

Managing Fatigue Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for managing employees of Ecoplant & Seeddown who may demonstrate signs of fatigue whilst in the workplace.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. **Employee.** Responsible for complying with Ecoplant & Seeddown policy and procedures, employment contract obligations and any relevant laws.
- 2.2. **Manager/Supervisor.** Responsible for the management of employees' health and safety specific to their location and workgroup.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Employee** – any person who has a signed contract of employment with Ecoplant & Seeddown.
- 3.2. **Fatigue** – extreme tiredness or weariness resulting from physical or mental activity.
- 3.3. **For Cause** – an observation by another person suspecting an employee may be fatigued.
- 3.4. **Workplace** - Any place where Ecoplant & Seeddown employees attend in relation to their service as an employee.

4. REFERENCES

- 4.1. Safety Policy
- 4.2. Fair Work Act 2009
- 4.3. Relevant WHS legislation

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1. **Overview.** This procedure is intended to provide guidance to Ecoplant & Seeddown employees in the management of employees suffering from fatigue.
- 5.2. **Identifying fatigue.** Fatigue is caused from a number of contributing factors resulting in an employee feeling lethargic and tired. Fatigue at times can often be difficult to recognise initially and often sufferers may be seen as unmotivated or show a disinterest in the task at hand. A

person suffering from fatigue may recognise the symptoms but may not be able to identify the cause. Symptoms of fatigue include -

- 5.2.1. Feeling tired or sleepy, or not feeling refreshed after sleep
- 5.2.2. Blurred vision
- 5.2.3. Feeling drowsy /relaxed
- 5.2.4. Increased irritability
- 5.2.5. Finding it difficult to keep your eyes open
- 5.2.6. Taking more frequent naps during leisure hours
- 5.2.7. Excessive head nodding or yawning
- 5.2.8. Finding it difficult to concentrate and/or making more mistakes than usual
- 5.2.9. Increased absenteeism
- 5.2.10. Repeatedly moving off track while driving plant or vehicles
- 5.2.11. Involved in near miss incidents

5.3. **Self identification.** Employees who feel they are suffering from fatigue should notify their immediate Manager. The fatigued employee will be offered a rest break before deciding if the employee can continue to work the rest of their shift. Employees who are required to go home due to fatigue will be deemed sick for the rest of that shift. Ecoplant & Seeddown will ensure the employee is provided a safe means to get home.

5.4. **For cause identification.** If an employee suspects another employee is suffering from fatigue, or an incident occurs that might have been a result of fatigue, they are to report their concerns to their Manager/Supervisor. Managers will raise the concerns with the suspected employee and decide whether the employee should take a rest break or if the employee should cease their shift for the day. Employees who are required to go home due to fatigue will be deemed sick for the rest of that shift. Ecoplant & Seeddown will ensure the employee is provided a safe means to get home.

5.5. **Managing Fatigue.** Reducing the chances of fatigue occurring and assisting sufferers in recovery is vital to the performance of all employees. The advantages of managing fatigue include -

- 5.5.1. A reduction in workplace incidents and work-related claims
- 5.5.2. A reduction in absenteeism and staff turnover
- 5.5.3. A reduction in damage to plant and equipment

- 5.5.4. Improvement to work quality, performance and productivity
- 5.6. The following is a list of methods that should be used to prevent employees from becoming fatigued. This list comprises of methods that should be adopted at home and/or the workplace.
- 5.6.1. **Sleep.** For the human body to function normally it is imperative that it receives adequate, regular and consistent amounts of sleep. Most adults need between 6 and 8 hours uninterrupted sleep in a 24 hour period. If not enough sleep is received, a sleep debt accumulates which increases the likelihood of making mistakes, particularly when feeling sleepy.
- 5.6.2. **Diet.** Low kilojoule diets, low carbohydrate diets or high-energy foods that are nutritionally poor, don't provide the body with enough fuel or nutrients to function at its best. Quick fix foods, such as chocolate bars or caffeinated drinks, only offer a temporary energy boost that quickly wears off and worsens fatigue. To reduce the onset of fatigue, a balanced diet high in nutrition is recommended.
- 5.6.3. **Exercise.** Physical activity is known to improve fitness, health and wellbeing, reduce stress, boost energy levels and aids in sleep. Regular exercise is also an effective treatment for anxiety and depression, which may also contribute to fatigue.
- 5.6.4. **Relaxation.** Relaxation assists in eliminating or reducing other symptoms of fatigue including stress but will not make up for lack of sleep. Relaxation can assist the body and mind to cope in different and unfamiliar situations, which may otherwise cause fatigue.
- 5.6.5. **Alcohol and Drugs.** Alcohol and drugs should be avoided to reduce fatigue. Alcohol is a depressant drug that slows the nervous system and disturbs normal sleep patterns. Other drugs, such as cigarettes and caffeine, stimulate the nervous system and make insomnia more likely.
- 5.6.6. **Rest Breaks.** The risk of employees developing fatigue, as well as muscle and soft tissue injuries from uncomfortable or repetitive tasks, may increase if employees work long periods without breaks. Employees should take adequate and regular breaks. If practical, employees should take their break away from their normal working environment and utilise the lunchrooms where available.
- 5.7. **Working Hour Rules.** Working hours may differ for each employee depending on the position of the employee and the work requirements. Employees have expected hours of work, which they are required to adhere to. Overtime may be an exception where an employee is required

to work over the normal nominated working hours. Overtime must be managed effectively to ensure employees do not become fatigued. This may include a rotation system to ensure that employees do not work excessive hours.

5.7.1. If employees are required to perform night work, other than in emergency situations, employees should be given at least 24 hours' notice. Where possible a longer period of notice should be given so that employees have time to adjust their activities.

5.7.2. The following principles must be followed –

5.7.2.1. **Daily:** No more than 14 hours per day at work. As a general rule, action should be taken that work and travel (either side of a rostered attendance) stays below 14 hours and wherever possible, be restricted to 12 hours. If working above 12 hours per day, a risk assessment should be conducted in order to manage the risk.

5.7.2.2. **Weekly:** No more than 70 hours of work time in any 7-day period.

5.7.2.3. **Fortnightly:** No more than 140 hours of work time in any 14-day period, plus at least 36 consecutive hours free in any 14-day period.

5.8. **Safe Driving Guidance.** Fatigue is believed to be one of the biggest killers in vehicle accidents on Australian roads, rivaling speed and alcohol.

5.8.1. Fatigue can have the following impacts when driving:

5.8.1.1. Slower reaction times: fatigue increases the time taken to react in an emergency;

5.8.1.2. Reduced awareness: a fatigued driver will be slower to notice oncoming hazards, such as roadwork or a railway crossing; and

5.8.1.3. Affected information processing: fatigue reduces both the ability to process information and short-term memory. A fatigued driver may not remember the previous few minutes of driving and will be slower in evaluating oncoming hazards.

5.8.2. In order to prevent and manage driver fatigue, whether driving for work or personal requirements, the following steps can be taken:

5.8.2.1. Avoid driving during the high fatigue risk times of 12am to 6am and 1pm to 3pm, particularly on country roads.

5.8.2.2. Avoid starting long drives after work.

5.8.2.3. If experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, pull over and take a 15-minute power nap.

- 5.8.2.4. Share the driving wherever possible.
- 5.8.2.5. Do not drink alcohol before or during the trip.
- 5.8.2.6. Take a break at least once every two hours.
- 5.8.2.7. If on medication, check that it does not cause any side effects that may impact driving.

5.9. **Prevention.** Ecoplant & Seeddown is committed to continually review the relevant legislation ensuring that work practices are in line with the appropriate guidelines. Employees will be notified of any changes that may affect their working conditions.

6. RECORDS

- 6.1. All documentation regarding any incident that involves an employee and fatigue should be kept on the employee's personnel file.

7. REVIEW

- 7.1. Annual