



Health Advisory: Insufficient Sleep and Work Performance

More than one third of U.S. adults get less than the recommended 7 or more hours of sleep per night.¹ In addition to increasing the risk of numerous health problems, insufficient sleep is associated with increased errors and a greater risk of both workplace accidents and motor vehicle crashes. Insufficient sleep also is associated with higher rates of absenteeism from work and reduced performance while at work. The negative consequences of insufficient sleep on work performance are especially severe in shift workers, who often must sleep at a time of day that is at odds with the body's circadian rhythms and natural propensity for sleep.

Employers should recognize the importance of sleep and the impact of insufficient sleep on individual health, public safety, and workplace productivity. It is estimated that about 1.23 million working days are lost on an annual basis in the U.S. due to insufficient sleep, resulting in up to \$411 billion in economic losses.²

To mitigate these losses, and to promote optimal health and safety, employers should provide education to employees about fatigue, sleep health, and sleep disorders, as well as strategies to improve alertness on the job, as part of a comprehensive employee wellness program. Employers with personnel in safety-sensitive positions also should implement a fatigue risk management system that includes screening for sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

1. Liu Y, Wheaton AG, Chapman DP, Cunningham TJ, Lu H, Croft JB. Prevalence of healthy sleep duration among adults--United States, 2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2016 Feb 19;65(6):137-41.

2. Hafner M, Stepanek M, Taylor J, Troxel WM, Van Stolk C. Why sleep matters — the economic costs of insufficient sleep: A cross-country comparative analysis. *Rand Health Q.* 2017 Jan; 6(4): 11.

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