Ready For Work Meeting Kit



Proper training and knowing the right tool for a specific work task are fundamental in establishing a cohesive, efficient and productive work team. But coming into work mentally and physically healthy is equally as important do proper training or selecting the right tool for the job.

FATIGUE – HOW IT AFECTS WORKERS

Fatigue is often thought of as the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy resulting from various sources such as insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety. Fatigue can be described as either acute or chronic.

However, fatigue can include mental, physical, or subjective states.

Mental state:

- Reduced mental capacity
- Inattentive
- Indecisive

Physical state:

- Physiological weakness or degradation
- Physically exhausted
- Weak

Subjective state:

- Tired
- Drowsy
- Weary
- Sleepy
- Lethargic

A Workplace Issue – Fatigue

Workplace factors that may influence fatigue are shift rotation patterns, balanced workloads, timing of tasks and activities, availability of resources, and the workplace environment (e.g., lighting, ventilation, temperature, etc.).

Research has shown that the number of hours awake can be similar to blood alcohol levels.

- 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05
- 21 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.08 (legal limit in Canada)
- 24-25 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.10

Fatigue is regarded as having an impact on work performance. Most incidents occur when people are more likely to want sleep – between midnight and 6 am, and between 1 to 3 pm. Fatigue affects people differently but it can increase a worker's hazard exposure by:

- reducing mental and physical functioning,
- impairing judgement and concentration,
- lowering motivation,
- slowing reaction time, and
- increasing risk-taking behaviour.

"WORKPLACE STRESS"

What is stress?

"Stress is a reaction to a situation – it isn't about the actual situation. We usually feel stressed when we think that the demands of the situation are greater than our resources to deal with that situation.

Workplace Stress then is the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands.

It is generally believed that some stress is okay (sometimes referred to as "challenge" or "positive stress") but when stress occurs in amounts that you cannot handle, both mental and physical changes may occur.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

According to The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD's) 2020 report, the main causes of sickness absence are:

Mental ill-health – Conditions like clinical depression and anxiety now top the three most common causes of long-term absence (59%), while three-fifths (60%) of organisations say common mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression have increased in the past 12 months.

Stress – The CIPD's report includes heavy workloads, management style and working relationships among the top causes of stress. Non-work factors such as family and relationship problems and health issues are also contributing to people's stress levels.

Minor illnesses – More than three-quarters (93%) of organisations reported that minor illnesses such as colds, flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines were the most common form of short-term absence within their organisation.

Back pain and other musculoskeletal injuries – Back pain and musculoskeletal

injuries such as neck strains and repetitive strain injury were cited as common causes of both short and long-term sickness for both manual and non-manual workers.

Recurring medical conditions – Recurring medical conditions such as asthma, angina and allergies are among the top causes of short-term absence, but can also lead to longer periods off too.

Home/family responsibilities – Caring for children can also impact employees and remain among the top causes of short-term absence for almost a quarter (24%) of organisations.

FINAL WORD

Whether it is sickness, fatigue, medication, or stress affecting you in a negative manner at work it is important to speak up and address the problem. When “simple fixes” are not enough to correct a health-related issue it is important to let a supervisor know and cease the work task. Address the problem at its source to ensure you can continue to work productively and safely.