



Policy

Fatigue Management Policy

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1. Purpose and Authority

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) is committed to providing, and supporting Parliamentarians to provide, safe, respectful, and healthy working environments. It is recognised that impairment in the workplace from fatigue can pose a significant risk to work health and safety (WHS) if not managed appropriately. Fatigue is mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces a person's ability to perform their work safely and effectively.

This policy provides a framework which aims at preventing, or minimising, risks to the health and safety of employees through:

- adopting a consultative approach to the management of fatigue at work
- reducing the risks associated with fatigue in the workplace
- ensuring that WHS and other legislative obligations are supported
- providing education and information regarding fatigue in the workplace.

This policy is underpinned by the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) which places a duty of care on the persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of those in the workplace. This includes identifying hazards and risks associated with fatigue within the workplace and implementing controls to mitigate these risks.

This policy applies to the following Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplace (CPW) participants, collectively referred to throughout this policy as "employees":

- Parliamentarians
- Members of Parliament (Staff) Act (MOP(S) Act) employee
- designated workers who carry out work in any capacity for a business or undertaking of the Commonwealth constituted by the provision of support to a Parliamentarian (a worker within the meaning of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011). This includes authorised persons, trainees, work experience students and volunteers.

2. Key principles

- Fatigue is recognised as an unavoidable WHS hazard present in CPWs, resulting from the unique demands of the Parliament that can necessitate long and irregular hours.
- The mental and physical demands of work can lead to impairment from fatigue which can adversely affect workplace safety through reduced alertness, which may lead to errors and an increase in incidents and injuries.
- Fatigue management is a shared responsibility between parliamentarians and their employees as it involves factors both inside and outside of work.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Employees

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety in the workplace including reducing risks associated with fatigue where practicable
- Gain an understanding of fatigue and how to prevent it through education and training
- Monitor their fitness for duty, including aiming to have sufficient rest to fulfil their duties, monitor their own levels of fatigue and taking steps to manage them where practicable

- Comply with any reasonable instruction issued by their supervisor relating to preventing and managing fatigue, including taking regular work breaks
- Comply with their obligations under the WHS Act 2011, ensuring they don't affect the health and safety of others
- Inform their supervisor, Parliamentarian or the PWSS if they have reasonable concern for themselves or others in relation to fatigue.

3.2 Authorised persons

Strong leadership plays a crucial role in creating safe and healthy workplaces that minimise the potential harm associated with the fatigue. For those in leaderships roles, this includes:

- promoting awareness of this policy and available supports
- ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees
- understanding the hazards and risks associated with fatigue in their workplace
- as far as reasonably practicable, managing work schedules, rostering arrangements, workloads, travel and other work demands in such a way that employees have adequate opportunities for rest
- consulting with employees when making decisions regarding rostering and allocating tasks
- ensuring that there are processes in place in their workplace to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety connected with fatigue
- providing information, education, training, instruction and supervision necessary to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with fatigue in the workplace
- encouraging employees to report concerns that they may have about work-related fatigue
- reporting and responding to incidents where fatigue has been a contributing factor
- recognising fatigue when it occurs and taking appropriate action when an employee is displaying fatigue related impairment at work, including providing appropriate support.

3.3 Parliamentarians

The WHS Act requires the Commonwealth as persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that employees and others are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, including those associated with the impact of fatigue at work.

Parliamentarians, supported by senior officials within the PWSS and the Department of Finance (Finance), have shared responsibility under the WHS Act to exercise 'due diligence' and take a systematic approach to managing risks with the primary aim of eliminating the risk, or if this is not possible, minimising the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

To ensure the health and safety of employees, Parliamentarians will (in addition to the responsibilities listed above):

- enable work environments where risks to health and safety associated with fatigue are eliminated if possible or minimised as far as reasonably practicable
- develop and implement systems at work that promote safety and harm minimisation
- ensuring that controls to manage the risks associated with fatigue are documented in the Electorate Office WHS Risk Register, Travel WHS Risk Register and APH WHS Risk Register, which are reviewed regularly
- monitor and review additional hours worked to ensure they are reasonable and necessary
- consult with staff regarding any consistent additional hours

- monitor worker's health and safety conditions in the workplace
- provide information, education, training, instruction and supervision necessary to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with fatigue in the workplace.

3.4 Parliamentary Workplace Support Service

The PWSS has a shared responsibility with Parliamentarians under the WHS Act to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that employees and others are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, including those associated with the impact of fatigue at work.

To ensure the health and safety of employees, the PWSS will (in addition to the responsibilities listed above):

- support parliamentarians and authorised officers to identify risks to health and safety from fatigue and implement mitigations so that these risks are eliminated if possible or minimised as far as reasonably practicable
- deliver training to support parliamentarians and their employees to implement strategies to reduce the risk of fatigue
- enable parliamentarians and their employees to access counselling and support to develop individual strategies to manage fatigue
- provide early intervention assistance to an employee who has been negatively impacted by fatigue in the workplace.

4. Effects of Fatigue on Safety and Wellbeing

The mental and physical demands of work can contribute to a worker becoming fatigued. Fatigue can adversely affect safety at the workplace through reduced alertness, which may lead to errors and an increase in incidents and injuries.

Safe Work Australia's draft Model Code of Practice for managing fatigue risks at work notes that fatigue can have a range of effects on workers' physical and psychological health. The short-term effects can include:

- constant yawning or falling asleep at work
- short-term memory and concentration problems
- difficulty participating in conversations
- poor decision-making and judgement
- reduced hand-eye coordination or slowed reflexes
- longer reaction time
- changes in behaviour
- increase in unplanned absences or arriving late for work
- dizziness, headaches or blurred vision.

5. Fatigue Risk Management

The impact of fatigue in the workplace can be mitigated using a consultative risk management approach by:

- identifying hazards which may contribute to fatigue
- assessing the risks of fatigue occurring
- implementing controls to manage the risks

- reviewing the effectiveness of risk controls.

5.1 Identifying Hazards

Fatigue hazards can be identified by:

- reviewing tasks, work demands, work hours and resources
- inspecting the work environment and suitability of facilities
- consulting with employees to gain their input
- reviewing any incident / injury reports where fatigue may have been a factor

Examples of factors which may present a fatigue hazard are included at [Attachment A](#).

5.2 Assessing Risks

Assessing risks involves determining:

- how many employees are at risk of fatigue and how often fatigue is likely to occur
- the degree of harm which may result from the fatigue
- how urgently action to control the risk needs to be taken – all risks should be eliminated or controlled and risks identified as “high” should be addressed in a timely manner

Potential incidents which may occur because of fatigue can include:

- errors when following safe work procedures resulting in unsafe acts or exposure to hazards
- accidents due to the loss of control of vehicles
- slips, trips or falls when performing tasks which require balance and coordination
- lapses in attention with tasks requiring a high degree of concentration
- increased risk of musculoskeletal disorders due to tiredness of muscles or a degree of physical exhaustion.

5.3 Employee Engagement

Consultation with employees is an important component of the risk management process and engaging with employees can facilitate the identification of effective and sustainable risk controls to manage fatigue in the workplace. The [Set the Standard Report](#) recommends the following principles be considered when reviewing work arrangements for MOP(s) Act employees:

- **Predictability:** While there is a need for political spontaneity in the chamber, parliamentarians, MOP(S) Act employees and employees of the parliamentary departments require certainty in their work schedules, so that they can meet commitments outside of work, including caring responsibilities.
- **Agency:** Where practicable, people should be entitled and empowered to choose working arrangements that best suit their personal circumstances.
- **Flexibility:** Where possible, people should have the opportunity to work flexibly, including through the use of remote work.
- **Effectiveness:** Work arrangements, sitting hours and patterns and chamber processes should support effective work at an individual level, as well as the effective delivery of the business of government.
- **Compassionate leadership:** Leaders within Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces should model compassionate leadership and be empowered to support their employees or party members in balancing work with other commitments.

5.4 Controlling Risks

To control the health and safety risks from fatigue, the factors causing fatigue should be eliminated at the source. If elimination is not reasonably practicable, the risks should be minimised.

Attachment A lists some common fatigue hazards and suggested risk controls. It also includes a Risk Indicator to assist in determining the risk rating for each hazard. Risk which are rated as high should be treated more urgently. This table should be used as a guide to assist with the identification of fatigue hazards and the implementation of risk controls.

Controls to manage the risks associated with fatigue should be documented in the Electorate Offices WHS Risk Register.

5.5 Reviewing Risk Controls

Risk controls should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective especially when:

- changes are proposed to the work environment, working hours, tasks or procedures
- there is an incident at the workplace where fatigue was a factor
- new information about fatigue becomes available
- a review is requested by the health and safety representative.

When reviewing risk controls ensure consultation with employees occurs to facilitate employee engagement and the identification of necessary changes to ensure risk controls remain effective.

6. Contacts and Resources

In an Emergency

When anyone is in immediate danger, please [call 000](#) for police or ambulance assistance.

To arrange emergency services in Australian Parliament House (APH), call APH Security on 02 6277 7117. Security will ring 000 and meet the first responders on arrival.

Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS)

The PWSS is available to provide a range of human resource and work health and safety support and guidance to Parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act employees. We also provide wellbeing support, conflict resolution and early intervention to all employees.

The PWSS can also be contacted via phone 24/7 on **1800 747 977**, by SMS on 0487 112 755, email at support@PWSS.gov.au, or in person at M2.105 in APH from 8.30am-8pm sitting days or 8.30am-5pm all other business days. Visit <https://pwss.gov.au> for more information.

Employee Assistance Provider (EAP)

MOP(S) Act employees and their families can access EAP services for work or personal issues, by calling 1300 360 364 or visit one.telushealth.com | **Username:** pwss | **Password:** Wellbeing

Before Blue Program

MOP(S) Act employees can access an early intervention mental health program which provides tools and support to manage stress, build resilience, and enhance overall mental wellbeing. The service can be accessed without a GP referral or mental health treatment plan. You can access the program by calling **03 9810 6100** or submitting an [enquiry](#). Employees can access the digital booking platform through the Beyond Blue webpage or register here using the registration code: **PWSS-B4B**.

Information and Resources

- [Draft model Code of Practice Managing fatigue risks at work](#)
- [Managing the risk of fatigue - Safe Work Australia](#)
- [Working from Home Guide - Comcare](#)
- [Travel Risk Assessment checklist- Comcare](#)
- [Fatigue as an Occupational Hazard | Sleep Health Foundation](#)
- [Excessive Daytime Sleepiness | Sleep Health Foundation](#)
- [Common Causes of Inadequate Sleep | Sleep Health Foundation](#)
- [Drowsy Driving | Sleep Health Foundation](#)
- [Sleeping Better in Your Hotel | Sleep Health Foundation](#)
- [Fatigue management in the workplace - PMC](#)
- [Set the Standard Report - Human Rights Commission](#)

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Authorised persons	A person authorised by a parliamentarian to exercise duties on their behalf.
Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplace (CPW)	A CPW includes any workplace where parliamentary work occurs, such as Australian Parliament House and parliamentary precincts, ministerial, parliamentary and electorate offices, Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices, home offices. This includes when that work may be remote from a CPW (for example, at external meetings/events or whilst travelling for work purposes).
Employee	For the purpose of this policy, an employee includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentarians MOP(S) Act employees designated workers who carry out work in any capacity for a business or undertaking of the Commonwealth (a worker within the meaning of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011) at a CPW, including authorised persons, trainees, students and volunteers.
Fatigue	Fatigue is mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces an employee's ability to perform their work safely and effectively.
Impairment	A worker is considered to be impaired if they are unfit to perform their duties and responsibilities safely, effectively and/or productively.
MOP(S) Act employee	MOP(S) Act employees are staff employed under the <i>Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 (Cth)</i> . MOP(S) Act employees are employed by Parliamentarians on behalf of the Commonwealth.
Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)	In WHS legislation, a PCBU captures all types of working arrangements or structures. PWSS and Department of Finance, on behalf of the Commonwealth, share the duties of a PCBU in conjunction with Parliamentarians.
Parliamentarian	This term refers to Members of the House of Representatives and Senators.
PWSS	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service
WHS Act	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>

8. Document Control

This document will be reviewed every two years or earlier when a business requirement is identified.

Version Control	
Approving authority	Chief Executive Officer of the PWSS
Date approved	
Current version	
Internal stakeholder/s	
Record ID	
Notes	

Attachment A – Fatigue Risk Management Chart

Instructions: Review the hazards listed in the table below and identify those which are an issue in your workplace. Use the General Risk Indicator to determine the risk level for each hazard and the priority for action. Review the risk controls and identify those which can be implemented to eliminate or manage the risks. Consider any additional controls which are relevant to your workplace. Document relevant risk controls in the Electorate Office WHS Risk Register.

Source: Adapted from - [Draft Model Code of Practice Managing fatigue risks at work](#)

Step 1: Hazard identification	Step 2: Risk Assessment	Step 3 Risk Control
Identify potential hazards and risks at the workplace. Examples are listed below however you should consider these in the context of your workplace.	To assist with risk assessment, a general level of risk for each hazard is Indicated using the arrow guide. In assessing risk consider interaction between hazards and how that could influence the level of risk. Also consider specific workplace circumstances. Higher levels of risk are a greater priority for action to eliminate or control the risk.	You should eliminate or minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. Examples of control measures are included below and in Chapter 5 of the Draft Model Code of Practice Managing fatigue risk at work .

Step 1: Hazard identification	Step 2: Risk Assessment			Step 3 Risk Control
Hazard	General Risk indicator			Possible control measures
Work hours design	<div>Lower Risk<div>Higher risk</div></div>			The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified hazard. Control measures may include:
Long hours	35-40 hours (per week) 7-8 hours (per ordinary working hours)	48 hours (per week) 10 hours (per ordinary working hours)	55 hours (per week) 13+ hours (per ordinary working hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor actual time worked and identify if excessive hours are being worked.Plan work plans and priorities to do the job without placing excessive demands on employees.Ensure employees have and take adequate and regular breaks so they can rest, eat and rehydrate.Structure work plans so demands are highest towards the middle of the day and decrease towards the end where practicable.Consider sleep opportunity and recovery in instances where employees are required to work on call after their ordinary hours or on days off.Have opportunities for employees to use leave entitlements and encourage them to do so.Design working hours to allow for good quality sleep and enough recovery time between workdays for travelling, eating and sleeping.
Irregular hours	Work hours are regular and infrequently change	Occasional unplanned overtime	Regularly working in an on call or as need arises capacity beyond a normal workday Regular unpredictable ordinary working hour changes Fly-in fly-out work (or other isolated work for short periods) Frequent unplanned overtime	
Insufficient breaks during work	Regular breaks provided and encouraged	Infrequent breaks Tightly scheduled breaks with little control when breaks can be taken	No breaks	
Insufficient breaks between periods of work	Adequate time for sleep, travel, meals, etc 16 hours between ordinary working hours	Working more than 5 days in a row 14 hours between ordinary working hours	Inadequate time for sleep, travel, meals etc Working more than 7 days in a row Less than 12 hours between ordinary working hours Not having at least two consecutive nights quality sleep between ordinary working hours Regular extended commute times	
Work that disrupts normal sleep patterns (including travel)	Regular day working hours	Afternoon working hours	For example, working until 10pm for Senate Estimates after a full day starting at 7:30am, or early starts for parliamentary sitting e.g. 5am to catch flight to Canberra	
Tasks, equipment and environment	<div>Lower Risk<div>Higher risk</div></div>			The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified hazard. Control measures may include:
High physical job demands	Minimal physically demanding work	Prolonged sedentary work Short periods of physically demanding work	New tasks where workers haven’t built the necessary knowledge or fitness for the task Lack of resources necessary for the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install fit for purpose equipment for use at the workplace.

Step 1: Hazard identification	Step 2: Risk Assessment			Step 3 Risk Control
Hazard	General Risk indicator			Possible control measures
High emotional job demands	Work-related causes of high emotional demand identified and addressed	Employees occasionally exposed to emotionally demanding tasks	Prolonged exposure to high emotional demands (e.g. responding to distressing or traumatic situations or managing heightened emotions of others in the workplace)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign jobs to limit periods of excessive cognitive (mental), emotional or physical demands. Identify and where possible, eliminate the causes of high emotional demands. Rotate workers through physically, cognitively or emotionally demanding tasks. Consider the expected workload and have processes to address peaks in workload. Schedule hard or complex tasks early in the day to avoid lower energy and concentration periods later in the day. Plan tasks to remove unnecessary work. Provide equipment and/or technology to assist with tasks. Match workers skills and experience to the tasks allocated (important to consider when recruiting staff). Provide additional breaks if working in extremes of temperature, eg. off-site. Ensure the workplace and surroundings are well lit, safe and secure. Ensure accommodation is quiet, dark and allows for sleep and recovery.
High or low cognitive (or mental) job demands	Varied task demands within the worker's skills and experience	Some variation in tasks but long periods of concentration required.	High concentration work, with high demands over an extended period Work where errors may have high risks (including driving) Insufficient time for the number or volume of tasks New tasks or technology the worker is learning	
Exposure to other psychosocial hazards	Psychosocial hazards identified and effectively controlled	Occasional exposure to psychosocial hazards	Regular, prolonged or severe exposure to hazards such as poor support, high job demands, low job control, isolated work (or other psychosocial hazards).	
Poor physical work environment	Well-designed physical work environment	Short exposures to loud noise, extreme temperatures, poor ventilation or lighting Prolonged exposure to low level noise	Prolonged exposure to loud noise, extreme temperatures, poor lighting Exposure to hazardous substances Lack of access to healthy food options or facilities to store and heat and eat healthy food options	
Poor accommodation	Accommodation provided close to the workplace and allows for reasonable sleep	Longer travel time between workplace and accommodation but transport and driver provided	Accommodation that doesn't allow for good sleep and recovery Accommodation requires significant travel to and from the workplace	
Individual (both work and non-work)	<div>Lower Risk</div> <div>Higher risk</div>			The most appropriate control measures should be implemented for the identified hazard. Control measures may include:
Sleep amount and quality	Awake for less than 16 hours 8 hours sleep in 24 hours	Awake for over 17 hours	Awake for 24 hours 6 hours sleep or less in 24 hours Poor quality sleep (e.g. influenced by health conditions, dietary factors or alcohol or drugs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult workers when designing work hours to enable workers to meet work and personal commitments where practicable. Set clear expectations on only attending work when fit to do so. Implement flexible working arrangements to accommodate the individual needs of workers, where practicable. Give additional support or supervision to workers who are new or returning to work after a period of extended absence. Implement a systematic approach to providing workers with accessible WHS information on a regular basis. Provide information to workers about how to manage fatigue. Promote healthy diet and appropriate meal and rest breaks.
Fitness for work	Experienced employees Fit and healthy employees	Inexperienced employees but with good supervision and support	Worker has limited experience and support Reduced general fitness Recent illness/injury	
Sleep opportunity	Adequate time to rest and sleep	Out of work responsibilities occasionally impact sleep	Significant out of work responsibilities impacting sleep time Extended commutes between work and home sleep environment	
Workplace barriers to health and safety information	Accessible options to understand health and safety information and to raise health and safety concerns are provided	Ad hoc approach to ensuring safety information is accessible and supporting employees to raise safety issues	Significant barriers to understanding health and safety information Significant barriers to raising health and safety issues	