FATIGUE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT
WA Health is committed to providing a safe workplace to achieve high standards in safety and health for its staff.

All areas of WA Health will comply with, or exceed, occupational safety and health (OSH) legal requirements and develop and implement safe systems and work practices that reflect this commitment to safety and health¹.

WA Health, its managers, supervisors and staff will work co-operatively to ensure that fatigue-related risks are identified, assessed and controlled in accordance with OSH legislative frameworks, accountabilities and tools.

Risks associated with fatigue will be managed to:
- minimise the risk of harm caused by fatigue
- maintain a safe and healthy work environment
- maintain the health and wellbeing of staff
- educate and improve awareness of the effects of fatigue.

2. SCOPE
This policy applies to all staff in WA Health, which incorporates the following entities:
- Department of Health
- Metropolitan Health Service
- WA Country Health Service
- Peel Health Service.

This policy will also apply to any other entities that become part of WA Health.

3. DEFINITIONS
Fatigue
Fatigue is an acute, ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental and physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries. It is more than feeling tired and drowsy, it is a physical condition that can occur when a person’s physical or mental limits are reached.

Fatigue can occur as a result of various factors that may be work-related, lifestyle related or a combination of both. Work factors can include the work task, work scheduling and planning, and environmental conditions. Lifestyle factors can include inadequate or poor quality of sleep due to sleep disorders, social life, secondary employment, travel time and health and wellbeing.

¹ Occupational Safety and Health Policy Statement
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Whilst not all people respond to fatigue in the same way, fatigue can cause reduced concentration, impaired co-ordination, compromised judgement and slower reaction times; ultimately increasing the risks of incidents and injuries. In a work environment, this can mean a person is unable to function safely and effectively, increasing the risk of adverse incidents.

**Shift work**

Shift work is usually described as work outside normal day hours. This includes weekend, afternoon and night shifts, rotating, split or broken shifts, extended shifts, rostered overtime and (non-rostered) extended working hours.

**Staff**

All persons working in or for WA Health including employees (permanent, temporary, sessional, full-time, part-time), contractors and volunteers.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Staff are responsible for:**

- informing themselves of the risks associated with fatigue
- avoiding behaviours and practices that may contribute to the development of fatigue, particularly those that may place themselves and/or others at risk of harm. This includes, but is not limited to, secondary employment and not using time off to recuperate
- reporting signs of fatigue that could place themselves or others at risk of harm to their manager or supervisor
- participating in strategies to reduce the risk of fatigue related harm (where required).

**Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:**

- applying risk management principles, particularly where new systems or hours of work are to be introduced, and in consultation with staff and/or unions and as per industrial agreements
- ensuring systems of work that minimise the risk of fatigue – for example, reasonable rosters, reasonable overtime practices, and adequate recuperation between shifts
- ensuring staff performing shift work or extended hours are properly supervised and that tasks are undertaken safely
- taking appropriate action when an employee is demonstrating or has demonstrated signs of fatigue that could place themselves or others at risk of harm.

**WA Health entities are responsible for:**

- identifying and managing factors in the relevant workplaces that cause fatigue and, if significant risks are identified, implementing strategies to minimise those risks, where reasonable and practicable to do so. Factors to consider include (but are not limited to):
  - mental and physical demands of the work undertaken
  - work scheduling and planning, for example, workloads, work patterns and rostering arrangements

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environmental conditions, such as adequate lighting, ventilation and equipment

- organisational culture
- individual and lifestyle factors.

- ensuring the effectiveness of any strategies or control measures introduced are monitored and assessed; and
- providing information and education to managers, supervisors and staff about risks associated with fatigue.

For further information about fatigue and/or risk management guidelines, refer to the Code of Practice: Working Hours outlined below.

**Local OSH Departments/Units are responsible for:**

- providing information, advice and consultation services regarding OSH matters and assisting with the development and implementation of OSH systems, procedures and programs.

5. **REPORTING**

Reporting will be in accordance with local health service OSH reporting frameworks and/or accreditation processes.

6. **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- Public Sector Management Act 1994
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Occupational Safety and Health Act Regulations 1996

7. **RELEVANT CODES OF PRACTICE/GUIDANCE MATERIAL**

- Code of Practice: Occupational Safety and Health in the Western Australian Public Sector (Commission for Occupational Safety and Health; 2007)
- Code of Practice: Working Hours (Commission for Occupational Safety and Health; 2006)

8. **WA HEALTH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- Risk Management Policy and Framework (February 2005)
- Occupational Safety and Health Policy Statement (September 2007)
- Local Health Service OSH frameworks, policies and procedures.

9. **AUTHORITY**

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This information is available in alternative formats upon a request.