

## Off-Duty Choices Matter

Choices produce outcomes. Two people can go into the same grocery store, push the same sized carts through it, and choose from the same inventory. Their specific choices can be vastly different, however. One cart pusher may choose sugary drinks and powdery confections along with highly processed, microwavable products. The other cart pusher may choose a variety of vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains. No doubt, their outcomes, in terms of their health and the health of their family members, will be different. The choices made in this hour of grocery store cart pushing could also determine the trajectory of a life's worth of outcomes. Choices made have far-reaching effects.

Consider the choices you make during your off-duty hours. Health practitioners and sleep specialists recommend that adults get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Shift workers who work rotating shifts have challenges getting the required amount of sleep their brains and bodies need. The disruption caused by switching from nighttime sleeping to sleeping during the day may be the greatest and most fundamental challenge these employees face.

The purpose of the Control Room Management regulations regarding hours of rest is for companies to provide pipeline controllers an opportunity for eight hours of sleep between shifts, and to place a limit on the total hours of service in a day and likewise in a seven-day period.

Getting plenty of rest is a shared responsibility. Your company has a responsibility to schedule adequate off-duty time for commuting and sleeping. They must provide adequate staffing in order to limit call outs and hours of service. As an employee, it's your responsibility to live a reasonable distance from your work place and use your off-duty time to get the sleep you need in order to show up for work "fit for duty".

There are obvious distractions that some consider more compelling than sleep. Gaming and surfing the internet are known to distract many a weary soul from getting the rest their bodies long for. Are you choosing wisely?

It can be helpful to keep your Pipeline Performance Group Managing Fatigue Calendar posted where you and your family can take note of your work schedule and corresponding sleep schedule. Days off can be highlighted as an open door to participate in family gatherings and activities, socialize with friends, or work on hobbies, chores and special interest projects. There are many opportunities for enrichment. Choose to do the things that add value to your life while keeping sleep priority one.

Most of us find that with a little planning there's less chaos and better order. When we use a calendar to plan and communicate well with others, it's possible we find more time to do the things that truly matter. Wasting precious time on energy-draining activities can leave a person feeling exasperated. Save yourself a little frustration by planning and choosing wisely.

