



CASE STUDY: Carnell Group – Preventing the Onset of Worker Fatigue in Construction

Carnell Group provides specialist maintenance and support services that help ensure safety and efficiency for the UK's highway infrastructure. As an organisation, we are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all our employees, making sure everyone goes home safely at the end of each shift.

Carnell recognises that employees need to be aware of fatigue and the impact exhaustion can have on an individual's health and wellbeing. We have implemented a number of initiatives to help address the issue of fatigue in the workplace.

Policies and Regulations

We have a number of policies in place to tackle fatigue. Our policies go above and beyond those set by The Working Time Regulations (1998) and aim to prevent workers from being too exhausted to work safely and efficiently.

Our working hours policy includes the following:

- The working time for a fixed worker should not exceed 12 hours in any 24 hour period.
- The working time for mobile and night workers should not exceed 12 hours in any 24 hour work period.
- There should be a minimum 12 hours rest period between shifts, including any commuting time for fixed workers.
- There should be a minimum 11 hours uninterrupted rest for mobile workers.
- The door-to-door time should not exceed a maximum of 14 hours per shift, including commuting time for fixed workers.
- The door-to-door time for mobile workers should not exceed 14 hours.
- The weekly working time in any 14 day period should not exceed an average of 72 hours over a seven day period.

Night Work

Our operations often require night work and on calling working to complete essential works. To safeguard the health and safety of our night workers, we have implemented the following regulations:

- No employee can engage in night work unless they have undertaken an occupational health assessment.
- Our site specific risk assessment must consider the risk of fatigue when planning night work.
- No night shift should exceed 12 hours unless an 'Extension of Hours Risk Assessment' form has been completed and approved. This form must provide an explanation as to why the extension is required and show what action is being taken to reduce the risks of fatigue.

- The requirements and conditions specific to any individual should be considered as part of the management of fatigue risks in night working. Any employee concerned with any relevant conditions should be encouraged to let their line manager know in advance.
- Employees should be encouraged to spot and report any signs of fatigue.
- Employees undertaking night work that involves hazards such as confined spaces, physical strain and mentally demanding work must adhere to the eight hours in every 24 hours shift rule.

On Call Arrangements

In all circumstances, should an employee be called out to work, then an appropriate risk assessment must be undertaken, in addition to reviewing their roster pattern.

As it is likely the recommended 12 hours rest period between shifts will be disrupted, the risk of fatigue is much greater. The following regulations are in place for on call workers:

- If a worker is disturbed for more than three hours, the rest time must be taken before the start of the next shift.
- If a worker is on call for a number of consecutive days, the worker must be removed from all on call duties for the next five consecutive days to allow time to recover.

Raising Awareness

We recognise that both management and employees need to be aware of fatigue and the impact it can have on health, safety and wellbeing. The management of fatigue as well as the signs and symptoms of fatigue are communicated to all employees using the following strategies:

- We delivered a presentation about fatigue, the management of fatigue as well as the signs and symptoms associated with being exhausted to all of our employees at the 'Back 2 Work' briefing session.
- We issue wellbeing bulletins to employees about fatigue which are briefed to all employees on site as part of our start of shift briefings. The bulletins also include information about the importance of sleep to help employees improve their sleeping patterns and to help reduce the risk of fatigue. These bulletins are also displayed in our welfare cabins and vehicles on site.
- Fatigue is discussed as an integral part of each employee's site induction.

We also ask all employees to protect their health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring they are fit for work.
- Capturing and recording their travel and start of work times.
- Not reporting for work if they are fatigued.
- Informing their line manager if they are feeling exhausted.
- Making their GP aware of their working arrangements.

Monitoring Fatigue

We have developed our own application to manage and review working hours and to help us track door-to-door times. This is the time an employee leaves home and gets back home and we ensure that this does not exceed 14 hours by monitoring working hours.

Employees swipe their fobs over their phones as they leave home to record the start of the door-to-door time and swipe in again to record their start of work time. Workers are then expected to record when they finish work and when they arrive home from work.

If an employee has worked 11.5 hours, the system sends the supervisor a reminder and a copy of the Extension of Hours Risk Assessment form to be completed if the employee is going to be working more than 12 hours. This assessment must be completed and approved before the employee can work over 12 hours.

If an employee has worked more than 12 hours, the system alerts the Contracts Manager and SHEQ Department to make sure that the risk assessment is completed and to ensure the justification for working more than 12 hours is valid.

The authorisation of additional working hours is only permitted in exceptional circumstances, including:

- If there are risks to the health and safety of colleagues or the public.
- If there is a significant disruption, this might include extreme weather, equipment failure, an accident or incident of a serious nature and the shortage or unavailability of other employees.

Prior to extended hours being approved, the line manager must make an assessment of the need to extend the working hours by completing an Extension of Hours Risk Assessment. This assessment must be completed for each employee working additional hours. Consideration must be given to:

- Suspending the work entirely.
- Bringing relief staff to site.
- Standing down fatigued workers.
- Monitoring the employees who will be working extended hours.

When working extended hours, the line manager must take all reasonable steps to:

- Relieve employees as soon as possible.
- Ensure that employees are provided with 12 hours rest before their next shift.
- Make arrangements to get employees back to their place of rest at the end of the shift.

To find out more about Carnell Group, please click [here](#) to visit our website.