

# TIPS ON NIGHT SHIFT

## FATIGUE

Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion which reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively. It can occur because of prolonged mental or physical activity, sleep loss and/or disruption of the internal body clock. Fatigue can be caused by factors which may be work related, non-work related or a combination of both and can accumulate over time.

## HOW FATIGUE CAN AFFECT YOU AT WORK

Rosters are provided every 6 weeks and consist of AMs, PMs and Whelping shifts. We will request your availability via email approximately one week before the current roster end, and a new roster will be published prior to the current roster finishing.

Fatigue can adversely affect safety at the workplace. Fatigue reduces alertness which may lead to errors and an increase in incidents and injuries, particularly when:

- operating equipment, including driving vehicles
- undertaking critical tasks that require a high level of concentration
- undertaking night or shift work when a person would be ordinarily sleeping

## SIGNS OF FATIGUE

- Excessive yawning
- Short term memory problems
- Impaired decision-making and judgement
- Slow reflexes
- Feeling drowsy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Blurred or impaired vision
- Reduced ability to engage in communication

## PREPARING FOR NIGHT SHIFTS

Sleep is the most obvious and easiest method to prepare to undertake a shift safely and reduce the possibility of fatigue. Good sleep quality not just the day before but the days leading up to your shift will reduce or eliminate any sleep debt you have built up over time.

**Sleep debt: similar to hunger/thirst – builds up over time.**

*If you have restricted sleep for several nights in a row you may need to catch up on sleep due to accumulated sleep debt.*

As you approach your rostered night shifts, stay up later each night. Try sleep in as much as you can in the morning of starting the first night shift. In the afternoon before night shift try make your room as dark as possible and get a nap to reduce any sleep debt before night shift.

It can obviously be very difficult to sleep before your shift but even a small nap can reduce your risk of fatigue during and after your night shift.

## MEALS, COFFEE & EXERCISE

Do what you normally do when you work day shifts (or as close to it as possible).

If you usually have coffee before and/or during work then do so. Caffeine can be useful when used appropriately. Obviously, if you are drinking energy drinks and coffees all night long this will negatively affect your sleep in preparation for the next nights shift.

Eat when you are hungry or try follow the same eating pattern as you would for your day shifts e.g., have breakfast foods when you wake up before work.

Beware of snacking on too much sugar during your shift hours – short sugar rushes are usually followed by an energy dip that can lead to fatigue. Try to avoid sugary snacks and have low-carb/complex carb snacks instead such as fruit.

Exercise is useful when you wake up but like caffeine can cause too much stimulation close to bed time – reducing the quality of sleep. Be mindful of how close to bed you exercise, if you do.

## MORE INFORMATION

If you require more information, please contact [info@interchangebench.com.au](mailto:info@interchangebench.com.au) or visit [www.safework.gov.au](http://www.safework.gov.au).

