Fatigue Doesn’t Take a Day Off: Managing Worker Fatigue & Shift Risk Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. **Reduced Reaction Time:** Fatigue slows physical and mental responses, making workers less able to avoid hazards, react to equipment movement, or correct mistakes.
2. **Impaired Judgment:** Tired workers underestimate risks, make poor decisions, and take shortcuts they normally wouldn’t, increasing near-miss and injury potential.
3. **Microsleep Episodes:** Extreme fatigue causes momentary “blackouts” lasting seconds—long enough to miss alarms, lose control of tools, or drift while driving.
4. **Decreased Coordination:** Fatigue weakens balance, grip strength, and fine motor control, increasing the chance of slips, dropped tools, or equipment mishandling.
5. **Cognitive Overload:** Long shifts and night work overload memory and attention, making complex tasks like troubleshooting, driving, or operating machinery more dangerous.
6. **Slower Hazard Recognition:** Tired workers overlook warning signs—such as unusual equipment noises, chemical odors, or unstable loads—before hazards escalate.

STATS

- In Canada, 47% of workers reported feeling burned out in 2025, with 31% indicating higher burnout levels than the previous year, largely due to shift-related fatigue and extended hours.
- 97% of US workers have at least one fatigue risk factor, and over 80% have two or more, contributing to increased shift work injuries and absenteeism from 2020-2025.
- Shift workers in Canada face a 30% higher risk of injury or ill-health compared to day workers, with night and rotating shifts exacerbating fatigue-related accidents through 2025.
- In Canada, night and rotating shift workers have up to 2 times higher

injury rates than day workers, with women on rotating shifts at 1.71 times greater risk due to sleep disruption.
- Evening shifts in US and Canadian workplaces show an 18% higher injury rate, rising to 30% for night shifts, primarily from fatigue impairing reaction times and decision-making.
- Fatigue contributes to up to 13% of workplace injuries in the United States, according to NIOSH fatigue-risk studies.