

## Fatigue Mitigation on The Job

Managing fatigue on the job is crucial for your personal well-being as well as for the safety of the pipeline. Add shift work into the mix and the challenges of managing fatigue increase. It's probably no surprise that shift workers struggle to sleep when they need to and feel sleepy when they need to be awake. It is important to be mindful of fatigue and its impact on pipeliner alertness. How do you manage the risks of fatigue on the job?

Your company's fatigue risk management (FRM) policy should facilitate safety, productivity and well-being in the workplace to proactively identify and mitigate the risks associated with employee fatigue. Such policies must establish guidelines regarding work schedules including limits on consecutive work hours or shifts to ensure you have sufficient recovery time, rest breaks to combat fatigue, training on fatigue awareness to educate employees and supervisors on recognizing the signs of fatigue and understanding its impact, Fatigue Reporting Systems to report incidents or near-misses where fatigue may have been a factor, and Health and Wellness support including access to resources such as wellness programs and health assessments.

Fatigue management, however, is not solely the company's responsibility. Your efforts for prioritizing sleep, managing personal lifestyle choices, adopting healthy habits, recognizing and reporting fatigue, and utilizing the company's resources are key to an effective personal fatigue management plan. By working together, you and your company can create a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment.

On the job, you must be prepared to fight fatigue with strategies that work for you. What is the number one fatigue countermeasure in pipeline control rooms? Our research with over 2500 Controllers shows that the majority *talk to their co-workers* to stay alert during a shift. Other fatigue countermeasures that may help mitigate sleepiness for you before or when it starts to set in are:

- adjust your desk, chair, the room temperature, or the lighting levels in your workspace,
- eat a healthy snack, hydrate with water, or grab a caffeinated beverage (use caffeine wisely!), or
- turn on some music, or watch TV or a movie, if permitted.

Staying alert can be challenging, especially if you have a 12 hour shift ahead of you. Alertness exercises are another great way to get the blood flowing and the muscles moving. They can also help keep your mind sharp and focused. Another perk? You won't need a lot of room or any special equipment for most of them.

You can request one of our alertness exercise cards which includes 8 recommended activities and can be posted in your work area or displayed in your break room. If you are interested, email us at [info@ppgatl.com](mailto:info@ppgatl.com). In the meantime, be proactive with your fatigue mitigation and give some of these alertness exercises a try:

- **Shoulder Blade Squeeze** - Bend elbows at your side, draw elbows back as if to touch them together behind your back, hold for 3 seconds, release and repeat 10 times.
- **Side Stretch** – Stand with feet apart and strong posture, lift one arm up and over your head, hold each stretch for 2 seconds, release and repeat with each arm 10 times.
- **Leg Extension** - Grip a stable object (e.g., desk, cubicle wall, etc.), bend knees, extend one leg backwards, hold for 3 seconds, release and repeat with each leg 10 times each.

