



Spotlight on...
worker fatigue

**CONSIDERATE
CONSTRUCTORS
SCHEME**

Case Study: Robertson

Preventing Fatigue in the Workplace

Robertson is one of the largest independently owned construction, infrastructure and support services in the UK. We are committed to delivering the highest standards of health, safety and wellbeing on all of our projects and programmes, embedding these standards into all of our activities.

WORKER FATIGUE

We take the issue of worker fatigue very seriously and understand the health and safety risks associated with feeling exhausted. Studies have shown that being awake for around 17 hours has a similar effect as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We are committed to achieving a high standard of fatigue management on all of our workplaces and construction sites.

We have developed a fatigue management procedure which establishes minimum standards acceptable for a safe working environment. This includes a fatigue risk management process and fatigue self-assessment system to monitor and control fatigue.

Like any other hazard in the workplace, when fatigue has the potential to impact an individual's ability to work safely, it will be identified, risk assessed and controlled to protect operatives and to prevent the prevalence of near-misses, accidents, injuries and ill-health.

FATIGUE RISK MANAGEMENT

The fatigue risk management process, in the context of work activity safety, is the process of identifying hazards, assessing the likelihood and consequences of the risks of injury and illness occurring and eliminating risks (where reasonably practicable) or implementing control measures to appropriately manage the risks posed by fatigue. This procedure will then be undertaken with the workplace health and safety representatives.

Alongside the fatigue risk management procedure, our fatigue self-assessment must be completed if safety critical workers are either displaying signs of fatigue or reporting feeling tired at work. After this assessment, the safety critical worker might be suspended from working for a short period of time, or other relevant control measures will be implemented to manage, mitigate and eliminate the risk of fatigue.

Robertson identifies the potential causes of fatigue, including long working hours, concentrating for long periods of time, limited rest breaks, travelling long distances and personal issues. We analyse working hours, compare planned hours with actual hours and consult with our employees about their shift patterns, workloads and working hours in advance to allow adequate time for construction works to be completed.

TOOLBOX TALKS

Robertson holds awareness sessions and weekly toolbox talks on health, safety and wellbeing issues in the workplace, including fatigue. Such discussions seek to engage with the workforce and improve health, safety and welfare standards on site. Our discussions inform operatives and give them a better understanding of fatigue, the dangers of working while fatigued and the risks of commuting to and from work while fatigued.

RESOURCES

Robertson directs operatives toward external resources, including the Construction Industry Helpline and PPP Healthcare to provide operatives with additional guidance, information and support.

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PPP Healthcare helps to raise awareness about the importance of getting enough sleep. We recognise that sleep is the most effective strategy for preventing and managing fatigue. An adult generally needs between seven and eight hours of sleep each night and when someone gets less sleep than they need, they build up a sleep debt which can cause fatigue. With the help of PPP Healthcare, operatives are educated about the importance of sleep and encouraged to complete a sleep diary to monitor their sleeping patterns and sleeping habits.

We also provide operatives with drop-in centres for health assessments to protect the health and wellbeing of operatives to make sure they are fit for work. This is particularly because fatigue is associated with long-term health risks, including depression, heart disease, high blood pressure and gastrointestinal disorders.



WELFARE FACILITIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Robertson provides the highest standard of welfare facilities so operatives can rest and enjoy their breaks in a comfortable, stress-free environment. We also take care to consider the effects of working conditions which can cause fatigue, such as extreme temperatures, noise, vibration and poor visibility by implementing effective controls to manage working conditions and to protect the workforce from fatigue.

CULTURE

Robertson fosters a positive health and safety culture on all of our sites, offices and factories. We operate an open door policy where all operatives are encouraged to discuss any health and safety concerns they might have by speaking to a manager or contacting the Robertson confidential reporting line. All workers are required to look after themselves and each other to safeguard against fatigue.

