Fatigue
Nearly one quarter of American workers spend over 40 hours a week at work and almost 15 million work full time on evening, night, rotating, or other irregular shifts.*

*OSHA
Irregular and extended work shifts are common among:

- Health care providers
- Air traffic controllers
- Transportation workers
- First responders and firefighters
- Police officers
- Construction workers
- Oil field workers
It is important to recognize the symptoms of worker fatigue and its potential impact on worker safety and health.
Irregular work schedules may cause **worker fatigue**. Long work hours may increase the risk of injuries and accidents, and can contribute to:

- Poor health
- Poor eating habits
- Lack of physical activity
- Illness
The human body operates on a circadian rhythm cycle, which means your body is naturally designed to sleep during night hours.

Fighting against this natural circadian rhythm can cause both sleepiness and fatigue.
Sleepiness is the normal drowsy feeling after a long day at work and can be fixed with a good night’s sleep.

Fatigue is the build-up of lack of sleep, poor sleep, and working long hours over time. Fatigue is mental or physical exhaustion that prevents workers from functioning normally.
Fatigue increases the risk of **illnesses and injuries** at work. Accident and injury rates are 18% greater during evening shifts and 30% greater during night shifts when compared to day shifts.*

*OSHA*
Fatigue can cause:

- Weariness
- Sleepiness
- Irritability
- Reduced alertness
- Impaired decision making
- A lack of motivation, concentration, and memory
Studies have shown that fatigue is linked to **health problems**, including heart disease, stomach and digestive problems, musculoskeletal disorders, depression, sleep disorders, and obesity.
Companies can reduce the risk of worker fatigue in the workplace by:

- Examining staffing issues, such as workload and work hours
- Arranging schedules to allow frequent opportunities for rest breaks and nighttime sleep
- Making adjustments to the work environment to increase alertness
- Providing worker education and training on the hazards of worker fatigue
- Implementing a Fatigue Risk Management Plan
Workers can promote healthy sleep by following sleep hygiene recommendations, such as:

- Making sure your sleep period is 7-9 hours without interruption
- Trying to go to sleep at the same time every day
- Avoiding drinks with caffeine before bedtime
- Making sure your sleeping environment is comfortable, cool, dark and quiet
- Exercising regularly and eating a balanced diet
The most effective way to reduce the risk of fatigue is to **control** what causes it.

To control fatigue:

- Reduce physical demands
- Take rest periods while working
- Avoid excessive overtime
- Avoid working in extreme temperatures
- Get enough sleep when you are not working
There is no magic number to tell you how much sleep you need to feel well-rested but the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends **7-8 hours** of sleep a day for adults.
Fatigue can also be a driving hazard because it reduces your ability to drive safely. Driving to and from work can be dangerous if you add fatigue to the mix.
Driving while fatigued can result in:
- Slower reaction times
- Errors in calculating speed and distance
- Poor judgment
- Falling asleep
Safe driving tips include:

- Get a good night’s sleep before heading off on a long trip
- Do not travel for more than 8-10 hours a day
- Do not travel when you would normally be sleeping
- Take a 15-minute powernap if you feel yourself becoming drowsy
Fatigue can be hazardous to your health and safety. Control the causes of fatigue to reduce your risk. Sleep is an important part of staying safe, make it a priority.
1. Long work hours may increase the risk of injuries and accidents, and can contribute to ____________, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity, and illness.
   A. Poor health
   B. Excellent health
   C. Increased physical activity
   D. Healthy eating habits

2. ____________ is the normal drowsy feeling after a long day at work and can be fixed with a good night’s sleep.
   A. Fatigue
   B. Tiredness
   C. Sleepiness
   D. Boredom

3. ____________ is the build-up of lack of sleep, poor sleep, and working long hours over time.
   A. Boredom
   B. Tiredness
   C. Sleepiness
   D. Fatigue

4. Fatigue ____________ the risk of illnesses and injuries at work.
   A. Increases
   B. Decreases
   C. Does not affect
   D. Eliminates

5. Studies have shown that fatigue is linked to health problems, including ____________, stomach and digestive problems, musculoskeletal disorders, depression, sleep disorders, and obesity.
   A. Kidney disease
   B. Heart disease
   C. Asbestosis
   D. Lung cancer

6. The most effective way to reduce the risk of fatigue is to ________.
   A. Ignore it
   B. Control what causes it
   C. Allow workers to take naps at work
   D. Let it continue to be an issue

7. Ways to control fatigue include reducing physical demands, taking rest periods while working, and ________.
   A. Working excessive overtime
   B. Working in extreme temperatures
   C. Getting enough sleep when you are not working
   D. Avoiding sleep when you are not working

8. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends ________ of sleep a day for adults.
   A. 3-4 hours
   B. 5-6 hours
   C. 7-8 hours
   D. 9-10 hours

9. Driving while fatigued can result in slower reaction times, errors in calculating speed and distance, poor judgment, and ________.
   A. Reaching your destination ahead of schedule
   B. Staying awake
   C. Obeying speed limits
   D. Falling asleep

10. Safe driving tips include taking a ________ powernap if you feel yourself becoming drowsy while driving.
     A. 30-second
     B. 1-minute
     C. 15-minute
     D. 3-hour
Instructors: The following key shows the answers for the Fatigue safety meeting quiz.

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