



Today's discussion is from the
First Aid/Health Category.

Fatigue/Stress

Accumulated (Chronic) Fatigue is defined as fatigue from which normal rest does not produce recovery. Accumulated fatigue is often caused by extended periods of stress with inadequate recovery periods, which results in decreased productivity, compromised immune function, and reduced alertness. Fatigued workers perform poorly, behave carelessly, tolerate greater errors and become inattentive. Chronic fatigue often results in increased stress, which may present itself through certain behavioral and physiological indicators, such as those described below:

- Behavioral indicators
 - Decreased motivation and low morale
 - Increased irritability and depression

- Physiological indicators
 - Confused, poor problem solving
 - Poor abstract thinking
 - poor attention/decisions
 - poor concentration/memory
 - extreme emotional responses
 - social/behavioral changes

- Recommendations for chronic fatigue/stress are:
 - Take longer periods of rest/recovery
 - Ensure that workers are adequately rested before they begin work shifts
 - Provide periodic rest breaks to allow physical and mental recovery
 - Alternate between heavy and light tasks
 - Eat well-balanced meals regularly, with energy supplements during periods of high exertion
 - Maintain hydration
 - Ensure workers maintain good personal hygiene
 - Maintain high standards of physical fitness and work capacity
 - In extreme cases, personnel may need to be relieved of their duties

References:

Wildland Firefighter Health & Safety Report, Missoula Technology & Development Center

1) [Spring 2004](#)

2) [Fall 2000](#)

3) [Fatigue Awareness PowerPoint](#)

[CISM Information Pamphlet, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, www.icisf.org](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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