Is This the Way You Want Your Workers Showing Up for Work?

What’s wrong with this picture?

Never mind the productivity concerns. Workers that nod off like this are a danger to everyone at the work site—including themselves.

Moral: Although it’s not so much an OSHA concern, workplace fatigue has become a serious problem. You need to recognize the hazard; you need to ensure the management of your organization recognizes it; and perhaps above all, you need to ensure that workers themselves recognize it.

The Dangers of Workplace Fatigue

What’s at Stake: 3 Reasons to Pay Attention

1. As many as 2 in 5 workers admit to experiencing fatigue on the job
2. Medically, fatigue has much the same effect on your body as being drunk—it significantly increases your risks of getting hurt or hurting somebody else at work
3. Fatigue sneaks up on victims—knowing how to recognize it goes a long way in making sure you don't get into an accident because of fatigue

The 3 Main Causes of Fatigue

The first step in protecting yourself is knowing how fatigue happens. Main causes include:

1. Not sleeping enough hours each night

Most adults need at least 7 hours of sleep per night. Reasons for missing sleep could include working too many hours, having more than one job and/or working irregular shifts:

2. Not being *able* to fall asleep

The magic 7 hours refers to the time you spend actually asleep, not how long you spend in bed. Tossing and turning is not sleep.

3. Aging

The older we get, the more sleep we need and the harder it becomes to avoid fatigue.

10 Signs of Fatigue

The next step in protecting yourself against it is being able to recognize when you—or a co-worker—are suffering from fatigue. Common signs of fatigue include:

1. Sleepiness
2. Irritability
3. Finding it harder to pay attention
4. Loss of appetite
5. Forgetfulness
6. Inability to process large amounts of information
7. More willing to take risks
8. More eager to find shortcuts to get the job done
9. Headache
10. Depression

8 Ways to Protect Yourself from Fatigue

1. Manage your sleep time
2. Avoid caffeine for 5 hours before bedtime
3. Eat light, nutritious meals
4. Drink plenty of water
5. Avoid medications that induce or interfere with your sleep
6. Take power naps
7. Make sure your bed and bedroom are comfy
8. Go to bed at a regular time