

FATIGUE MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS IT WORTH TO YOUR COMPANY?



By Corinne Watson

Driving after being awake for 24 hours is equivalent to driving with a Blood Alcohol Level twice the allowable legal limit. It is against the law to drive in a state of fatigue! It is deemed to be driving dangerously, recklessly and carelessly.

Fatigue in the workplace can compromise the health and safety of staff and other road users so it is something that needs to be taken seriously. Even though you are not the one doing the driving, the responsibility of managing fatigue falls on the shoulders of both the employer and employee. The consequence of driving whilst fatigued, impacts not only on that driver, but can also impact on you as their manager. Some important reasons why you should take an interest in managing fatigue are:

- Legally speaking – ‘Chain of Responsibility’ legislation means that if a tired driver is charged with dangerous, reckless or careless driving, you could be charged with contributing to the offence
- The ‘Operator Rating System’ is now billed as going live 1st July 2009 and is likely to be accompanied by a Performance Programme which will recognise proactive management of fatigue with a positive impact on your published rating score


- Fatigued drivers are more prone to having an accident which can end up costing your company time and money

When someone is suffering from fatigue they are prone to having something known as a ‘Micro-sleep’ - this is when your brain switches off causing you to fall asleep. It is completely uncontrollable and most commonly occurs when a person is driving. Generally it will only last for a few seconds but it is certainly long enough for an accident to occur and that is something that every company wants to avoid. Fatigue is hard to recognise so, as a Manager what can you do to help your drivers avoid becoming fatigued in the first place? Education is an effective way to start managing fatigue, for example, many people know that taking a ‘Power Nap’ can help to combat the effects of fatigue but did you know that these naps should be limited to 40 minutes. Knowing the standards that have been set as safety measures to help prevent fatigue in drivers is very important. Both you and your drivers being aware of the new ‘work hours’ and their implications for fatigue is a very powerful tool in helping to reduce the chances of fatigue becoming a problem for your company.

Generating timesheet reports from your GPS system is an easy and effective way to monitor

drivers’ hours. You can see who is close to their maximum hours or done more hours than usual. This sort of information can help you determine potential problems before they happen.

You can also use your GPS System to gain information that will help you deduce the state of your drivers. Some systems report on heavy acceleration, braking and cornering and you can have the system send you an alert to let you know when these events are occurring. Fatigue can cause an increase in these events so a system capable of capturing this information in real time can be a very effective device in helping you to monitor the current state of your drivers. If the alerts start coming through thick and fast for a particular vehicle, you need to quickly make the right call for the safety of that driver. Acting on this information as it happens can help to avoid a potential accident, protect your driver, your customers’ product and your company.

When you think about it, a system that can deliver that sort of real time information in today’s world of new ‘Work Hour’ rules and the introduction of the ‘Operator Rating System’ could be as valuable to your company as the drivers themselves or your invoicing team. Let’s keep it safe out there. 



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