

Fit for Duty

An individual is fit for duty if they are in a physical, mental, and emotional state that allows them to perform essential work tasks safely.

Employers and supervisors must make every effort to ensure their workers are fit for duty, and promptly address any unsafe situations that may arise when a worker is impaired.



Impairment in the Workplace

A worker who is impaired on the job is unfit to safely perform work. Workers in this condition can injure themselves or others. One of the most common causes of impairment in the workplace is the use of substances. This may include: **alcohol, recreational cannabis, illegal drugs, prescription drugs** (including medically prescribed cannabis), and **over-the-counter medications**.

Fatigue in the Workplace

Fatigue is a state of feeling weary, exhausted, or sleepy, and can have effects similar to impairment. While fatigue often results from a lack of sleep, it can be heightened from prolonged mental activity or long periods of stress or anxiety. There are also workplace factors that can increase feelings of fatigue, such as:

- Extended shifts or shift rotations (days and nights)
- Boring or monotonous repetitive tasks
- High temperatures
- High noise levels
- Dim lighting or poor visibility

Fatigue can affect a person’s health over the long term, which may lead to increased sick time and absenteeism from the workplace.

Effects on a Worker	Impairment	Fatigue
Impaired judgement, thinking, and decision-making	✓	✓
Inability to do complex planning	✓	✓
Poor communication skills	✓	✓
Reduced attention and memory	✓	✓
Reduced ability to handle stress	✓	✓
Decreased motor coordination, reaction time, and sensory perception	✓	✓
Psychological or stress-related effects, such as mood swings	✓	✓

Ensuring Fit for Duty: *What Can You Do?*

Employers/Supervisors

Employers and supervisors have responsibilities when it comes to ensuring workers are fit for duty. The following practices will assist in ensuring a safe worksite.

- Prevent an impaired worker from performing activities where impairment may endanger the impaired worker or someone else.
- Refuse to allow a worker to remain at any workplace while the worker's ability to work safely is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes. Ensure safe transportation home.
- Create shift schedules that give workers enough time for adequate rest.
- Modify duties, as required, for workers returning from injury or illness.
- Provide a work environment that has adequate lighting, comfortable temperatures, and reasonable noise levels.
- Strive to provide some variety by incorporating job rotation.
- Encourage workers to maintain a healthy lifestyle that provides adequate rest and healthy eating.
- Develop a fit for duty drug and alcohol policy to ensure all parties understand their responsibilities. Ensure both supervisors and workers are adequately trained in how to recognize the signs of impairment, including fatigue.

Workers

Workers are responsible for their own safety as well as that of their coworkers. As a worker, you can do the following to keep your workplace safe:

- Make sure your ability to work safely is not impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes.
- Tell a supervisor or employer if your ability to work safely is impaired for any reason.
- Tell a supervisor or employer if any prescription, or over the counter medicine you are taking, may impact your ability to do some jobs safely.
- Tell a supervisor or employer if a coworker appears to be impaired.



Visit our website to learn more about [Cannabis & Workplace Safety](#).

