

Americans often do not recognize the importance of sleep. People often make light of how little sleep they get on a regular basis; an over-worked, over-tired condition has become the norm for many.

A good night's sleep is not just a novelty, it is a necessity.

The effects of fatigue are far-reaching and can have an adverse impact on all areas of our lives.

Work often requires us to override those natural sleep patterns.

More than 43% of workers are sleep-deprived.

Those at the highest risk work the night shift, long shifts, or irregular shifts.

A few facts for employers:

- Safety performance decreases as employees become tired
- 62% of night shift workers complain about sleep loss
- Fatigued worker productivity costs employers \$1,200 to \$3,100 per employee annually
- Employees on rotating shifts are particularly vulnerable because they cannot adapt their "body clocks" to an alternative sleep pattern

Drowsy driving is impaired driving, but while we wouldn't allow a friend to drive drunk, we rarely take the keys away from our tired friends or insist they take a nap before heading out on the road.

Research shows:

- You are 3 times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued
- More than 5,000 people died in drowsy-driving related crashes in 2014
- Losing even two hours of sleep is like the effect of drinking three beers
- Being awake for more than 20 hours is the equivalent of being legally drunk

Sleep is a vital factor in overall health.

Adults need an average of 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

30% report averaging less than 6 hours of sleep each night.

- Chronic sleep-deprivation causes depression, obesity, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses
- Fatigue is estimated to cost employers \$136 billion a year in health-related lost productivity
- **More than 70 million Americans suffer from a sleep disorder**

Americans receive little education on the importance of sleep, sleep disorders, and the consequences of fatigue, but industry leaders recently have been drawing attention to this issue.

Employers are in an ideal position to educate employees on avoiding fatigue-related safety incidents.

Employers should include fatigue in the hazard risk assessment.

During the assessment, it should be verified if fatigue is considered in the employer's hazard recognition and control processes.