

# SHIFTWORK AND SLEEP

Most people need between 7.5 and 8.5 hours of sleep every 24 hours to function at their best. Missing sleep—even gradually over several nights—can be just as harmful as losing a full night's rest. Both can lead to slower reaction times, difficulty concentrating, poor decision-making and a reduced ability to respond to changes.

In manufacturing, shift work is common, and being asked to work different shifts can lead to fatigue. That's because our bodies have an internal clock (circadian rhythm) that helps regulate when we feel alert and when we feel tired. Adjusting to a new schedule takes time, and rotating between day and night shifts can make it even harder to stay well-rested and alert.

## HAZARDS TO BE AWARE OF:

- SLEEP DEPRIVATION
- HEALTH, DIET & EXERCISE
- DRIVING SAFETY



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**SLEEP DEPRIVATION:** Sleep deprivation for shift workers can be especially dangerous as it impairs reaction time, concentration and decision-making—greatly increasing the risk of workplace accidents and injuries.

- Make sleep a priority and aim for consistent, undisturbed rest.
- Ask your family to support your sleep schedule by limiting noise and adjusting activities while you rest.
- Keep your bedroom dark and quiet; consider using earplugs or an eye mask.
- Turn off your phone or set it to “Do Not Disturb.”
- Avoid sleeping pills—they can leave you groggy and don’t provide natural, restorative sleep.

**HEALTH, DIET & EXERCISE:** Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help reduce fatigue and improve overall well-being.

- Avoid heavy meals before bedtime—digestion can disrupt your sleep.
- Eat in moderation and try to stick to regular meal times.
- Limit fatty, fast foods and choose nutritious options.
- Stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Avoid alcohol before bed—it interferes with deep sleep.
- Skip caffeine within four hours of bedtime—it can still affect your sleep even if you fall asleep quickly.
- Stay physically active to reduce stress.

**DRIVING SAFELY:** Fatigue can seriously impair your ability to drive safely, especially after long shifts.

- Consider carpooling with other shift workers to help keep each other alert.
- Keep the car cool and play upbeat music to stay awake.
- If you start to feel drowsy, don’t push through—pull over in a safe spot and take a short nap. Fighting fatigue behind the wheel can lead to serious or even fatal accidents.



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