

# HEALTHY WORK

📄 CASE STUDY

## Change in attitude – key to tackling fatigue

When driver Malcolm Burkes first started at Fonterra it was all about getting out there, getting the job done and getting back as quickly as you could.

“Now I don’t hesitate to call Fonterra up and tell them I’m going to stop and have a sleep. Fonterra’s whole attitude towards making me feel alright about managing my fatigue makes me feel better.”

This change in attitude is the result of Fonterra putting fatigue front and centre by launching a programme in December 2015 to help keep tanker operators stay safe after having two roll overs and three incidents where drivers drove off the road or tracks.

Matt Roberts, Fonterra’s Te Awamutu Depot Manager says that they identified a couple of incidents that may have been fatigue-related.

“We also never really had a relationship with the drivers that meant they felt comfortable enough to say ‘hey I am fatigued, I haven’t

been sleeping well.’ In part we put this down to that New Zealand culture of ‘she’ll be right mate’, and not wanting to show any weakness.”

**“At Fonterra it’s about building a culture where people actually care about each other.”**

So they got together with drivers, unions, the health and safety team, and managers, and looked at what they could do with the problem. The Fatigue Management Programme was the result.

“It starts at the bottom and goes right through to the top,” says Simon Aykroyd, Driver Performance Assessor. “This is empowering both sides to be



### WORK-RELATED HEALTH IN ACTION

- > increased focus on health and safety awareness has contributed to improved employee satisfaction
- > annual lung function tests for all at-risk workers.

able to cope with fatigue and to have a process in place to prevent any serious harm to our drivers.”

The programme starts with all drivers attending a fatigue training programme where they are then given a book on fatigue and shift work with some good tips and explanations. “The book is not just for the drivers but for their families

to read so they get the context of what the drivers are going through each day on shift work,” says Simon Aykroyd.

Since introducing the programme there is a lot more openness with the drivers and a change in culture with fatigue. “We value human life above all else and we manage risk accordingly,” says Julio Rodriguez, General Manager Health and Safety. “At Fonterra it’s about building a culture where people actually care about each other.”

In May 2016, the Fonterra Co-Operative Group won the supreme award at the New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards. Fonterra won for initiatives addressing milk fatigue in milk tanker drivers (above) and the welfare of contractors on the company’s major construction projects.



### HOW IT WORKS

Along with the culture change at Fonterra, they introduced a risk assessment tool to help identify fatigue and make changes to reduce the risks from fatigue while at work.

This tool tracks five areas:

- > Sleep opportunity: ensuring employees get enough time between shifts for rest.
- > Sleep obtained: Track that drivers are getting enough sleep through a non-judgemental self-reporting system.
- > Fatigue related symptoms: Monitoring behaviour and identifying at risk individuals.
- > Fatigue proofing strategies: Reducing the risk by better managing scheduling, allowing flexibility, such as self-selected breaks.
- > Monitoring events: Monitor driving behaviour to provide managers further information to use alongside the risk assessment tool when addressing fatigue risks within their teams.

### TAKE OUTS FROM FONTERRA CO-OPERATIVE GROUP

**Having workers participate in planning means:**

- > Top-down approach
- > Fatigue front and centre
- > Empowering workers
- > Open communication

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