



# Shiftwork, Long Work Hours, and Fatigue



***Working evening or early morning shifts makes it hard to get enough quality sleep. Lack of sleep and long work hours can make you tired (fatigued) at work. Tired workers can have a harder time focusing, putting them at higher risk for injury.***

## Henry's Story

Henry was working the night shift on a large office building construction project. One night he almost severed a finger while operating a table saw. He had been working four 10-hour night shifts for 3 weeks to wrap up work on the project.

- ✘ **Have you ever felt too tired to work?**
- ✘ **What do you do to stay alert at work?**

## Remember This

- Signs of fatigue include
  - Poor sleep
  - Feeling tired or falling asleep at work
  - Lack of energy or motivation; a 'do not care' attitude; moodiness; or poor judgment
  - Difficulty focusing on work
  - Slowed reactions
  - Increased anger or irritability

## ➤ Take action

- Take breaks at least every 1 to 2 hours or spend time working on another task.
- Eat healthy snacks often, such as fruit and nuts. Candy, chips, and other processed and sugary foods make you feel more tired.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- If possible, stay or go frequently into brightly lit areas to improve alertness.
- **Don't drive or operate machinery** if overly tired. Drowsiness increases your risk of a car crash or other incident.

## ➤ Make changes

- Rest on your days off, and have at least one day off per week.
- Limit use of caffeine, especially 5 hours or more before bed.
- Make your sleeping space comfortable, dark, and quiet. Avoid lighted screens of cell phones, tablets, computers, etc., 60 to 90 minutes before bed.
- Get 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep each day (most people need this much). See a doctor if you are having trouble sleeping or if you fall asleep at work. Remember, getting enough sleep can save your life.

## How can we stay safe today?

What will we do at the worksite to prevent problems with fatigue from shift work or long work hours?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicable OSHA Standard: 5(a)(1) of the OSHA Act, The General Duty Clause**

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- ✘ Pay attention to how tired you feel. If you feel tired or distracted, take a break.
- ✘ Eat healthy snacks and drink water.
- ✘ Don't drive or operate equipment if you feel sleepy.