



More on Fatigue: Work Factor

As part of Safety Day: Do the Right Thing in Managing Fatigue, we are presenting a series of short articles to raise your awareness of fatigue and fatigue-related risks as well to give you some ideas and tips as to avoid these hazards and keep you and your family safe.

Causes of general fatigue

Generally, fatigue is caused mainly due to inadequate “good quality” sleep, sustained physical stress, and/or mental stress. These in turn are caused by two distinct factors:

- Body Clock Factors and
- Work Factors.

What PDO is doing to manage fatigue caused by work factors

Understaffing & Shift work

Staffing imbalance, or understaffing, is a term used to describe mismatch between the number of staff required to perform a task and the number of staff available to perform it. A biological definition of shift work is any work pattern after 6pm that causes a change in normal sleep patterns

PDO maintains proper “staff balance” as a general rule, through proper planning and coordination of workload against manpower resources – both short term and long term. We have put in place controls to assess current and anticipated turnover and absenteeism issues when planning manpower allocation.

In addition, PDO attempts to minimize physical demands of workers through automation to the extent possible. We employ relief workers or assign extra workers for physically demanding jobs. We rotate shift work and minimize the number of days for night shift for an individual.

Work environment

Poor quality of the work environment is also a significant cause of fatigue. The key factors are workplace air quality, noise, illumination, indoor temperature and humidity.

PDO is ensuring that engineering controls are provided to comply with requirements of safe exposure limits, based on Omani regulatory requirements. We are also minimizing exposure to sub-standard conditions, in case of any unplanned work.

Ergonomics

Sub-standard ergonomic design in a plant or office/desk working environment can result in upper limb disorders, backache, repetitive strain injury, eye strain etc. These in turn over a period of time can cause or aggravate fatigue.

PDO makes every effort to consider during engineering design the relationship among people, jobs/tasks and the inanimate things; i.e., equipment, furniture, work environment, facilities, vehicles and printed materials for employee use. We are paying more attention to the design for comfortable workstations in both the Coast as well as the Interior. PDO is giving due consideration to the physiological conditions of those who work in night shifts. Last, we provide suitable induction training to workers on the proper use of equipments, instruments, tools and furniture.

Psychological stress

High level of work pressure or demand on an individual can cause psychological stress. Even though work pressure in the short term can increase the output and productivity of an individual, in the long term work stress always produces negative effects and adds to fatigue.

PDO is identifying and constantly assessing the level of occupational stress based on the work demands and the mental state of the staff employed. We conduct pre-employment screening to determine whether an individual is prone to psychological stress against the work demands, as well as provide counselling where needed.