

TOOLBOX TALK

Fighting Fatigue

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Fatigue is the condition of being physically or mentally tired or exhausted. Extreme fatigue can lead to uncontrolled and involuntary shutdown of the brain.

Fortunately, there are ways to fight fatigue:

- Get eight hours of sleep before starting work.
- Sleep at the same time each day. If workers rotate shifts, establish clockwise rotations (from day to evening to night). Clockwise rotating makes it easier to go to sleep when a worker goes to bed.
- Take all scheduled work breaks. A snack or exercise during the break is refreshing.
- When trying to sleep during the daytime, find a cool, dark, quiet location. Use earplugs, soft music, or a fan to block out noise.
- See your doctor about sleep disorders, medications for illness, and using bright light on the job or during waking hours.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, beginning the day with high protein foods and ending with carbohydrates. Do not eat great quantities before bedtime; they may cause trouble sleeping.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes. These substances cause sleep disturbances.
- Walking, stretching, and aerobics can help a person stay awake. Exercise will give you stamina and help you to fall asleep later.
- Work carefully and very methodically, always following proper procedures.

When you're fatigued you will make errors in judgment. Your mind or eyes can be off task and you can make a critical error.