



Fatigue Management Policy

1. Background

The WA Country Health Service is committed to providing a safe workplace to achieve high standards in safety and health for its employees, in accordance with the [Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#).

All areas of the WA Country Health Service are to comply with, or exceed, occupational safety and health (OSH) legal requirements and develop and implement safe systems and work practices that reflect this commitment to safety and health.

2. Policy Statement

The WA Country Health Service, its managers, supervisors and employees are to work co-operatively to ensure that fatigue-related risks are identified, assessed and controlled in accordance with OSH legislative frameworks, accountabilities and tools.

Risks associated with fatigue are to be managed to:

- Minimise the risk of harm caused by fatigue;
- Maintain a safe and healthy work environment;
- Maintain the health and wellbeing of employees; and
- Educate and improve awareness of the effects of fatigue.

All areas of WA Country Health Service shall identify and manage factors, in the relevant workplaces that cause fatigue and, if significant risks are identified, implement strategies to minimise those risks, where reasonable and practicable to do so. Factors to consider include (but are not limited to):

- Mental and physical demands of the work undertaken;
- Work scheduling and planning, for example, workloads, work patterns and rostering arrangements;
- Environmental conditions, such as adequate lighting, ventilation and equipment;
- Organisational culture; and
- Individual and lifestyle factors.

3. Definitions

Fatigue	<p>Fatigue is an acute, ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental and physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries. It is more than feeling tired and drowsy, it is a physical condition that can occur when a person's physical or mental limits are reached.</p> <p>Fatigue can occur as a result of various factors that may be work-related, lifestyle related or a combination of both. Work factors can include the work task, work scheduling and planning, and environmental conditions.</p>
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	<p>Lifestyle factors can include inadequate or poor quality of sleep due to sleep disorders, social life, secondary employment, travel time and health and wellbeing.</p> <p>While not all people respond to fatigue in the same way, fatigue can cause reduced concentration, impaired co-ordination, compromised judgement and slower reaction times; ultimately increasing the risks of incidents and injuries. In a work environment, this can mean a person is unable to function safely and effectively, increasing the risk of adverse incidents.</p>
Shift Work	<p>Shift work is usually described as work outside normal day hours. This includes weekend, afternoon and night shifts, rotating, split or broken shifts, extended shifts, rostered overtime and (non-rostered) extended working hours.</p>

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- Applying risk management principles, particularly where new systems or hours of work are to be introduced, this should be undertaken in consultation with employees, and as per industrial agreements;
- Ensuring systems of work that minimise the risk of fatigue – for example, reasonable rosters, reasonable overtime practices, and adequate recuperation between shifts;
- Approval of proposed additional hours and overtime, to ensure appropriate fatigue management strategies are in place;
- Reviewing and approving actual hours worked (this could include RoSTAR authorisation or timesheet sign off);
- Ensuring employees performing shift work or extended hours are properly supervised, take adequate breaks and perform tasks safely; and
- Taking appropriate action when an employee is demonstrating or has demonstrated signs of fatigue that could place themselves or others at risk of harm.

Employees are responsible for:

- Informing themselves of the risks associated with fatigue;
- Avoiding behaviours and practices that may contribute to the development of fatigue, particularly those that may place themselves and/or others at risk of harm. This includes, but is not limited to, secondary employment and not using time off to recuperate;
- Reporting signs of fatigue that could place themselves or others at risk of harm to their manager or supervisor; and
- Participating in strategies to reduce the risk of fatigue related harm (where required).

Occupational Safety and Health departments are responsible for:

- Providing information, advice and consultation services regarding OSH matters and assisting with the development and implementation of OSH systems, procedures and programs;
- Ensuring the effectiveness of any strategies or control measures introduced are monitored and assessed; and
- Providing information and education to managers, supervisors and employees about risks associated with fatigue.

5. Compliance

This policy is a mandatory requirement under the [Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#). Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Records Management

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System.

[Records Management Policy](#)

7. Evaluation

Evaluation and review of this policy is to be carried out by the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) department every two years (or earlier if required).

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) – 1.1a, 1.7a, 1.7b, 1.7c, 1.10a, 1.10c, 1.10d.

9. Legislation

[Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 \(WA\)](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

10. References

[Code of Practice: Occupational Safety and Health in the Western Australian Public Sector](#) (Commission for Occupational Safety and Health; 2007)

[Code of Practice: Working Hours](#) (Commission for Occupational Safety and Health; 2006)

11. Related Forms

Nil.

12. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Risk Management Policy](#)

WACHS [Risk Management Procedure](#)

WACHS [Safe Driving Policy](#)

13. Related WA Health System Policies

Nil

14. Policy Framework

WA Health [Employment Policy Framework](#)

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