

# The Fatigue Management Guide

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Everything a Safety Manager needs to know about managing the risks of fatigue in the workplace.

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# Welcome to the Fatigue Management Guide

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Fatigue is a common problem that affects many employees in different industries. In fact, according to the National Safety Council, about 69% of workers are “tired at work”.

We all know the significant impacts fatigue has on your business. Fatigue steals our productivity and motivation. It leads to poorer judgment and decision-making. It makes us accident-prone, compromises our immune system and exposes us to illness. It diminishes our creativity and ability to focus.

In this guide, we will discuss the causes and consequences of workplace fatigue, fatigue management legislation and provide effective management strategies you can implement today!

# Introduction

## Understanding Workplace Fatigue

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To effectively battle workplace fatigue, it's crucial to know your enemy. In this section, we'll venture into the realm of fatigue, uncovering the key culprits behind it and the consequences that can arise if left unchecked.

## Causes of Fatigue

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### **Sleep Deprivation and Poor Sleep Quality:**

Inadequate rest or sleep is a significant cause of fatigue. This can be due to work-related stress, family responsibilities, or lifestyle choices.

### **Long Work Hours and Shift Work:**

When you're burning the candle at both ends or working the graveyard shift, fatigue is bound to creep up on you. Long work hours and shift work can disrupt your natural sleep patterns and circadian rhythm, leaving you feeling exhausted and struggling to concentrate during the day.

### **High-Stress Environments:**

Stress is like kryptonite to your energy levels. When you're under constant pressure, your body produces stress hormones that can leave you feeling worn out and drained. In high-stress environments, fatigue can sneak up on even the most seasoned work warriors.

### **Physical and Mental Exertion:**

Whether you're lifting heavy loads or juggling multiple tasks at once, pushing your body and mind to the limit can sap your energy. Both physical and mental exertion can lead to workplace fatigue, making it challenging to stay alert and focused on the job.

# Consequences of Workplace Fatigue

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## **Decreased Productivity and Performance:**

Fatigue can transform even the most motivated go-getter into a sluggish sloth, leading to decreased productivity and performance. When running on empty, it's tough to concentrate, problem-solve, and keep up with the workload. Fatigued employees may work more slowly, make more errors, and require more supervision. This can lead to delays in production, increased overtime costs, and decreased overall efficiency.

## **Increased Risk of Accidents and Errors:**

When fatigue clouds your judgment, accidents and errors are more likely to happen. Tired workers are at a higher risk of making mistakes, which can lead to costly and potentially dangerous consequences for both themselves and their colleagues.

## **Negative Impact on Physical and Mental Health:**

Constant fatigue can take a toll on your body and mind. It can weaken your immune system, leaving you susceptible to illness, and can exacerbate existing health issues. Furthermore, prolonged fatigue can contribute to mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression.

## **Strained Relationships with Colleagues:**

Let's face it – no one enjoys working with a grumpy, irritable co-worker. Fatigue can put a strain on relationships in the workplace, creating tension and friction among team members. By addressing workplace fatigue, you're not only helping yourself but also fostering a more harmonious and supportive work environment.

## **The Economic Impact:**

Due to the increased number of accidents and injuries, fatigue can have significant direct and indirect costs. Direct costs may include the medical expenses, workers' compensation claims, cost of repairing or replacing damaged property and lost productivity during recovery. Indirect costs may include increased healthcare costs, legal and insurance costs and reputation damage.

# Fatigue Management Legislation

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## Australian Legislation

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In Australia, the WHS regulations recognise the significant risks and consequences of workplace fatigue, thus have legislation in place to ensure the safety and well-being of workers. While specific regulations may vary across states and territories, some common requirements include:

### **Duty of Care:**

Employers have a duty to manage fatigue-related risks and ensure the health and safety of workers by implementing effective fatigue management strategies.

### **Risk Assessment:**

Organisations must conduct thorough risk assessments to identify factors that contribute to fatigue, such as long working hours, shift work, and physically demanding tasks.

### **Fatigue Mitigation Measures:**

Employers are responsible for implementing measures to mitigate fatigue risks, including rest breaks, shift scheduling, and employee education and training.

## United States of America Legislation

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In America, fatigue management regulations typically fall under transportation and occupational safety regulations, such as the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. Key aspects to consider for fatigue management compliance include:

### **Hours of Service:**

Regulations govern the maximum hours of service for workers to prevent fatigue-related accidents. These regulations set limits on consecutive work hours and mandatory rest periods.

### **Fatigue Risk Assessment:**

Employers are required to assess fatigue risks associated with long shifts, night work, and demanding physical tasks. Risk assessments help identify appropriate mitigation strategies.

### **Mitigation Strategies:**

Employers must implement effective fatigue mitigation strategies, including rest breaks, shift scheduling, and education/training programs, to manage and reduce fatigue risks.

# Identifying Fatigue in the Workplace

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To tackle workplace fatigue, it's essential to recognise when it's lurking in the shadows, waiting to strike. In this section, we'll unveil the tell-tale signs and symptoms of fatigue and introduce some handy tools to help you identify and assess fatigue risks in your workplace.

Keep your eyes peeled for these common indicators that fatigue may be affecting you or your colleagues:

- Yawning and rubbing of eyes
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Slowed reaction times and reduced coordination
- Irritability, mood swings, and impatience
- Forgetfulness and difficulty remembering tasks
- Increased errors and accidents
- Frequent headaches or feelings of dizziness



# Fatigue Risk Assessment Tools

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To systematically identify and address fatigue in your workplace, consider implementing these fatigue risk assessment tools:

## Fatigue Audit Tools

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Fatigue audit tools help you examine your workplace policies, procedures, and practices to identify areas where fatigue may be lurking. By conducting a thorough audit, you can pinpoint potential fatigue hotspots and develop targeted strategies to address them.

## Self-Assessment Questionnaires

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Empower employees to gauge their own fatigue levels by providing self-assessment questionnaires. These tools can help individuals reflect on their sleep habits, work schedules, and stress levels, allowing them to identify areas where they may need support or adjustments.

## Observation and Monitoring Techniques

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Keep a close watch on your workplace for signs of fatigue among employees. Encourage supervisors and team members to monitor one another and report any concerns or observations. By staying vigilant and fostering open communication, you can more effectively identify and address fatigue in your workplace.

Remember, the key to managing fatigue is staying one step ahead of it. By learning to recognise the signs and symptoms and utilising assessment tools, you'll be well on your way to creating a more energized and productive work environment.

# Creating a Fatigue Resistant Workplace Culture

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It's time to roll up your sleeves and build a fortress against workplace fatigue. In this section, we'll explore how you can create a fatigue-resistant workplace culture, where open communication, work-life balance, and employee support reign supreme.

## Encouraging Open Communication

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It's important to foster a judgment-free environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their fatigue-related concerns. Make sure to train managers and supervisors to recognise the signs of fatigue and address them proactively. It can also be helpful to hold regular team meetings to discuss fatigue management strategies and gather feedback from employees.

## Promoting a Healthy Work-Life Balance

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Encourage employees to take breaks and recharge throughout the workday, whether it's a walk outside, pulling into a service station after driving for 2 hours, sitting down in the shade to escape the sun for a bit or other fatigue mitigation strategies. It's also important to encourage your workers to have adequate time between shifts or travelling periods, even if it means taking a day to rest before travelling back home.

## Offering Support and Resources for Employees

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### **Mental Health Support and Counseling:**

Provide access to mental health support services, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), to help employees cope with stress, anxiety, and other fatigue-related concerns.

### **Sleep Hygiene and Wellness Programs:**

Offer workshops or seminars on sleep hygiene, stress management, and other wellness topics to equip employees with tools to maintain their energy levels and overall wellbeing.

### **Flexible Work Arrangements:**

Consider implementing flexible work options, such as remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks, to help employees better balance their personal and professional commitments.

By cultivating a fatigue-resistant workplace culture, you're laying the groundwork for a more energized, productive, and resilient workforce. And remember, a little understanding, empathy, and support can go a long way in combating workplace fatigue.

# Implementing Effective Fatigue Management Strategies

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Now that you've built the foundation for a fatigue-resistant workplace culture, it's time to dive into the nuts and bolts of fatigue management. In this section, we'll outline effective strategies to help you keep workplace fatigue at bay and maintain a thriving, energetic workforce.

## Setting Realistic Expectations and Workloads

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Collaborate with employees to set achievable goals and deadlines, taking into account their individual capacities and responsibilities. Make sure to monitor workloads to ensure they remain manageable and adjust as needed to prevent burnout. Encourage employees to voice concerns about their workloads and provide support in finding solutions.

## Implementing Rostering and Scheduling Best Practices

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### **Limiting Excessive Work Hours and Overtime**

Establish policies that limit excessive work hours and overtime to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance and reduce the risk of fatigue.

### **Providing Adequate Rest Breaks and Time Off**

Ensure employees have ample opportunities for rest during their workday and provide sufficient time off between shifts to recover and recharge.

### **Rotating Shifts and Ensuring Sufficient Recovery Time**

Implement fair and balanced shift rotation systems, giving employees enough recovery time between shifts, especially when transitioning from night to day shifts or vice versa.

## Optimising the Work Environment

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### **Adequate Lighting and Temperature Control**

Create a comfortable work environment with proper lighting and temperature control to minimize eye strain, drowsiness, and discomfort.

### **Ergonomic Workstations and Seating**

Provide ergonomic workstations and seating to reduce physical strain and discomfort, helping employees stay focused and energized throughout the day.

### **Creating Spaces for Relaxation and Rejuvenation**

Designate areas within the workplace for employees to unwind and recharge, such as break rooms, quiet spaces, or outdoor areas.

## The SafetyIQ Fatigue Management Solution

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Did you know...

People are 70% more likely to be in a workplace accident when they are fatigued.

30% of serious accidents are directly related to fatigue.

You are 3x more likely to be in a road accident when driving fatigued.

There is clearly a need for an advanced fatigue management solution. One that we provide...

## Our Solution

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Our proactive Fatigue Management Solution uses a game-like quiz to identify when your people are struggling with alertness, a leading indicator of fatigue.

Unlike other Fatigue Solutions, we focus on the individual, before they are in danger. Moreover, with individualized results, the test is accurate, objective, cannot be cheated and adjusts your results as you improve with practice.

It's not only fatigue that affects alertness. Coming down with an illness, receiving distressful news or being under the influence of recreational or prescription drugs can put us off our game and become a safety risk to the workplace. That's why our solution measures all forms of alertness based on NASA's Psychomotor Vigilance Test.

Ultimately, you can encourage people to get a solid 8 hours sleep each night, avoid alcohol and eat healthily, but you can't ensure they do so, especially outside of work hours. The only thing you can do is have the ability to know when your employees are off their game and ensure they don't injure themselves because of it.

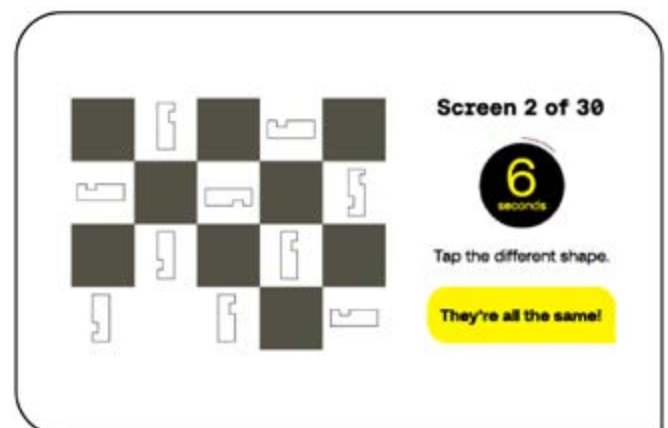
## How it Works:

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Users complete a 60-90 second game-like test at the start of each shift or before undertaking a high-risk activity. The system develops a personal, rolling baseline that learns each person's behaviour patterns, and average performance, and adjusts as they improve with practice.

If a user receives a score outside their baseline parameters, they are prompted to retake the test. If their score doesn't improve, their manager is notified to check-in with them and see if they are safe to work.

Our goal is to provide you with the ability to highlight at-risk workers, start a conversation and care for your employees.





# Case Study

*"The platform is really well aligned with our expectations, and it allows us to have technology behind what our drivers are doing as well as compliance with Department of Transport requirements."*

Gary Anglesey  
Director of Operations

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## Situation



A labourer foreman was on a 2 week-night shift. One night he scored outside normal range (ONR) at 3am. Site safety manager was notified to contact him and found out he was exhausted and extremely fatigued.

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## Outcome



The manager pulled the labourer of the night shift, made sure he had a day to properly rest and changed his schedule to daytime shifts.

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## Situation



A worker scored ONR after taking her daily fatigue test, notifying her manager to initiate a conversation. The manager then found she was dealing with family trouble and the stress was affecting her ability to think straight.

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## Outcome



Her foreman kept an eye on her throughout the shift and gave her tasks that did not put her at risk of injury.

## Case Study



*"We were looking for a competitive advantage when it came to implementing SafetyIQ and what we found was a 70% cost reduction straight-away and achieved higher compliance and safety improvements."*

Marco Waanders

GM of Camp Management

<b>Challenge</b>	ⓘ	After a series of fatigue related incidents, Ventia's Rig & Well Services realised their paper-based system was insufficient and difficult to manage.
<b>Solution</b>	💡	SafetyIQ's Risk Assessment module simplified their fatigue and risk management by highlighting at risk workers and automating the review process.
<b>Results</b>	📈	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ No fatigue related incidents since implementation in 2016</li> <li>→ 70% reduction in costs by switching to SafetyIQ from call centres</li> <li>→ 37 hours a month is saved by eliminating manual approval processes</li> </ul>

## Where Other Fatigue Management Processes Fall Short

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### **Accuracy of Results:**

Many Fatigue Management Solutions or paper-based options provide generic and inaccurate results. People may lie on the paper-based assessment in fear of getting in trouble or taken off of work. Alternatively, many solutions only go off of what the average person is generally capable of, meaning results can be discriminatory.

Our Fatigue Management Solution on the other hand is a cognitive performance test derived from NASA's psychomotor vigilance test. Because of this, the test is able to measure your alertness based on the speed and accuracy of your responses to specific shapes and patterns. It doesn't matter if you naturally perform better or worse on these kinds of tests, as the rolling baseline gives parameters for your normal range of alertness. There is also no way to lie or have a different person undertake your test due to how personal the results are.

### **Time Taken to Complete:**

Many strategies and solutions for fatigue management can be time consuming, taking your team away from their tasks and becoming a burden to complete.

Our Fatigue Assessment is a game-like quiz that only takes 60-90 seconds to complete. Everyone can quickly complete the assessment at the start of their shift as they clock on.

### **Fostering a Good Safety Culture:**

If you do suspect that one of your employees is fatigued that day, what are your next steps? A lot of other solutions may require that the person does not work that day, leading to lost productivity and an apprehension towards following this.

Additionally, in the scenario where you have a younger manager who has noticed a veteran employee seeming not themselves that day, it can be daunting to address the issue with no objective data.

With our solution, the assessment provides objective data that highlights your at risk workers. If a worker receives a score outside their normal range (possibly fatigued), you are prompted to have a conversation with them and show you care for their wellbeing. Understand what might be causing this score (e.g. up all night with a sick child at home, receiving distressful news that morning). Then discussing whether they need to take the day to rest, undertake low risk tasks or do some fatigue mitigation strategies. Ultimately, it's not about catching someone doing the wrong thing, its about being aware of when your workers may be struggling.

## **Analytical Abilities:**

Although other digital solutions may provide some analytical qualities, if you are choosing a paper-based method managing these records can be time-consuming and prone to errors. It becomes challenging to organise, sort, and retrieve information when needed. Analysing data and identifying patterns or trends for improvement becomes a manual and arduous process.

Our solution can provide a full picture of your workplace. You may notice an increase in incidents or increase in higher fatigue scores during certain tasks, shift times or part of the day. From there you can make evidence based decisions to implement fatigue mitigation strategies or make shift changes.

## **Expensive and Unnecessary:**

Whilst a paper-based fatigue management system doesn't have direct costs of technology, the time-consuming manual process is costing you in expensive wages.

Moreover, there are some fatigue management technologies that use cameras in vehicles to monitor eye movement and detect fatigue. Whilst these systems may be beneficial for those operating these vehicles, they are expensive and not relevant to a lot of professions.

Our fatigue solution is proactive and versatile. It notifies people of fatigue levels before they are behind the wheel. Moreover as it tests all forms of fatigue, it is applicable for any job or industry.

## Additional features:

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Our full suite of safety solutions provide a comprehensive approach to safety management and integrate with our Fatigue Management Solution. Whilst all occupations benefit from a Fatigue Management Solution, there are specific industries and tasks where fatigue is a significant risk. We provide additional solutions that not only mitigate the high-risks of that role, but also the risks of fatigue.

### Journey Management

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Research has shown that you are 3x more likely to be in a car accident when driving fatigued. They are also twice as likely to be fatal. With our solution, you can proactively assess your driver's fatigue levels before they get behind the wheel. Then the Journey Management Solution provides centralised visibility of your mobile workers, and an automated emergency escalation process if something goes wrong. The travelling workers also have planned fatigue rest breaks throughout the journey where they are notified to check-in and confirm their safety.

### Lone Worker Management

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This feature is especially critical for lone workers as there is no one nearby to notice if they seem distracted, fatigued or generally not themselves. Similar to our Journey Management Solution, you can proactively assess your lone worker's fatigue levels before they start this high-risk activity, then maintain communication with these workers through check-in and escalation processes. If the lone worker misses a check-in, or activates an SOS, the escalation process is triggered and managers are alerted to resolve the issue.

### EHS Management

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For a comprehensive overview of your entire organisation, we recommend pairing the Fatigue Management Solution with our EHS Management Suite. This includes Audits & Inspections, Incident Reporting, Safety Observations, Training Tracking and Configurable Dashboards and Analytics. For example, say you notice in your Dashboard that a high number of incidents have happened when people continue to use heavy machinery after 3pm. You could then require employees to do a Fatigue Assessment at 3pm each day, specifically those who are operating or working in close proximity to this machine.

## Conclusion

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In today's fast-paced and demanding work environments, managing fatigue is crucial for maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of employees.

This comprehensive Fatigue Management Guide has provided insights into understanding workplace fatigue, its causes, consequences, and the legislative framework surrounding fatigue management. Additionally, it has explored various aspects of fatigue management, including identifying fatigue in the workplace, conducting fatigue risk assessments, fostering a fatigue-resistant culture, implementing effective strategies, and the fatigue management solution we provide.

Embracing and integrating these potent fatigue management strategies into your workplace will pave the way for a spirited and revitalized workforce, armed and ready to confront any challenges that may come their way.

Remember, fatigue management is an ongoing commitment that requires continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to evolving workplace conditions. By prioritizing fatigue management, organisations can foster a culture of well-being, safety, and optimal performance, ensuring the health and success of both their employees and their business.

[Book in a free demo of the SafetyIQ Fatigue Management Solution](#) and see how it can benefit you.

## Helpful References

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### Blog Articles:

<https://safetyiq.com/why-safetyiq/fatigue-management-module/>

<https://safetyiq.com/insight/the-hidden-dangers-of-fatigue-in-the-workplace-a-guide-for-employers/>

<https://safetyiq.com/insight/the-ergonomic-impact-of-fatigue-management-programs/>

<https://safetyiq.com/insight/the-complete-guide-to-workplace-fatigue-management/>

<https://safetyiq.com/insight/6-workplace-fatigue-management-tips-you-should-know-about/>

[See more](#)

### Other Resources:

[Driver Fatigue Assessment Template](#)

<https://safetyiq.com/free-calculator/the-fatigue-calculator-quiz-alertness-test/>

### Legislation and Guides:

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2011-010>

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/act-2011-018>

<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz?path=%2Fc%2Fa%2Fwork%20health%20and%20safety%20act%202012>

<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2012-001>

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00293>

<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/occupational-healthand-safety-act-2004/037>

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/completeoshact>

<https://www.osha.gov/worker-fatigue>

