



Health and Safety Toolbox Talks

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TOOLBOX TALK:

Managing Shift Work

Speaker: Safety Manager/Foreman

Audience: Workers

I. Introduction

2 min

The goals of today's Toolbox Talk are to:

- **Goal 1.** Identify strategies to sleep better before and after shifts
- **Goal 2.** Identify ways to eat better for irregular shifts

Working different shifts makes it hard to get enough quality sleep and eat regularly to stay healthy. Low-quality sleep and bad eating habits can harm our bodies. We will identify the things we can do to sleep well and eat healthy when working irregular shifts.

II. Discussion Questions

5 min

- What strategies do you use to cope with irregular shifts?
- What do you think can be done to make workers feel more comfortable with shift work?
- What should we do at the worksite to prevent safety problems resulting from shift work?

III. Sleep

5 min

There are a variety of ways to cope with sleep problems caused by shift work. Find the approach that will help you the most based on your individual needs, your shifts, and your environment at home.

- What will help you to have better quality sleep? (*Note to presenter: start a discussion first and then provide the workers with the following methods*)

- Your family and living companions have a vital role in helping you to sleep better. Post a shift work calendar to help them keep track of your schedule. Get them to reduce the levels of noise and light in the home during your sleep hours.
- Take a 15-minute nap in the heated trailer on the site when you feel tired.
- Get 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep each day (most people need this much).
- Stay on the same sleep schedule every day (even on days off) because keeping a regular sleep schedule will help you align your body clock with your sleep pattern, and hence increase the quality of your sleep.
- Make your sleep space comfortable, dark, and quiet. Avoid lighted screens of cell phones, tablets, computers, etc., 60 to 90 minutes before bed.

Taking breaks at least every 3 to 4 hours or switching tasks regularly can help with your fatigue from lack of quality sleep. Remember to not drive or operate equipment if you feel sleepy. Drowsiness increases your risk of a car crash or other incidents.

IV. Diet

3 min

Shift work may cause workers to eat at odd times and have more limited food options. In addition, stomach problems are common among shift workers. Better eating habits can help workers feel less tired (*Note to presenter: provide the following methods to help workers eat better*)

- Eat healthy snacks, such as fruits and nuts (option to keep fruits fresh in the cooler provided).
- Limit use of caffeine, especially 5 hours or more before bed.
- Have a hot meal while on site using the microwave.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated (water cases provided in the trailer).
- Limit consumption of alcohol and avoid any alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime.

IV. Conclusions

2 min

If you have any questions about what we discussed today, please reach out to the safety manager or your foreman.

Are there any questions?

Thanks for your time!

Sources

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