



Human Resource Message

From
Your Human Resource Specialists



Work and Fatigue in Wildland Firefighting effects your physical and emotional state!

Wildland Firefighting is arduous work, performed for long shifts in difficult environmental conditions. The work can be dangerous due to the fire and working conditions. Heat, smoke, rolling rocks, falling snags, and other hazards threaten the worker. Fatigue can impair performance and decision making, increasing the risk of injury. Prolonged exposure to fatigue, stress, smoke, and poor nutrition has the potential to increase the incidence of upper respiratory illness, but also mental lapses.

The stress response is necessary to prepare an athlete, firefighter or soldier for a maximal effort in a physical challenge, but it can be unhealthy if it occurs too often in the wrong setting.

Definitions:

Fatigue—A sense of tiredness, either mental or physical, brought on by stress (lack of sleep, physical work, nutritional inadequacies, or mental stresses). Fatigue following work or sleep deprivation is a normal state and can be reversed with adequate recovery or rest.

Accumulated (Chronic) Fatigue—Fatigue from which normal rest does not produce recovery. Accumulated fatigue is often caused by extended periods of stress with inadequate recovery periods, resulting in decreased productivity, compromised immune function, and reduced alertness.

Fatigued workers perform poorly and behave carelessly, tolerate greater errors, and become inattentive. They display decreased motivation, increased irritability and depression, and low morale. Accumulated fatigue is more persistent, producing a wider array of effects on performance, health, and morale than ordinary fatigue. Accumulated fatigue requires longer recovery periods than ordinary fatigue.

Correct Nutrition, Hydration and Rest are good coping mechanisms for stress and fatigue. Make use of your down time and rest per the work/rest guidelines.

Your Mental Health Matters!