



The National Safety Council recognizes June as Safety Awareness Month. According to the NSC website, the fourth leading cause of deaths in the United States are preventable injuries, known as accidents.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, worker fatigue is directly linked to long work hours, extended or irregular shifts, and disruption in sleep schedules. This can lead to injury, fatigue, physical, mental and emotional stress.

Fatigue is our body's signal that a rest period is necessary. Our bodies operate on a circadian rhythm known as our sleep/wake cycle. We are naturally programmed to sleep at night, but demanding work schedules can disrupt that natural cycle which can lead to increased fatigue, stress, lack of concentration and decreased alertness which can result in accidents.

Worker fatigue also increases your risk for illness and injuries. Research shows that people who work 12 hours per day are at a 37% increased risk for injury and increased risk for developing heart disease, stomach and digestive issues, musculoskeletal disorders, depression, sleep disorders, poor eating habits and worsening of existing chronic diseases just to name a few.

When it comes to work safety, it is important to remember that it is everyone's responsibility. Employees need to make sure they following safety protocols at their place of employment and practicing good sleep hygiene. Employers must provide a safe working environment as well as the tools and training needed for employees to do their jobs safely.

Tips on prevention can be found at the following link: <https://www.osha.gov/worker-fatigue-prevention>

**Additional Resources:** <https://www.osha.gov/worker-fatigue/resources>

**-Pam Wheeler  
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