



SAFETY SHARE

January 14, 2016

Fatigue / Sleep

A person's safety whether at work, at home or at play can be influenced by many factors; weather, time, condition of equipment etc. But **many times safety is compromised by simple fatigue or lack of sleep.**

It is estimated that worldwide.... sleep-deprived workers cost the global economy \$350 billion dollars each year. This is just the estimated economic impact! The cost in human terms (i.e. loss of life, permanent disability, family trauma, etc.) is beyond measure.

So...why is this important to your business? It is important for two primary reasons:

The health and safety of its employees

The protection of business assets and the business as a whole

Sleep is as basic to survival as food and water. Losing as little as 2 hours of sleep can negatively affect alertness and performance. Sleep deprivation affects a person's alertness and ability to respond to an emergency.

Symptoms of too little sleep can include: decreased judgment; basic decision-making and memory; slower reaction time; lack of concentration; and mood changes. Lack of sleep combined with physical exhaustion can eventually create a situation where the body will basically shut itself down and the individual will fall asleep no matter what is done to stay awake (even with today's drugs). This is the body's mechanism to keep from literally running itself to death.

As you can guess, falling asleep on the job or coming to work fatigued can have serious consequences. It has been noted that during surveys of crews and facilities that fatigue is alive and well. The long, and many times irregular, hours that are inherent to the asphalt and aggregate business can create an atmosphere where fatigue can come easily.

So...what can be done? The most obvious thing is to get enough sleep (generally 7-9 hours of sleep per night is the recommended amount of sleep needed for optimal performance and health in healthy adults). It's understood that this amount of sleep is not always possible.... but **remember that lost sleep is never gained back, in other words you can't make up for lost sleep during the week by sleeping all weekend.... what's lost is lost.**

The next major thing that can be done is to fight fatigue. This can be accomplished by proper nutrition, exercise and controlling stress as much as possible. Of these, proper nutrition is the most important. Fatty foods, junk foods and foods high in sugars do not provide the lasting energy needed to produce peak performance and overall health.

Fatigue can easily lead to an accident, and that accident could be fatal for you, a co-worker or even a family member.

Remember: Good health and alertness is as important to job safety as any piece of safety equipment.