



Notes for the Shift Worker

Issue 1/2005

A business case for health and safety

The UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a campaign and website to persuade companies of the business case for sensible health and safety - that effective health and safety management is not only beneficial for staff but also good for the bottom line.

A national advertising campaign is underway citing company examples that have reaped the benefits in terms of improved profitability.

Besides the possible legal costs involved in a work-related accident, it's the hidden ones of covering absences, recruitment, training and production losses that really swallow a company's profits.

HSE shows cost-effective health and safety steps that a business can benefit from.

These include

- Reducing minor injuries
- Reducing reported injuries
- Reducing recruitment costs (see article on page 2 *The cost of staff turnover*)
- Reducing absenteeism
- Reducing downtime
- Reducing insurance claims and premiums
- Reducing injuries related to hours worked

A downloadable booklet "Making Health and Safety Pay" is available.

See the website www.hse.gov.uk/betterbusiness.

Sleep apnoea a bigger heart risk than smoking?

A study reported in *The Lancet* (2005; 365: 1046-53) has found that men with severe sleep apnoea had a 4.7 times higher risk of cardiovascular death compared with a matched healthy control group.

The director of Melbourne's Austin Hospital's Institute for Breathing and Sleep, Professor Rob Pierce, said sleep apnoea remained underdiagnosed and undertreated in Australia.

The head of sleep medicine at Melbourne's Alfred Hospital, Associate Professor Matthew Naughton, said that the findings provided some of the strongest evidence yet that sleep apnoea was an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Industry initiatives on rostering practices

Recent initiatives announced by WMC Resources (shortly to become BHP-Billiton) and Lanfranchi Nickel Mines, which address the retention of employees and their personal and social needs, can be expected to stimulate discussion on rosters and hours of work in the industry.

WMC Resources Ltd has determined to introduce a 8/6 roster for all employees at Leinster and Mt Keith operations while Lanfranchi Nickel Mines will operate a week on/week off roster at its Kambalda operations scheduled to commence in April.

The even time roster will result in an average 42 hour working week for employees.

Not getting enough sleep could increase hunger and appetite

Three recent studies have shown a connection between lack of sleep and obesity.

The most recent reported in the *Annals of International Medicine* looked at how sleep curtailment may cause decreased levels of leptin (a hormone associated with hunger levels) and an increase in ghrelin levels (a hormone that triggers hunger).

Participants who spent only four hours in bed had average leptin levels, 18% lower and average ghrelin levels, 27% higher than participants who spent 10 hours in bed.

The changes observed in response to sleep restriction were associated with a 24% increase in hunger and a 23% increase in appetite.

Importantly the participants' appetite for calorie-dense, high carb foods like sweets, salt snacks and starchy goods increased by 33% to 45%.

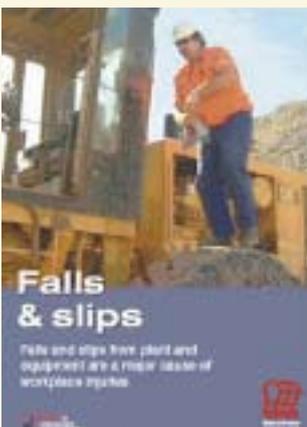
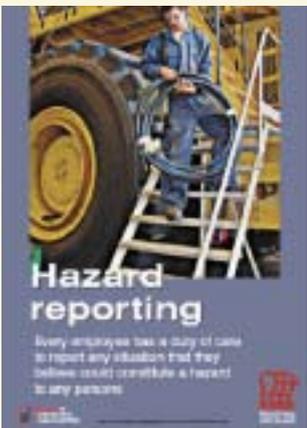
Safety posters

A series of safety posters have been developed by the MARCSTA Management Committee for general use in industry.

Most of the material has been directed towards addressing the major causes of serious injuries as reflected in the DoIR Safety Performance of the WA Minerals Industry 2003/2004.

Each set, comprising six posters, costs \$20 including GST, postage and handling.

Visit our website www.marcsta.com to obtain an order form.



Could disruption of circadian rhythms be a risk factor for breast cancer?

Researchers at Yale University's School of Medicine say that their findings suggest that the genes that control circadian rhythms might be a potential bio-marker for breast cancer.

The study looked at the features of industrialisation, electricity, altered light and artificial light at night - with the idea that the use of electric lights at night can play a role in the risk increase of breast cancer.

While their research findings and an earlier study which found increased breast cancer in the night shift nurses suggested new research directions, more investigation needs to be done.

Shiftworkers and sleep

A recent study at the Henry Ford Hospital Sleep Disorders and Research Centre, Detroit, Michigan, involving 2,570 residents ranging from 18 to 65 years, found that the prevalence of insomnia or excessive sleepiness was 32% and 26% in night and rotating shift workers respectively.

The cost of staff turnover

According to Circadian Technologies (USA) the cost to recruit and train a new extended hours worker is upwards of \$38,000 yet one third of facilities responding to their most recent "Shiftwork Practices" survey indicated having no turnover prevention program.

Circadian suggest that turnover prevention programs - periodic pay increases, vacation time, employee assistance programs, mentoring etc - are an investment with tangible returns.

What really makes a woman happy? Sleep!

The journal Science has reported that sleep quality has a greater influence on the ability to enjoy one's day than household income and even marital status.

In a study of 909 women they found that an extra hour of sleep had more of an impact on how the participants feel throughout the day than earning more money a year.

Fatigue roadblocks catch errant drivers

Road blocks east of Merredin and on the WA - SA border have highlighted that there are truck drivers clearly breaching the fatigue regulations of the OSH Act.

Fifteen drivers received on-the-spot prohibition notices and many other drivers were not allowed to continue until they had adequate rest.

Further notices will be issued and inspectors will be following up on other issues with another 81 different transport operators.

A *Code of Practice for Fatigue Management for Commercial Drivers* sector has been in operation since 1998 (www.safetyline.wa.gov.au/PageBin/codewswa0231.htm.)

The Extended Working Hours Code of Practice recommended for implementation is nearing completion.