

February 2026

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02-02-2026 - TBT - Fatigue on the Job

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You are the most important safeguard in protecting yourself and others while at work. When you cannot fully focus and perform your duties correctly, you could be leaving yourself at risk for injury. Being tired on the job is a major problem in the United States for workers. Fatigue leaves workers performing at lower levels, and this exposes them to higher chances of an injury or an incident occurring. It is important to prevent fatigue while on the job to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Fatigue in the Workplace Statistics:

- Fatigue carries an overall estimated cost of more than \$136 billion per year to employers in health-related lost productivity.
- 1 in every 5 workers is sleep deprived.
- Poor sleeping habits lead to stress on the job.
- In a survey by Caremark Rx Inc. of 29,000 adults, 38% reported feeling tired at work in the last two weeks.



Fatigue Causes:

- Lack of sleep
- Too many demands at work or home
- Medication
- Alcohol or Drug use
- Other health problems, such as depression or anxiety

Safe Work Practices to Prevent or Improve Fatigue:

- Get plenty of rest. It is recommended to get a minimum of seven hours of sleep a night.
If your work schedule is too demanding or the hours you are working are making you feel fatigued every single day, talk with a supervisor. Sometimes responsibilities or schedules can be altered to improve productivity and safety in the workplace.
- It is important to understand the side effects of the medication before using it at work. Talk with your doctor to make sure he/she understands your work responsibilities to ensure the medication will not interfere with your performance.
- Take care of your health. Addressing other health issues can greatly improve how you feel both at home and at work.
- Eat a better diet. Food to humans is as gasoline is to a car– if you put dirty gas in your car, it will not run well. The same goes for your body!
- For short periods of less intense fatigue, use caffeinated beverages to help you wake up. Another option is to get up from where you are working to stretch or take a walk.

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02-09-2026 – TBT – Auditing Ourselves

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When the word audit is mentioned, people generally think of a negative experience, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax audit or of a confrontation. However, it is possible for audits to be positive.

First, let's consider the definition of audit. Audit: A systematic or methodical review; to examine with intent to verify.

Audits can apply to your job. From a safety standpoint there is only one way to do a job - the safe way. Safety needs to be the first consideration in everything we do. It is possible that we may not always be doing this, so our continuing efforts to review or think about our jobs are auditing.

Contrary to an IRS audit which evaluates what we did not record, our job audit should evaluate what we did record. If we take the time to at least mentally think out the steps that we go through to perform a task, we can audit it to ensure we are safe.

Auditing ourselves:

Look at these things prior to completing a task:

- PPE, do we have the correct eye protection? The correct gloves? Protective footwear?
- Do we need any special PPE such as a chemical apron or a harness?
- Is our PPE in good condition?
- Do we have the correct tools and are they in good shape?
- Do we know how to operate the tools or equipment?
- Do we know how to accomplish the task safely?
- Do we know the harmful energy sources around the area and have we isolated them?

These are a just a few of the questions we should ask. However, they include some of the most important ones. Ensure you do a quick audit, prior to accomplishing a task. A more thorough one should be done if we're doing something for the first time or for the first time in a long time.

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02/16/2026 – TBT – Competent Person in Excavation and Trenching

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OSHA requires that a “Competent Person” be responsible for the safety of all workers in a trenching/excavation operation. OSHA defines a Competent Person as “an individual who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards or working conditions that are hazardous, unsanitary, or dangerous to employees and who is authorized to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate or control these hazards and conditions.” The Competent Person is required to:

- Have training in soil analysis and the use of protective systems, be knowledgeable about OSHA requirements, and have authority to immediately eliminate hazards.

- Inspect the trench, adjacent areas, and any protective systems for possible cave-ins, failure of protective systems, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions. Inspections must be performed daily: before work begins, throughout the shift, and after every rainstorm or other hazard increasing occurrence.

- Review a pre-task plan with supervisor daily.

- Assure that the location of underground installations or utilities have been properly located.

- Identify and ensure use of adequate protective systems, work methods, and personal protective equipment (PPE) on the excavation site.

- Test for low oxygen, hazardous fumes and toxic gases, especially when gasoline engine-driven equipment is running, or the dirt has been contaminated by leaking lines or storage tanks. Insure adequate ventilation or respiratory protection, if necessary.

- Provide safe access within 25 feet of workers into and out of the excavation.

- Provide appropriate protections if water accumulation is a problem.

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2-23-2026 - TBT - Complacency

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The term complacency has several definitions; perhaps the one most suitable (in the context of safety) is as follows, "a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like". Ironically, this feeling can develop from a perception that you live and work in a safe environment. An environment of few, if any, workplace incidents and when an incident does occur, it is often of a minor nature.

The message here is, never let your guard down. We maintain our safety by doing just that, maintaining it.

The ways we maintain our safety:

- We maintain a safe workplace by following established protocols and procedures.
- We have regular safety meetings to discuss changes and potential hazards that develop from day to day on our worksite.
- We wear the appropriate PPE for the task at hand.
- We take a "Four Second Reset" to stop and think about the safety side of the task we're about to start.
- We manage our "Zone of Control" on the worksite. Hazards identified, eliminated or controlled. Maintaining housekeeping and organization. Other workers and/or mobile equipment coming into your work area.
- We report all perceived or potential hazards on the worksite.
- We report all near misses. When reported, we can collect information, identify trends, correct current problems, and prevent future incidents and injuries from happening.

- We coach, mentor and watch out for each other throughout the day.

A level of safety in the workplace where incidents are indeed a rare occurrence, does not guarantee future success, however it is an indication of a strong safety culture. It's up to all of us to never let our guard down. Continuous safety maintenance is the backbone of a strong safety culture and a truly safe workplace.

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