Fatigue toolbox talk

Health · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

On many South African sites the day starts with a long taxi or bakkie ride before sunrise and ends with the same trip home, and deadlines push crews into overtime and weekend work. A tired worker reacts slowly, misjudges risk and makes mistakes on ladders, scaffolds, plant and power tools, and then drives home. Fatigue is a hazard to plan for like any other.

SAY THIS

What fatigue does

Fatigue is more than feeling sleepy. When you are worn out, your reactions slow down, you forget steps, you stop noticing hazards and you take short cuts you would never take when fresh. A tired person can nod off for a few seconds without knowing it. A few seconds is enough to step off a slab edge or drift a bakkie into the oncoming lane.

Where it comes from

Long shifts and many days in a row without a proper break. Getting up very early for a long trip to site. Too little sleep because of a second job, a new baby, noise at home or worry. Hard physical work in the heat. Some medicines and illness. Alcohol the night before. Most of us have more than one of these at the same time.

Warning signs

Watch for yawning, heavy eyes, rubbing your eyes, daydreaming, being short-tempered, and making small mistakes like dropping tools or measuring wrong. If you notice them in yourself or a mate, take it seriously. Pushing through does not make it go away.

What we do on site

Take your breaks, and take them away from the work: sit down, eat, drink water. Swap jobs during the day so nobody does the same heavy or boring task for hours. We plan the most dangerous work, like lifting, working at heights and operating plant, for when people are fresh, not the end of a long day. If you have worked a very long day or night, do not operate machinery or drive the site vehicle until you have rested.

Your part

Use your time off to sleep. Eat properly and drink water through the day. If you are taking medicine that makes you drowsy, tell the supervisor so we can give you safe work. Say so if you are too tired to work safely today; it is not weakness, and we would rather move you to a safer task than deal with an accident.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- [ ] Who has worked overtime, a weekend or a night shift recently, and what jobs are they on today?
- [ ] Are breaks planned, and is there a shaded place to sit and eat?
- [ ] Is the highest-risk work today scheduled for earlier in the shift?
- [ ] Who is driving the bakkie or transport home tonight, and how long have they been at work?
- [ ] Can we rotate the most repetitive or heaviest tasks between people?

ASK THE CREW

? What time do you leave home to get to site, and how long is your trip back?

? When did you last feel too tired to work safely? What did you do about it?

? Which job on this site is the hardest to do when you are tired?

? What would make it easier for you to tell me when you are too tired for a task?

THE LAW

Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 8: General duties of employers to their employees; Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 14: General duties of employees at work; Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, section 15: Daily and weekly rest period; General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 2A: Intoxication. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/fatigue/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Fatigue and long shifts

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

NO.	NAME AND SURNAME	COMPANY OR TRADE	SIGNATURE
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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.