



FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

TOOLBOX TALK: Fatigue Management

RATTLIR Safety Series – “Strike Before It Bites”

Purpose

Fatigue is one of the most common and most underestimated contributors to workplace incidents. This toolbox talk outlines RATTLIR’s work-hour limits, fatigue indicators, and safe practices to ensure employees remain alert, safe, and effective in the field and office.

RATTLIR Fatigue Policy Requirements

To support safe operations and prevent fatigue-related incidents, RATTLIR enforces the following limits:

- Work Shifts (Field and Office): Will not exceed 12 hours.
 - Supported by NIOSH, DOE, and API RP 755 guidance. Studies show incident rates increase significantly after 12 hours, with cognitive impairment, slower reaction time, and reduced hazard recognition.
- Driving: Limited to 10 hours or 500 miles, whichever comes first.
 - FMCSA permits up to 11 hours of driving, but research from NTSB, insurance industry data, and fatigue modeling show crash risk increases sharply after 9–10 hours behind the wheel. Capping driving at 10 hours (or 500 miles) provides a necessary safety margin.

These limits are designed to minimize fatigue accumulation, reduce impairment risk, and ensure that all personnel remain within safe physiological and cognitive operating windows.

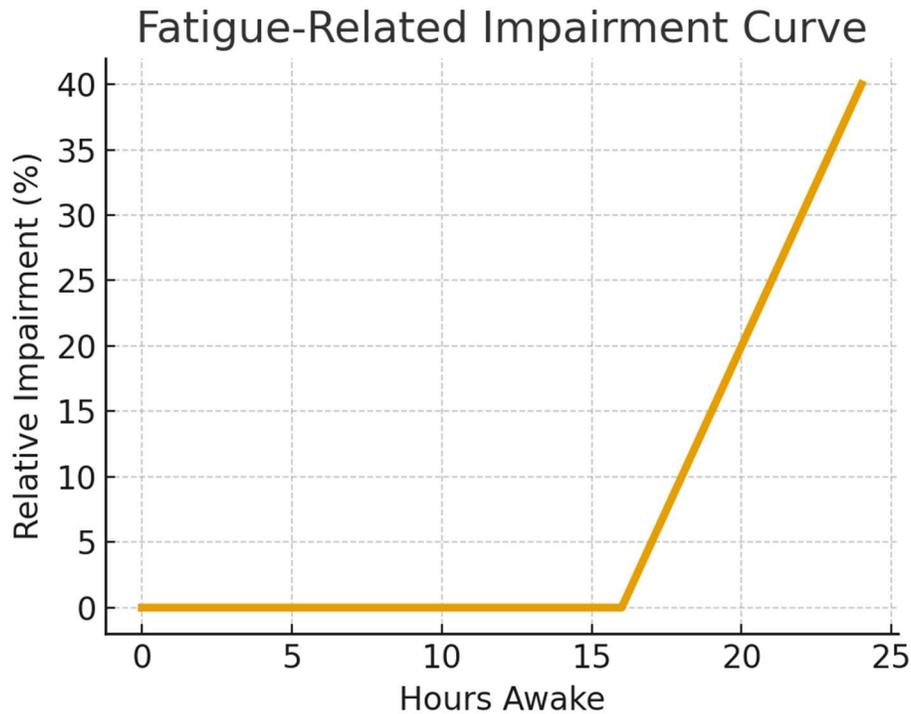


Figure 1 – General illustration showing increased impairment as time awake exceeds normal ranges.

Common Indicators of Fatigue

- Slow reaction time or delayed responses.
- Difficulty concentrating or completing routine tasks.
- Frequent yawning, heavy eyelids, or micro-sleeps.
- Irritability, reduced awareness, or forgetfulness.
- Drifting within a lane or variable driving speed.
- Physical clumsiness or loss of coordination.

Fatigue Prevention Strategies

- Get sufficient rest before starting any shift or long drive.
- Take short breaks every 2–3 hours during field work or driving.
- Stay hydrated and maintain balanced nutrition throughout the day.
- Rotate tasks when possible to reduce mental and physical monotony.
- Avoid starting new high-risk tasks when tired—pause and assess instead.
- Notify supervision if fatigue becomes noticeable or begins affecting performance.



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Emergency Response

If a team member is displaying significant fatigue:

- Remove them from high-risk tasks.
- Provide rest and hydration.
- Reassign duties until alertness is restored.
- If driving, stop immediately and take a rest break before continuing.
- Document and report fatigue-related near misses for follow-up.

Discussion Questions

- Are you well-rested enough to perform your tasks safely today?
- Are we working near the 12-hour limit for any personnel?
- How can we rotate tasks or add breaks to reduce fatigue risk today?

RATTLIR Takeaway

Fatigue affects judgment, coordination, and reaction time just like impairment. By enforcing safe work-hour limits and actively monitoring fatigue, RATTLIR ensures every team member can operate safely and strike before it bites.