

SAFETY ALERT

Fatigue

Recently there has been some incidents which may have been impacted by the worker's fatigue. Fatigue can create a real risk to the health and safety of people at work.

Fatigue reduces alertness, which may lead to errors and an increase in incidents and injuries. As a worker experiences rising fatigue levels, there are corresponding physiological, behavioural and emotional changes that may impact on the ability of a worker to safely undertake work.

Fatigue may increase the risk of incidents because of a lack of alertness and may result in a slower reaction to signals or situations and affect the ability to make good decisions, particularly when:

- operating fixed or mobile plant and driving vehicles;
- undertaking tasks that require a high level of concentration; and
- undertaking night or shift work when a person would not ordinarily be working.

Some of the signs include excessive yawning or falling asleep at work, impaired judgement and slow reflexes.



Safety solutions

For possible solutions to managing workplace fatigue look at:

- designing work rosters so that workers have enough recovery time between shifts;
- avoiding or minimising work during periods of extreme heat or cold;
- rotating jobs to limit a build-up of mental and physical fatigue;
- planning for job demands during expected peaks and troughs in work flow throughout the year;
- ensuring workers take adequate and regular breaks to rest, eat and rehydrate; and
- encouraging workers to report any concerns they may have about work-related fatigue.