Fatigue Doesn’t Take a Day Off: Managing Worker Fatigue & Shift Risk Picture This



In the image, the worker is visibly exhausted, asleep while leaning against a railing on an elevated structure. Falling asleep at height is extremely dangerous—one shift of balance or sudden movement could lead to a fall. The worker is also disengaged from surroundings and completely unaware of nearby hazards, showing clear signs of fatigue that should have been addressed long before reaching this point. This level of exhaustion makes mistakes, slow reactions, and serious incidents far more likely.

Workers should take scheduled rest breaks, rotate tasks, and follow policies that limit excessive overtime or back-to-back shifts. Supervisors must identify early signs of fatigue—slowed movements, yawning, zoning out—and intervene before a worker reaches dangerous exhaustion. Sleep, hydration, and proper shift planning are essential to maintain alertness, especially when working at heights or around machinery. Managing fatigue proactively helps prevent falls, errors, and serious incidents on the job.