

NIGHT SHIFT SAFETY: SPLIT SHIFT SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

Depending on the employer, employees may be offered or required to work in split shifts. Industries that sometime use split shifts include construction, restaurants, warehouses, and so on. In this lesson we will define what a split shift is, the effects of working a split shift, and safe work practices.



DEFINITION

In general, a “split shift” is defined as “a shift of working hours divided into two or more working periods at times (such as morning and evening), separated by more than normal periods of time off (as for rest).

This definition may be more defined by local, state, or federal regulations.

EFFECTS OF WORKING SPLIT SHIFTS

Due to irregular hours, many split shift employees may experience one or more of the following:

- Fatigue from sleep disruption
- Stress
- Frequent colds or other respiratory illnesses
- Changes to your sleep patterns
- Digestive problems
- Heart disease
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Anxiety



SAFE WORK PRACTICES

To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring during a split shift or the development of negative health effects, you should do the following:

Meals

Food is essential to keeping the body functioning properly and thus meals play an important role before, during, and after work. To help with meals, you should:

- Maintain your regular eating patterns as much as possible. If you are still working on an eating routine, it is recommended that you eat small amounts of food throughout the night to help keep your energy levels up.
- Keep your meals varied and balanced. If you have questions about your diet, please speak with your medical provider.
- Where possible, limit how much caffeine you drink, particularly around bedtime.
- Try to avoid greasy foods, especially at night.
- Allow yourself to relax during mealtimes because stress can contribute to digestive disorders.
- Give your body appropriate time to digest meals. Eating too quickly or moving too quickly after eating could cause an upset stomach or other digestive disorders.

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Social and Family Activities

Working a split shift can interfere with family and friend routines, which can put strains on relationships. This strain can add to feelings of anxiety and other health issues. To help with this, it is recommended that you:

- Set aside time to spend with friends and family members.
- Stay in communication with others.
- Keep family mealtimes the same whenever possible.

Sleep

Just as food is necessary for us to function, so is sleep. To help yourself function at your best when working, you should:

- Where feasible, set time aside before bed for relaxation. This can include breathing exercises, meditation, reading a book, listening to music, and so on.
- Create a relaxing bedroom environment when you are home. A relaxing environment can help with sleep.
- Stick to a consistent sleep routine. If you are unsure about a sleep routine that would work best for you, please speak with your medical provider.
- Ask friends and family to limit certain activities while you are sleeping to help minimize sleep disruption.



Exercise

To help with stress and fitness, you should get plenty of exercise. Exercise requirements can vary from person to person, so if you are unsure about an exercise routine, please speak with your medical provider.

Transportation

It is recommended that you use public transportation, taxis, or other rideshare services, rather than driving if you are working a night split shift because fatigued drivers tend to have more vehicle accidents than drivers who are fully awake.

If you use private transportation, then carpooling or sharing driving responsibilities is recommended.

When at Work

When at work, you should:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Inform your supervisor if you are feeling fatigued.
- Use provided napping rooms or areas if your company offers them.
- Take all scheduled breaks.
- Conduct all required shift inspections.
- Dress appropriately for weather conditions.
- Assure that working areas have adequate lighting and ventilation.
- Keep in contact with co-workers to help you stay alert.



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If you have any concerns about workplace hazards or conditions, please speak with your supervisor.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, split shifts can be an ideal work schedule for some employees. However, it can cause others to feel fatigue or contribute to the development of certain health disorders. When working a split shift, it is recommended that you speak with your medical provider about your sleep routine and diet. Additionally, you should create a sleep schedule that will help you feel rested before heading to work. If you have any questions about split shifts, please speak with your supervisor.





Builders' Exchange
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Safety Meeting Report

Employer _____

Date _____

Location _____

Meeting Supervisor _____

Safety Meeting Subject: _____

Accidents Reviewed: _____

Suggestions: _____

Employee's Attending

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
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14. _____
15. _____