

Wellbeing series: The importance of sleep for wellbeing

Did you know that being awake for 17 hours has a similar effect on your brain as drinking alcohol? Sleep is not just a luxury; it's a fundamental necessity for our overall wellbeing and workplace performance. Despite its importance, many of us underestimate the impact of adequate sleep on their productivity and safety.

Fatigue—often resulting from inadequate or poor-quality sleep—can significantly impair judgement and reduce alertness, increasing the risk of incidents and accidents. NZTA Waka Kotahi [reported](#) that in 2022, fatigue was a factor in 23 fatal crashes and 80 serious injury crashes. It's important that you and your kaimahi (staff) are getting enough rest every night.

You can read more fatigue facts in [this fact sheet](#) kindly shared by TELUS Health.

The consequences of sleep deprivation extend far beyond mere drowsiness. WorkSafe New Zealand highlights that fatigue can lead to reduced cognitive performance, including slower reaction times, poorer judgement, and decreased awareness. These effects can be particularly bad in community housing when decisions are being made that can affect people's lives.

As CHP workers, the impact of fatigue on workplace productivity and safety cannot be overstated: fatigue causes more mistakes and can create unsafe situations for our kaimahi. Worksafe NZ has a range of suggestions for combating fatigue as an employer [that you can find here](#).

To help support your people, draw attention to the importance of sleep health. CHPs could implement fatigue management policies, provide education on sleep hygiene, and ensure work schedules allow for adequate rest periods - although your workers may not work shifts, the pressures of family life, sport and recreation and life administration can feel like you leave work just to start another job! You may also notice your kaimahi taking work home: unless this is part of a flexible working practice, it should be something you actively discourage as you could be seen to be contributing to fatigue, stress, or even burnout.

Encourage your people to maintain consistent sleep schedules, create sleep-friendly environments, and practise good sleep hygiene. Limiting caffeine and alcohol intake, and avoiding electronic devices before bedtime are good examples of this. Worksafe has [created a handy guide](#) to help employers identify and manage hazards that can lead to fatigue...sadly, they haven't come up with a way to cancel work altogether!