

CONTRACTOR SAFETY ALERT



High Potential Incident – fatigue related vehicle accident

Number: 94

Issued: 10/05/2023

Background

On 4 May, an FPC contractor worker left home at 3:00am to travel to the work site. As they neared the entrance to the work site (3:30am) they suffered a microsleep, when they awoke 2-3 seconds later the vehicle was veering off the unsealed road towards a large tree, they braked heavily but the vehicle struck the tree at approximately 50 km/hr with airbags deploying. Fortunately, the worker did not sustain any serious injuries.

Key Points

- The worker sustained a neck strain.
- The night before the accident the worker went to sleep at 10pm, much later than their usual bedtime of 7pm, resulting in them having less than 5 hours sleep.
- Research has shown that going without sleep for 17 hours in a 24 hour period has a similar impairing effect on driving performance as a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.05, which carries double the risk of a sober driver.
- The worker has regular shifts, with weekends providing regular rest periods.
- Circadian rhythms are our in-built body clock that determine when we are at our most alert, and most sleepy. Generally, humans are programmed to feel very sleepy between 2am and 4am, and then again between 2pm and 4pm. Sleep related vehicle accidents peak during these times.

Sleep is the only way to overcome tiredness. Don't put yourself or others at risk, if you feel fatigued STOP work and talk to your Supervisor.