

Hazard Alert

No: 1609/004
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Job Planning and Fatigue Management

Incident:

A subcontractor was providing traffic management for a night time mobile road marking operation. The driver of a utility towing an AWMMS trailer fell asleep behind the wheel and crashed into the back of the Truck Mounted Attenuator (TMA). The driver sustained lower back pain due to whiplash and was unfit for work for seven days.



Factors:

Organisational, individual and team failings led to this incident occurring.

- Minimal time to plan the job which reduced the workers available to undertake the job
- The expectation for workers to switch shift patterns at short notice was high and unreasonable
- Accommodation was provided, but the employee decided that he wanted to travel each day, adding three hours extra onto each day
- The employee (driver) had spent the previous day with his family and hadn't rested and had taken calls from his employer
- The employer had made calls to the employee during their allocated rest time
- The driver had fallen asleep on two occasions earlier that night and was woken by the STMS
- The team disregarding and downplaying the severity of these visual warning signs (previously falling asleep) by the driver himself and by his supervising STMS
- The driver was not wearing his seat belt which was a contributing factor to the outcome of his injuries.

Recommendations:

- When planning jobs the person planning should:
 - provide maximum opportunity for the worker to have sufficient rest and to readjust to different work times/shifts
 - avoid multiple changes of shifts from day to night, especially where work may be delayed due to weather or other requirements
 - establish a review process to check on workers fatigue levels at commencement of new shifts
 - give greater consideration to the resources required to undertake the job if planning at short notice.
- Where accommodation is provided, the expectation is that workers will use this accommodation and this use will be for rest and relaxation. Where this is not practicable, an alternate plan to manage fatigue and schedules should be made
- Supervisors/Managers are to ensure all workers are fit for work
- Ask workers who are doing night shift what's an appropriate time to contact them during the day, and remind workers of the need to rest during the day
- Reinforce to workers that everyone has a responsibility towards the safety of all workers and the public, and to address any adverse behaviours, including the duty/right to stop work that is unsafe (in this incident stopping the worker from continuing to drive)
- Reinforce requirement to wear a seat belt
- Reinforce with managers/supervisors the importance and responsibility for managing fatigue.

Link to: [Fatigue Management Standard](#)



What am I doing?

What could go wrong?

How could I do it safer?