

Fatigue Management

A guide

Introduction

In 1998 a document was produced called the Northern Territory Road Transport Fatigue Management Code of Practice. This document was created to provide operators in the road transport industry with a basic set of guiding principles (refer Section 6.1 of the Code) that should be applied in the management of fatigue in the workplace.

Fatigue Management ... A Guide has been developed to enable operators to periodically audit their own fatigue management systems. This document will help you to ensure that the systems you have put in place are continuing to be effective in reducing the impact of fatigue in the road transport industry.

How to use *Fatigue Management ... A Guide*

Fatigue management systems, like any management systems, can be broken down into component parts, which are:

1. responsibilities
2. training
3. scheduling
4. health assessments
5. vehicle standards
6. review

This guide will help you to ensure your fatigue management system meets the requirements of each of these elements and will ask you questions to enable you to check its effectiveness. Once you have done this you can prepare an action plan to enable you to rectify any problems that you may have identified. This guide must be read in conjunction with the Code.

Some road transport operations may not neatly fit all of the elements contained in the guide. Fatigue management systems should have the flexibility to accommodate aspects of the operation which may be unique to a particular sector of the industry, for example, livestock transport, haulage to remote communities or tourist vehicle and coach operations. Operators must conduct risk assessments to ensure that their drivers are able to accommodate these aspects and are not driving when fatigued.

Why should I use this guide?

Under the Work Health legislation all employers have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace. The road transport industry is no different except that the workplace may be a long haul transport vehicle or a tourist coach.

Employers also have a duty of care to identify the hazards in the workplace, assess the risks and control the risks. In this case the hazard is the effects of fatigue on long distance truck drivers and tourist coach operators. The risk assessment is high and the control is to implement a fatigue management system. To this end employers must have a fatigue management system in place and this document will help you check your compliance with the Code. This in turn will ensure that you are meeting your duty of care.

What will happen if I don't have a fatigue management system in place?

Whilst the Code is voluntary, failure to manage the issue of fatigue in the road transport industry is a breach of duty of care of the Work Health Act and can incur a fine of \$125,000 for a body corporate or \$25,000 for an individual. Compliance with the Code will ensure this doesn't happen and more importantly will make our roads a safer place to be.

1. Responsibilities

With regard to the road transport industry everyone within the industry has a duty of care to ensure that fatigue is being effectively managed, including owner/operators, managers, drivers, schedulers, freight forwarders, consignors, receivers, subcontractor drivers and tourist vehicle and coach operators. The individual responsibilities are listed below except where the company has only one person, the owner, then that person will have responsibility for all the positions listed.

1.1 Owner / Operator / Manager

The owner / operator / manager accepts responsibility for the implementation of the fatigue management policy.

Definitions

Owner / operator - a person/ body who is the registered owner or operator of the vehicle used for the transport of people or freight.

Manager - a person / body that employs people or subcontractors for the transport of people or freight.

1.1.1 Has the manager signed a fatigue management policy?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

(The policy document should be on public display and widely distributed to all relevant staff and work areas.)

1.1.2 Has the Manager implemented a Fatigue Management system and has any documentation been issued to relevant staff?

(Note: relevant staff would be any one involved in the driving process directly or indirectly eg; managers, drivers, schedulers or administrators)

YES NO

If 'yes', how?:

(Should sight the documentation and see that it is distributed to relevant staff and work areas.)

1.2 Schedulers

Schedulers will ensure that consideration is given to the guiding principles of the Code when preparing driver rosters.

Definitions

Scheduler - a person who is responsible for the preparation of driver rosters and trip schedules.

1.2.1 Has the scheduler been advised of the requirement to implement the guiding principles when preparing driver rosters and trip schedules?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

1.2.2 Does the scheduler undertake risk assessments on a regular basis to ensure rosters and trip schedules comply with the guiding principles?

(Note: Whilst it is not necessary to undertake a risk assessment prior to every trip which follows a routine schedule, an initial risk assessment should be undertaken and further assessments should be conducted as part of the review of the fatigue management system. Risk assessments should be conducted for any trips which involve irregular schedules or factors. . Risk assessments should be recorded in writing and maintained for audit/review)

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

(Should sight risk assessment documentation.)

1.2.3 Does the scheduler maintain a record of drivers' working hours showing the duration of trips, meal and other breaks, and overnight stops, as part of this risk assessment?

YES

NO

If 'yes', how?

(Drivers' records should be available and should be kept for a period of 5 years.)

1.3 Drivers

Drivers will ensure that they present themselves fit for work in accordance with the Code and in particular the following:

- Driver must present in a fit state free from alcohol and drugs;
- Drivers need to be rested prior to starting work and this includes limiting “out of work” activities that could be detrimental to their fitness for work;
- Drivers need to monitor their own performance and take regular periods of rest to avoid continuing work when tired.

(Note: For tourist operations, which are based around passenger itineraries, adequate periods should be allocated as rest breaks for drivers. Drivers should be made aware of times which have been scheduled as rest breaks, and should ensure that these breaks are utilized.)

1.3.1 Have drivers been advised of these requirements?

YES NO

If ‘yes’, how?

(Check if there is anything in writing to confirm that drivers have been informed.)

1.3.2 Do drivers participate in regular risk assessments to ensure compliance with the Code?

YES NO

If ‘yes’, how?

(Check if risk assessment records indicate drivers have been involved.)

1.4 Subcontractor companies / drivers

Subcontractor companies / drivers will ensure that they comply with the Code.

Definitions
Subcontractor companies / drivers - A company or individual that has entered into an agreement with another person or organisation to carry persons or freight on their behalf.

1.4.1 Are subcontractor companies / drivers made aware of their obligations to comply with the Code?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

(Check if there is anything in writing to verify – for example, contract documentation.)

1.5 Freight forwarders / consignors / receivers / wholesalers

Freight forwarders, consignors, receivers and wholesalers have a duty of care to abide by the Code and must not place unreasonable demands on the transport operator to perform a task contrary to the guiding principles of the Code.

Definitions

Freight forwarder / consignor - a person / body responsible for the commissioning of the carriage of freight.

Receiver - a person / body who pays for and / or takes possession of the freight.

Wholesaler - a person / body responsible for selling of things in large quantities to be retailed by others (including tour wholesalers).

1.5.1 Are freight forwarders / consignors / receivers / wholesalers advised of the need to comply with the Code?

YES

NO

NOT APPLICABLE

If 'yes', how?

(Check if there is anything in writing to confirm that consignors, receivers etc have been informed eg: contract clauses, invoices.)

2. Training

Management needs to ensure that all workers are trained in all aspects of fatigue management and also make available lifestyle information relevant to maintaining good health in this industry.

2.1 Are all staff inducted in the implementation of the fatigue management program?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

(This could include being given a copy of the code of practice, company policy or fatigue management manual and being explained the contents by a suitably competent person endorsed by management. The staff member once they are sure they are fully conversant with the program should have signed off and dated some form of documentation to verify. This record should be kept for that staff member. Further information regarding training resources can be obtained from the ATANT.)

2.2 Is lifestyle information/counselling available to assist drivers to maintain an appropriate level of health and fitness that is required to do the work safely?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

(This can be demonstrated by having information available for drivers or by having discussions with drivers organised by management. Ask for evidence of this.)

3. Scheduling

Schedulers must be able to demonstrate that they give due consideration to the guiding principles of the Code when preparing driver rosters and trip schedules. Risk assessments should be done to take the following into consideration.

3.1 Are drivers given time to plan for long shifts?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.2 Are drivers given clear instruction when unfamiliar work (eg; new destinations or carrying different loads) and/or irregular work hours are unavoidable?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.3 Is early morning driving avoided where possible in consideration of increased risk factors between midnight and sunrise?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.4 Is there adequate time allocated for sleep and rest during and following each trip?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.5 Do schedules take into consideration the need for drivers to take rests?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.6 Are drivers returning from leave made aware of the risks of longer working hours?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

3.7 Do drivers have at least two 24 hour periods of rest in every 14 days?

YES NO

(Note: some extended tours or trips of longer than 14 days will require special arrangements to allow drivers to compensate for an extended work schedule, and should be taken into account in risk assessments.)

If 'yes', how?

3.8 Where midnight to sunrise work exceeds two consecutive nights are provisions made for the driver to recover sleep debt?

YES NO

(Note: it is recognised that some tourist operations are required to conclude after midnight or commence before sunrise. The increased risk from regular late/early shifts should be reflected in risk assessments and accommodated in the driver’s schedule.)

If ‘yes’, how?

(Should sight rosters, driver records and risk assessments for verification of compliance.)

4. Health Assessments

Management should be aware of fatigue indicators (refer Section 5.4 in the Code) and should ensure drivers undertake regular medical assessments.

(Note: The Northern Territory has adopted the NRTC Medical Examinations for Commercial Vehicle Drivers. Commercial passenger vehicle driver licences and the transport of dangerous goods include legislative provisions for health assessments. Whilst it is recommended drivers of other forms of commercial transport undertake regular medical assessments, this is an advisory measure only, and is not required under legislation.)

4.1 Are drivers given pre-employment and / or regular health assessments?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

5. Vehicle Standards

Management must ensure that all vehicles are provided and maintained in accordance with the appropriate roadworthy standards to ensure the safety of the drivers and the general public is maximised.

5.1 Does the operator follow a maintenance schedule for servicing vehicles?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

5.2 Are vehicles used for long trips provided with an appropriate sleeper cab or bunk in accordance with the appropriate Australian Standard?

YES NO NOT APPLICABLE

If 'yes', how?

5.3 If not, is other appropriate accommodation provided on long journeys?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

5.4 Are vehicles used for long haul trips fitted with air conditioning and heating as appropriate?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

5.5 Are sleeper cabs/bunks fitted with air conditioning?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

6. Review

Management must ensure that their fatigue management system is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This will include ensuring that the system is being used as it should.

6.1 Is there a routine audit procedure scheduled to review the fatigue management system to ensure that it is being implemented as it should (eg quarterly or six monthly reviews)?

YES NO

If 'yes', how?

7. Signature

This document can be used for internal self-audit or as part of an external review of your fatigue management system. When the document is completed, a signed and dated copy should be kept on file to demonstrate a review has taken place.

7.1 The document should be signed and dated by the owner/manager or appropriate representative when it is completed.

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Signature

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Date

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Name (print)

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Position