WHS DOCUMENTS & TEMPLATES

DOC-FTG-TPL · Fatigue Management Policy Template

Product Overview

For: Australian businesses with shift work, long hours, on-call work, night work or driving: managers, rostering staff, supervisors and WHS advisers

Version 1.0 · 15 November 2026

A fatigue management policy that manages fatigue through the design of the work: causes, hours and rest limits you set with your workers, roster principles, reporting fatigue, and a checklist for rosters and exceptions.

The policy explains what fatigue is and what causes it, at work and outside it, then sets the business's own limits: the longest shift, the shortest break between shifts, weekly hours, consecutive shifts and nights, days off and breaks, each with a common starting point as an example. Roster principles, overtime approval, staffing and long drives follow.

Workers report fatigue without being treated badly for it, and supervisors know what to do. The Fatigue Risk Checklist (Word and PDF) checks a roster, a job or an exception to the limits, sets the controls, most effective first, and records the decision.

Written once for Australia, to the model WHS laws, in plain terms that also work in Victoria. The guide's state and territory notes show where the law differs, including the regulator to contact. Made by Orana Skills Centre.

What is included

Item	File
Fatigue management policy: what fatigue is, its causes, hours and rest limits, roster principles, reporting fatigue, second jobs and roles	02_TEMPLATE/Fatigue Management Policy.docx and .pdf
Fatigue risk checklist for a roster, a job or an exception to the limits: risk factors, controls and decision	02_TEMPLATE/Fatigue Risk Checklist.docx and .pdf
How to Use This Template: how to complete and adapt it, the law in brief, state and territory notes, records and every placeholder	01_START_HERE/How to Use This Template.pdf
Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms and Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Who it is for

- Businesses with shift work, night work, on-call or call-out work
- Managers and rostering staff who plan hours and staffing
- Businesses whose workers drive long distances for work

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How to Use This Template

How to complete, adapt and keep the fatigue management policy template

1 What this template is for

Fatigue reduces a person's ability to work safely, and it is mostly created by the way work is organised: hours, rosters, night work, staffing and travel. This policy manages it there first, with limits the business sets and keeps, and gives workers a safe way to say when they are too tired to work.

2 How to use it

Step	What to do
1	Look at your rosters, overtime records, incidents and what workers say about tiredness, to see where fatigue is a risk.
2	Set your limits in section 4 with your workers and their representatives: start from the examples and adjust them to the work and the risk.
3	Fill in the other placeholders, and check the limits against any award, enterprise agreement or industry law that applies.
4	Have the owner or chief executive approve and sign it.
5	Brief workers and supervisors, and use the Fatigue Risk Checklist for new rosters and any exception to the limits.
6	Review the limits and the policy after a fatigue-related incident, when rosters change, and at least every two years.

Make it work, not just exist

- The best fatigue control is a roster that allows enough sleep. Asking people to manage their own fatigue is the weakest control.
- Count all the hours: travel, on call, second jobs and long commutes all eat into rest.

3 The law, in brief

The WHS laws require a business to manage risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable, and fatigue is one of them. Workers must take reasonable care, which includes coming to work fit for work. The model laws set no hours limits for most work.

Drivers of fatigue-regulated heavy vehicles have work and rest limits under the Heavy Vehicle National Law in the participating states and territories; Western Australia and the Northern Territory have their own rules. Some industries, such as rail, aviation and mining, have their own fatigue requirements, and awards and enterprise agreements may set hours and breaks.

This template is written once for Australia, to the model WHS laws that the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory have adopted, each with its own variations. Victoria has its own Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws. The template uses plain terms that work in every jurisdiction; the state and territory notes below show where the law differs.

4 State and territory notes

Use the table to fill in the placeholders for your jurisdiction, and to see where the law differs from the model WHS laws. Check the regulator's website for current details before you rely on them.

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Fatigue Management Policy

Managing the risk of fatigue through the way work is planned, rostered and done

1 Purpose

Fatigue is more than feeling tired. It is mental or physical exhaustion that reduces a person's ability to work safely: slower reactions, poorer judgement, lapses in attention and falling asleep. It is a hazard like any other. This policy sets out how **[Company name]** manages the risk, starting with how work is designed, rostered and resourced.

2 Scope

This policy applies to everyone who works for **[Company name]**, including employees, contractors, labour hire workers and volunteers, and covers rostered work, overtime, on-call work, call-outs and travel for work.

3 What causes fatigue

Work-related causes	Causes outside work (that also matter)
■ Long shifts and long weeks; too little time between shifts	■ Poor or short sleep, sleep disorders

The rest of this page, and the rest of this document, are in the full product.

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Fatigue Management Policy Template

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

This sample shows a few pages, so you can judge the layout and the quality. A fatigue management policy that manages fatigue through the design of the work: causes, hours and rest limits you set with your workers, roster principles, reporting fatigue, and a checklist for rosters and exceptions.

What the full product contains

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Formats

- Word (.docx), editable, with your logo and business name in the header
- PDF copies of the Word documents, for printing blank
- Delivered as a single ZIP download

Get the full editable documents

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