



SAFETY



CONVERSATION



Topic: Fatigue in the Workplace

WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN

In this safety conversation we will discuss how fatigue in the workplace can affect you and your safety whilst carrying out routine tasks. We will also provide some useful information on how to reduce fatigue so that it doesn't adversely affect you and those around you.

HOW IT WILL HELP YOU IN YOUR JOB

Following this conversation, you will:

- Understand what fatigue is and its causes
- Know what effect fatigue can have on you and your team
- Understand what you can do to reduce fatigue before it becomes an issue

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Fatigue is generally considered to be a decline in mental and/or physical performance that results from prolonged exertion, sleep loss and/or disruption of the internal clock. In this safety conversation, we are going to be focusing on mental fatigue and what affect it can have on you at work.

What causes fatigue?

This is simple: lack of sleep and poor-quality of sleep. Often, it's the reasons behind the lack of or poor-quality sleep that are more difficult to understand and resolve. If you are experiencing changes in personal circumstances or work environment this may result in a lack of or poor-quality sleep. If this continues for some time and you are not getting enough sleep, you will build up "sleep debt" which can only be rectified by a few nights of good sleep. Some of the main causes of fatigue are:

- Working when you would normally be asleep
- Sleeping when you would normally be awake
- Getting less sleep than normal or getting poor sleep
- Having no time to rest and recover from work
- Alcohol (for example, alcohol consumed in the afternoon may be twice as potent in terms of producing sleepiness as the same amount taken in the evening)
- Prescribed or over-the-counter medication may cause sleepiness
- Suffering medical sleep problems

What are the consequences of fatigue in the workplace?

Fatigue has been shown to be a performance factor in the workplace which can increase the likelihood of incidents occurring. If you are experiencing fatigue, there is a good chance it could result in:

- Slower reactions
- Reduced ability to process information
- Impaired ability to make effective judgements
- Memory lapses and lack of attention
- Underestimation of risk
- Reduced coordination and reduced communication

What can you do to reduce fatigue?

The most important thing is to ensure you are getting enough good quality sleep. If you notice some of the signs of fatigue, act quickly and get some rest. The longer you take to act the more "sleep debt" you will incur and the longer it will take you to recover. Healthy sleeping habits are vital in ensure you do not suffer fatigue. The [NHS Website](#) has some detailed advice on sleep but we have provided some quick sleep tips in this document. You can also watch a video on sleep on the [We Are ESS YouTube channel](#).



FATIGUE WARNING SIGNS

- Feeling like you have lost time
- Feeling dazed
- Day dreaming
- Loss of concentration
- Poor coordination
- Easily distracted
- Blurred, dimmed vision
- Making errors during routine tasks
- Changes in mood

QUICK SLEEP TIPS

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule
- Set a bedtime that is early enough for you to get at least 7 hours of sleep
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime
- Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon or evening
- Avoid consuming alcohol before bed

BE MINDFUL

- If you notice the signs of fatigue be sure to act quickly and get some good quality sleep
- Follow the quick sleep tips to ensure a healthy sleep routine

SPEAK OUT

- If you believe that fatigue is affecting, you or your safety at work let your supervisor or manager know

GET INVOLVED

- Encourage your team members to look out for their own wellbeing
- If you see someone making mistakes say something to them, politely



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