



Workplace Implications of Sleep

Sleep is a foundational element in determining one's overall health and quality of life, with the average adult requiring at least seven hours of sleep per night for the best health and wellbeing. Even though most people know this, sleep is severely undervalued in our culture, as revealed in a 2013 Gallup poll which showed that 40% of Americans get less than 6 hours of sleep per night. What many people may not realize is that a lack of sleep leads to negative physical, mental and emotional consequences that have direct and meaningful implications in the workplace.

What happens when you don't get enough sleep?

When you don't get enough sleep, your heart rate increases, you lose your ability to concentrate, your short-term memory suffers, and your physical performance may be impaired. With a lack of sleep, you also experienced increased feelings of hunger and crave unhealthy foods, which can lead to weight gain and a host of other health issues.

How does a lack of sleep impact work?

The side effects of not getting enough sleep are more than just a nuisance—they can be job hazards and can significantly lower productivity and morale in the workplace.

Drowsy driving is a significant workplace risk related to a lack of sleep. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that in 2015 there were 90,000 traffic accidents involving drowsy drivers, leading to an estimated 41,000 injuries and more than 800 deaths. Beyond driving-related accidents, fatigue and a lack of alertness are contributing factors in many workplace incidents. Others who work with heavy machinery or power tools, or in dangerous work zones, face clear safety concerns when fatigued.

Sleep impacts more than just safety. Employers should note the impacts of sleep on their workplace culture. The quality and quantity of sleep impacts employee morale, productivity and overall health. A lack of sleep leads to a 'get-through-the-day mentality', while people who have good sleep health report feeling more effective at getting things done each day.

Getting enough rest is vital for a safety and health and will make workers more productive. To learn more about sleep, the science behind sleep habits and the impacts of sleep on your work and overall quality of life, listen to the [recent webinar from our Scott Risk Performance Team](#).