
- Planning the journey, taking into consideration pre-journey work duties, the length of the trip and post-journey commitments.
- Staying overnight if driving time and non-driving duties exceed 12 hours in one day, unless driving duties can be shared.

#### **Relevant Legislation**

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*

## APPENDIX A: Fatigue Management Work Start Guide

The chart below is to be used as a guide only.

6:00am START					
Hours worked per day →	8	9	10	11	12
Days worked per week ↓					
5	Low 66	Low 72	Moderate 78	High 84	High 90
6	Low 73	Moderate 80	High 87	High 94	High 100
7	Moderate 77	High 85	High 92	High 99	High 106
7:00am START					
Hours worked per day →	8	9	10	11	12
Days worked per week ↓					
5	Low 58	Low 64	Low 70	Moderate 76	Moderate 82
6	Low 65	Low 72	Moderate 78	High 85	High 92
7	Low 69	Moderate 76	Moderate 83	High 90	High 97
7:30am START					
Hours worked per day →	8	9	10	11	12
Days worked per week ↓					
5	Low 54	Low 59	Low 64	Low 70	Moderate 76
6	Low 60	Low 66	Low 72	Moderate 78	High 85
7	Low 63	Low 70	Moderate 76	Moderate 83	High 90
8:00am START					
Hours worked per day →	8	9	10	11	12
Days worked per week ↓					
5	Low 48	Low 53	Low 58	Low 63	Low 69
6	Low 53	Low 59	Low 64	Low 70	Moderate 78
7	Low 56	Low 61	Low 68	Moderate 75	Moderate 82
9:00am START					
Hours worked per day →	8	9	10	11	12
Days worked per week ↓					
5	Low 41	Low 45	Low 50	Low 55	Low 65
6	Low 45	Low 50	Low 55	Low 61	Low 69
7	Low 47	Low 52	Low 58	Low 64	Low 72