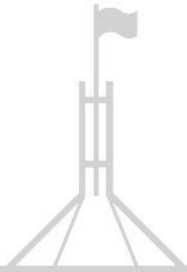




Australian Government



**Fatigue Management Policy for
Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984
employees**

APRIL 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Department of Finance (Finance) is committed to contributing to a safe and healthy working environment for staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act employees) and supporting Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees to reduce and manage the risks of fatigue in the workplace.

1.2 This policy has been developed to:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities for all individuals involved in managing fatigue in the workplace
- provide employing Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees with guidance to assist them to recognise the cause and effects of fatigue in the workplace
- provide guidance to Parliamentarians and managers on how to manage and take reasonably practicable steps to manage, mitigate and eliminate fatigue in the workplace so far as is reasonably practicable through a risk management approach
- comply with legislative frameworks and to assist in the development and implementation of a fatigue management plan which provides strategies to effectively control the risk of fatigue.

2. Principles

2.1 This policy is based on the principle that fatigue is everyone's responsibility in the workplace. Parliamentarians, managers and other MOP(S) Act employees all share a responsibility for preventing and managing fatigue in the workplace.

3. What is fatigue?

3.1 Fatigue is more than feeling tired and drowsy. In a work context, fatigue is mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces your ability to perform your work safely and effectively. All workplaces are affected to some degree by worker fatigue.

3.2 Work-related fatigue may be caused by prolonged or intense mental or physical activity, excessively long working hours, a lack of recovery time between work periods, strenuous tasks and travel time.

3.3 Non-work related fatigue may include poor quality or lack of sleep, long commute times or a medical condition.

4. Why is fatigue a problem?

4.1 Fatigue can adversely affect safety at the workplace. Fatigue reduces alertness, which may lead to errors and increase in incidents and injuries.

4.2 The effects of fatigue can be short or long term.

4.3 The long term health effects of fatigue can include:

- heart disease
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- gastrointestinal disorder
- lower fertility
- anxiety
- depression.

4.4 In the short term, a person may show signs or report symptoms including:

- constant yawning or falling asleep at work
- short-term memory problems and difficulty concentrating
- difficulty participating in conversations
- poor decision-making and judgement
- reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes
- changes in behaviour
- increase in unplanned absences or arriving late for work.
- dizziness, headaches or blurred vision

3.5 The mental and physical demands of work can contribute to a worker becoming impaired by fatigue in a number of ways.

5. Managing fatigue in the workplace

5.1 Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to ensure fatigue does not create a risk to health and safety at work.

5.2 Workplace fatigue can be minimised by Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees implementing a risk management process by:

- identifying and implementing control measures through examining work practices, systems of work, and worker records
- assessing risks by consulting workers about the impact of workloads and work schedules, including work-related travel and work outside normal hours
- in consultation with Finance, reviewing workplace incident data and human resource data and developing strategies to reduce risks.

5.3 The risk management process aims to identify all reasonably foreseeable factors which could contribute to an increase risk of fatigue and minimise them. There may not be obvious signs of fatigue at the workplace but this does not mean it is not occurring or factors or which may increase the risk of fatigue is not present.

6. Identifying factors that may contribute to fatigue

6.1 The first step of implementing a risk management approach to managing the risks of fatigue in the workplace is to identify risk factors that may contribute to fatigue.

6.2 Work-related fatigue may be caused by:

- prolonged or intense mental or physical activities
- sleep loss and/or disruption of a MOP(S) Act employee's internal body clock
- organisational change
- travel
- exceptionally hot or cold working environments
- work scheduling (including having a minimum number of hours between finishing work one day and starting work the next day) excessively long shifts
- strenuous jobs
- long commute times.

6.3 In addition to work-related factors that can contribute to fatigue, it is important to identify other lifestyle factors that cause fatigue. These can include:

- lifestyle – e.g. having care of a child, undertake voluntary work, have more than one job, level of fitness and diet

- home environment – e.g. having a noisy neighbour or a bedroom that is too hot or cold
- health condition – e.g. insomnia, sleep apnoea or alcohol/drug dependencies.

7. Assessing the risks

7.1 Assessing risks can assist in finding out:

- where, which and how many workers (including contractors and subcontractors) are likely to be at risk of becoming fatigued
- how often fatigue is likely to occur
- the degree of harm which may result from the fatigue
- what actions should be taken to control the risk of fatigue
- how urgently action to control the risk needs to be taken.

7.2 When assessing risks, contributing factors to fatigue should not be considered in isolation. For example, job demands, hours of works and environmental conditions may all increase the risk of fatigue in the workplace

8. Controlling the risk

7.1 The best way to control the health and safety risk from fatigue is to eliminate the factors causing fatigue at the source, however if elimination is not reasonably practicable, this risk must be minimised.

7.2 What is reasonably practicable to do to management the risk of fatigue will vary depending on the type of work being carried out by the person experience fatigue.

7.3 There are common areas where implementing control measures can reduce the risk of work related fatigue. These include:

- work scheduling
- job demands
- environmental conditions

Work Scheduling

7.4 Control measures for fatigue risks which can be built into a work schedule may include:

- designing working hours and rosters to allow for good sleep opportunity and enough recovery time between work days or shifts for traveling, eating, washing and sleeping
- developing a working-hours policy on a daily work hours, maximum average weekly hours, total hours over a three-month period and work-related travel
- developing procedures to manage and limit excessive working hours, for example requiring minimum breaks on a regular basis, especially during longer shifts
- ensuring workers have and take adequate and regular breaks to rest, eat and rehydrate
- managing overtime and swapping of shifts
- developing plans to deal with workload changes due to absenteeism.

Job Demands

7.5 Control measures for fatigue risks can include:

- ensuring fit-for-purpose plan and equipment is used at the work place
- encouraging workers to report concerns that they may have about work-related fatigue
- redesigning the job to limit periods of excessive mental or physical demands

- developing contingency plans for potential situations where workers may have to unexpectedly work longer hours
- planning for expected changes in work flow including anticipating peaks and troughs during the year.

Environmental Conditions

- avoid work during period of extreme temperatures
- provide a cool area where workers can take a rest break and rehydrate in hot work environments
- where possible, discuss options for ventilation and mechanical cooling devices in hot, small and enclosed spaces with Finance
- provide and maintain a workplace which is well lit, safe and secure.

9. Reviewing the risk

9.1 Once control measures are introduced, Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees should review them regularly to ensure they are effective. The frequency of reviews depends on the nature of the hazard. For example, a high-risk hazard will require more regular assessments.

9.2 Control measure should also be reviewed when:

- there is any indication risks are not being controlled
- new tasks, procedures or schedules are introduced
- changes are proposed to the work environment, working hours, or rosters
- there is an incident due to fatigue at the workplace
- new information regarding fatigue becomes available
- the results of consultation, including a request from a health and safety representative indicate that a review is necessary.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees are responsible for ensuring that their behaviours does not create or exacerbate risks.

MOP(S) Act Employees are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care to manage their own health and safety
- complying so far as reasonably able to with any reasonable instruction that is given to them by their employing Parliamentarian and manager
- understanding their responsibilities to ensure they arrive to work in a rested condition and are fit to undertake duties
- assessing their fatigue levels after they leave work and where possible organise alternative means of transport if they are fatigued
- seeking medical advice if there are concerns about the health conditions which a MOP(S) Act employee may reasonably believe affect their performance at work, for example, sleep apnoea, irregular breathing or insomnia
- taking regular breaks
- informing their employing Parliamentarian or manager of a medical condition which may limit the ability the person's ability to work and be more susceptible to fatigue

Parliamentarians and managers are responsible for:

- exercising due diligence to comply with WHS duties

- ensuring staff take reasonable breaks as required
- ensuring that there are reasonable breaks between shifts (i.e. end of one shift and the start of the next shift)
- understanding the risks and hazards associated with fatigue in the workplace
- undertaking appropriate risk assessment to mitigate fatigue in the workplace
- ensuring all staff are aware of, and understand this policy
- recognising fatigue when it occurs and take appropriate action when an employee is displaying fatigue related impairment at work

Finance is responsible for:

- consulting with MOP(S) Act employees on matters relating work health and safety including fatigue management
- providing broad work health and safety policy advice and assistance to Parliamentarians and managers in relation to fatigue management through information on the MaPS Website and MOPS Learning.
- providing broad advice and policy updates within reasonable time frames in relation to fatigue management.
- maintaining this policy in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

11. Safe travel and driver fatigue

11.1 Travel presents particular fatigue risk for MOP(S) Act employee due to the requirement to travel long distances, the time demands of work and the intensity of the work undertaken.

11.2 Evaluating whether physical travel is necessary should always be considered, or whether another means of communication to attend meeting such as telepresence or teleconferencing would be safe and more efficient.

11.3 To the extent possible MOP(S) Act employees should:

- avoid travel where other suitable communication options are available
- avoid travelling in the early mornings or late at night, particularly if driving
- avoid scheduling an early start after the travelling late the previous night, if reasonably practicable
- avoid scheduling a late meeting or starting late at an event if travel is required to commence the work next day
- consider travelling on the day before or after official business, if reasonably practicable.

11.4 Driving whilst fatigued increases the risk of have a micro sleep and losing control while at the helm of a vehicle. A micro sleep is a brief and temporary loss of consciousness lasting anywhere from a few seconds to a number of minutes.

11.5. Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees must identify and manage the risks of driver fatigue through a risk management approach.

11.6 Signs of driver fatigue include:

- sore eyes
- light boredom, restlessness
- drifting attention
- occasional yawning, drowsiness, nodding off
- difficulty in concentrating
- missing traffic signs, drifting out of lanes

11.7 Driver fatigue can be managed by:

- avoiding driving your normal sleep hours
- sharing driving duties if possible

- avoiding fatty foods and foods with high sugar content
- consuming caffeine in moderation
- avoiding drugs and/or alcohol before or during driving.

12. Related legislation and Guidelines

12.1 This policy is to be delivered in accordance with:

- *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020 - 2023*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*

13. Resources

- *Guide for Managing the Risk of Fatigue at Work*

14. Further Assistance

For queries relating to the operation of this policy please contact MOPSWHS@finance.gov.au