



## **CASE STUDY: J. Murphy & Sons Limited – *Eliminating Worker Fatigue***

J. Murphy & Sons Ltd is a leading global, multi-disciplined engineering and construction company. Core to our key values is protecting the health, safety and welfare of the workforce and mitigating any potential health and safety risks in the workplace.

### **Worker Fatigue**

Fatigue is a serious workplace hazard and we are committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable, that staff working hours will be managed so that operatives do not suffer injury, ill-health or any other detrimental impact through working excessive hours. Operatives should be able to do their jobs properly without the need to work very long hours.

An employee must not commence or continue work if they are fatigued to such an extent that their condition may prejudice their safety or the safety of others. Managers must not plan work arrangements for employees who are fatigued or are likely to become fatigued during the work period. Managers and supervisors are authorised to prevent any employee from commencing work or continuing work if they believe an operative is fatigued.

### **Monitoring Working Hours**

Our projects operate under different management systems and contractual arrangements. It is therefore appropriate that the monitoring of working hours is undertaken by project leaders. Effective arrangements must be in place to monitor working hours and to review exceedances to the following:

- No employee should be allowed to work more than 14 hours on any given day, this includes door-to-door travel time and rest periods.
- Travel time should not exceed one and a half hours each way per day if driving, or two hours otherwise.
- Time off in lieu should be granted where additional working time is authorised in advance for a specific operational requirement.
- Time off in lieu accrued should be taken by agreement with the line manager within four weeks of being earned and prior to transfer to another project.
- All employees should take at least one break every year of two consecutive weeks.

We believe it is in the employee's and the company's interests that staff take their full allocation of annual leave and not accumulate significant amounts of untaken leave. Employees should take their full annual leave entitlement within the holiday year. A maximum of five days annual leave may be permitted to be carried forward, to be taken within three months of the following year.

Where exceedances are required, management will ensure that these are justified, minimised and risk assessed for health and safety implications and that arrangements are in place to control the identified associated risks.

## **Driver Fatigue**

Driver fatigue is a serious problem, causing thousands of road accidents each year. Research shows that driver fatigue may be a contributory factor in up to 20% of road accidents and up to 25% of fatal and serious accidents. These types of crashes are around 50% more likely to result in death or serious injury as they tend to be high speed impacts because a driver who has fallen asleep cannot brake or swerve to avoid or reduce the impact.

Sleepiness reduces action time, vigilance, alertness and concentration so that the ability to drive is impaired. It is clear that drivers are aware of when they are feeling tired and so make a conscious decision about whether to continue driving or to stop for a rest. It may be that those who persist in driving underestimate the risks of falling asleep at the wheel.

Crashes caused by tired drivers are most likely to happen:

- After drinking alcohol.
- Between 2am and 6am.
- Between 2pm and 4pm.
- After having less sleep than normal.
- On long journeys on monotonous roads.
- After long working hours or on journeys home after long shifts.

To minimise the risk of driver fatigue, we recommend:

- Plan an overnight stop if necessary.
- Avoid driving between 2am and 6am.
- Plan the journey to include regular rest breaks.
- Be extra careful when driving between 2pm and 4pm.
- Avoid setting out on a long drive after having worked a full day.
- If you are feeling tired, stop somewhere safe and take a break.
- Avoid driving in the period when you would normally be falling asleep.
- Try to ensure you are well rested and feeling fit and healthy before starting long journeys.

To find out more about J. Murphy & Sons Limited, please click [here](#) to visit our website.