

Fatigue Management Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

Template Version 1.0 | December 2024

Important Notice

This template is provided as a general guide only and should be customised to your specific workplace. We recommend having this policy reviewed by a WHS professional or legal advisor before implementation to ensure compliance with your state or territory legislation.

1. Purpose

This policy establishes [Company Name]'s commitment to managing fatigue-related risks and ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all employees. Fatigue can impair performance, increase the risk of incidents, and affect long-term health.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, including full-time, part-time, and casual workers
- Contractors and labour hire workers
- All work activities where fatigue may pose a risk

3. What is Fatigue?

Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively. It can result from:

- Inadequate sleep quantity or quality
- Extended periods of wakefulness
- Long work hours or shifts
- Physically or mentally demanding work
- Disruption to the body's internal clock (circadian rhythm)
- Health conditions or medications
- Personal factors such as family responsibilities

4. Effects of Fatigue

Fatigue can result in:

- Slower reaction times

- Reduced concentration and alertness
- Impaired decision-making and judgment
- Decreased motivation
- Increased errors and mistakes
- Increased risk of workplace incidents
- Long-term health effects

5. Risk Factors

[Company Name] has identified the following work-related fatigue risk factors:

5.1 Work Scheduling

- Shifts longer than 10 hours
- Night shifts or early morning starts
- Rotating shift patterns
- Working more than 50 hours per week
- Insufficient rest breaks
- Less than 10 hours between shifts
- Working more than 5-6 consecutive days
- On-call requirements disrupting sleep

5.2 Work Demands

- Physically demanding work
- Mentally demanding or high-concentration tasks
- Monotonous or repetitive work
- Working in extreme temperatures
- High-risk activities (driving, operating machinery)

5.3 Individual Factors

- Sleep disorders
- Medical conditions
- Medications that cause drowsiness
- Personal circumstances affecting sleep
- Long commutes
- Secondary employment

6. Controls

[Company Name] will implement the following controls:

6.1 Work Scheduling Controls

- Limit shifts to a maximum of 12 hours (including overtime) where practicable
- Provide a minimum 10-hour break between shifts
- Limit consecutive night shifts to a maximum of 4
- Provide at least 2 consecutive rest days per week where practicable
- Schedule demanding tasks during peak alertness periods
- Rotate workers in high-risk roles
- Consider fatigue when planning overtime

6.2 Work Environment Controls

- Provide adequate lighting
- Manage temperature and ventilation
- Provide break areas
- Ensure adequate staffing levels
- Design jobs to vary tasks where possible

6.3 Administrative Controls

- Provide fatigue awareness training
- Monitor working hours
- Develop procedures for reporting fatigue
- Include fatigue in risk assessments
- Review incidents for fatigue as a contributing factor

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Management

- Implement and maintain this policy
- Design work schedules that minimise fatigue risks
- Provide adequate resources for fatigue management
- Monitor compliance with working hour limits
- Investigate fatigue-related incidents
- Provide training on fatigue management

7.2 Supervisors

- Monitor employees for signs of fatigue
- Manage overtime and shift arrangements
- Take action when fatigue risks are identified
- Support employees who report fatigue

- Model good fatigue management practices

7.3 Employees

- Arrive at work fit for duty and adequately rested
- Report to their supervisor if fatigued and unable to work safely
- Use breaks effectively for rest and recovery
- Disclose any factors that may affect fitness for work
- Manage personal responsibilities to obtain adequate sleep
- Report secondary employment that may cause fatigue
- Not engage in high-risk activities when fatigued

8. Signs of Fatigue

Warning signs that an employee may be fatigued include:

- Yawning or drowsiness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Slower reaction times
- Irritability or mood changes
- Increased errors or near misses
- Memory lapses
- Reduced vigilance
- Microsleeps

9. Reporting Fatigue

Employees must report to their supervisor if they:

- Are too fatigued to work safely
- Observe a colleague showing signs of significant fatigue
- Have concerns about scheduling or workload causing fatigue

Reporting fatigue will not result in disciplinary action. The focus will be on finding solutions to manage the risk.

10. Response to Fatigue

When fatigue is identified, the supervisor will assess the situation and may:

- Reassign the employee to lower-risk duties
- Provide additional rest breaks
- Arrange for the employee to cease work and go home safely
- Adjust future rostering

- Refer the employee to medical assessment if appropriate
- Investigate the underlying causes

11. Secondary Employment

Employees must disclose any secondary employment to their manager. [Company Name] may:

- Assess whether secondary employment creates a fatigue risk
- Require adjustments to working hours
- In some cases, prohibit secondary employment that creates unacceptable risks

12. High-Risk Activities

Particular attention to fatigue management is required for:

- Driving company vehicles
- Operating heavy machinery or equipment
- Working at heights
- Working with hazardous substances
- Any safety-critical role

Additional controls may apply for these activities.

13. Driving and Fatigue

Employees must not drive company vehicles or for work purposes while fatigued. When driving:

- Plan trips to allow for adequate rest
- Take regular breaks (at least every 2 hours)
- Share driving on long trips where possible
- Avoid driving during low alertness periods (2am-6am, 2pm-4pm)
- Stop and rest if feeling drowsy
- Report any near misses or fatigue-related incidents

14. Training

Employees will receive training on:

- Understanding fatigue and its effects
- Recognising signs of fatigue in themselves and others
- Strategies for managing fatigue
- Reporting requirements
- This policy and related procedures

15. Monitoring and Review

[Company Name] will:

- Monitor working hours and overtime
- Review incident reports for fatigue-related factors
- Periodically survey employees on fatigue
- Review the effectiveness of fatigue management controls
- Update this policy as required

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant fatigue-related incidents.

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Fatigue Management Policy. I understand my responsibilities and agree to comply with the fatigue management requirements.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____