

# Fitness for Work Procedure

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## INTRODUCTION

Fitness for Work (FFW) means that an individual is in a state (physical and psychological) which enables the person to perform assigned tasks competently, and in a manner, which does not compromise or threaten their safety and/or the safety of others.

This procedure establishes the minimum health and safety requirements for fitness for work.

## COMPLIANCE

This is a compliance requirement under the:

- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2016
- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2017
- Return to Work Act 2016 (NT)
- Return to Work Regulation 2016 (NT)
- Model Code of Practice - How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks
- Model Code of Practice – Managing the Work Environment and Facilities

## INTENT

The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate a safe, healthy and productive workplace through the mitigation of health risks to personnel associated with their own, or others fitness for work.

CDU employees are required to follow this procedure. Contractors are required to have a documented procedure that meets or exceeds this procedure.

## RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In the context of this document

**Fitness for Work (FFW)** means that an individual is in a state (physical and psychological) which enables the person to perform assigned tasks competently, and in a manner, which does not compromise or threaten their safety and/or the safety of others.

## PROCEDURES

Charles Darwin University recognises that a number of factors affect an individual's fitness for work and that these factors can be a contributing factor in workplace injuries and incidents.

Factors that have potential to impact fitness for work include:

- Fatigue
- Stress
- Medical fitness for the specific job
- Alcohol and other drugs – covered in separate procedure

- Injury rehabilitation and return to work – covered in separate procedure
- Working in heat – covered in separate procedure

Appropriate controls are identified in this procedure and the related procedures shall be implemented to mitigate risks associated with fitness for work. These controls will require ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The steps that need to be taken to manage fitness for work will vary from one worksite to the next, depending on the nature of the work, environmental conditions and individual factors.

## Responsibilities

### Line Managers

Line Managers shall:

- Ensure compliance with the requirements, and adequate implementation of this procedure in their area of responsibility
- Provide adequate resources for the effective implementation of this procedure
- Ensure the fair and consistent application of this procedure
- Ensure that Supervisors understand and implement the Fitness for Work Procedure in all their areas of responsibility
- Maintain confidentiality of the individual in accordance with the requirements of this procedure
- Ensure adequate breaks between shifts (rostering, call out, etc.) to adequately manage fatigue
- Promote participation / utilisation of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as required
- Ensure that all individuals in their area of responsibility are aware of and comply with the requirements of the Fitness for Work Procedure
- Take prompt and appropriate action whenever they deem a person may not be capable of performing their role in a safe manner
- Maintain records of breaches of this procedure

### SEW Manager

SEW Manager has the following responsibilities:

- Audit and review compliance with this procedure
- Ensure fair and consistent application of this procedure
- Implementation of the requirements of this procedure, including appropriate education and training
- Maintain confidentiality of the individual in accordance with the requirements of this procedure

### All Employees

Employees have the following responsibilities:

- Notify their Supervisor or health and wellbeing of any concerns about potential impairment to their fitness for work, including medication they are taking that may affect their fitness for work

- Comply with site alcohol or other drug testing where applicable
- Notify their supervisor of any situation in which these procedures may have been breached including:
  - Where they become aware that themselves, or others may not be fit for work i.e. unable to conduct their normal duties without risk to themselves or others

### **Training and Competence Requirements**

Workers, Managers and Supervisors shall be provided with awareness and information on how to manage fitness for work and minimise the risks. This includes:

- the work health and safety responsibilities in the workplace
- symptoms and risk factors for fatigue, stress and other fitness for work issues
- hazards, risks and effective control measures that may be associated with fatigue, stress and other fitness for work issues
- nutrition, fitness and health issues relating to fitness for work
- balancing work and personal lifestyle demands

### **Fatigue Management**

Fatigue is an acute, on-going state of tiredness that leads to mental or physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries. It is more than a feeling of tired and drowsy, it is a physical condition that can occur when a person’s physical or mental limits are reached.

Fatigue can occur as a result of various factors that may be work-related, lifestyle-related or a combination of both. The management of workplace fatigue is a shared responsibility between management and each individual.

The effects of fatigue decrease performance and productivity in the workplace and additionally they increase the potential for incidents and injuries to occur, by placing the individual fatigued worker and others in the workplace at increased risk.

Further guidance can be found in the Fatigue Management Procedure.

### **Workplace Stress**

Stress potentially contributing to illness and injury can come from many sources, both work and personal (relationship, dependency, financial). The causes of stress (often called stressors) can be many and varied, and can occur as a result of combinations of more than one stressor. Personal stressors may make it difficult for people to cope with workplace stressors.

It is reasonable to assume that people in the workplace are fit to cope with the pressure from normal work demands, and in the majority of instances people adjust to stressors and are able to continue to perform their normal work duties.

Stress becomes an occupational hazard if it adversely impacts on safety and health in the workplace. Whilst stress is not a disease or injury, it can lead to mental and physical ill health.

#### **Signs of Stress**

Personal signs of Stress include:

- immediate body changes that may be associated with distress, such as changes in heart rate and breathing rate, muscle tension, nausea or vomiting
- feelings of anger, protest or frustration
- feelings of anxiety or being out of control
- feelings of guilt or embarrassment
- irritability and loss of concentration, poor memory, learning difficulties
- prolonged sleeplessness and disturbing dreams

Outward signs of stress in individuals that could be noticeable to colleagues and managers include:

- deteriorating relationships with colleagues
- irritability, indecisiveness, absenteeism, reduced performance
- demand for more precise instructions
- increased smoking or alcohol consumption, or drug taking
- complaining about ill-health
- actual ill-health such as frequent headaches, gastro-intestinal disturbance, on-going minor illnesses, skin rashes, deteriorating immune response

### **Workplace Considerations**

Workplace considerations in relation to stress:

- Environmental stressors such as excessive noise, temperature and humidity, lighting, vibration and air quality
- Workloads and deadlines
- Awareness of signs of stress in yourself and your colleagues
- Utilise and referral to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as required

### **Employee Assistance Program**

CDU has a place an Employee Assistance Program to provide employees and their immediate family with confidential assistance and/or counselling for work or personal issues. Further information can be found online or in person with People and Capability.

### **Risk Mitigation Strategies**

#### **Line Managers and Supervisors**

- be aware of the warning signs of people under too much pressure
- consider and assess potential stressors in the workplace
- be understanding of stressors outside the workplace, but line managers only seek information they need to know
- provide a consistent management approach
- encourage employees to feel comfortable to seek professional help to aid in resolving problems e.g. EAP.

## Individual Employees

- Be aware of warning signs of stress in yourself and colleagues
- Utilise stress mitigation strategies as required
- Utilise EAP as required

## Medical Requirements

### Pre-Employment Medicals

The medical requirements outlined in this Procedure provide initial assessment of the worker's fitness to undertake their duties.

The Pre-employment Medical may be undertaken by a Medical Practitioner. It may include:

- Medical Questionnaire (inclusive of fatigue and psychological questionnaire)
- Physical Assessment
- Laboratory Drug and Alcohol Testing

And may include (but is not limited to), as per identified hazards / inherent requirements of the individual's role:

- audiometry (hearing)
- spirometry (lung function)
- vision (testing)
- strength (flexibility and fitness test)

The Pre-employment Medical Provider will make a determination of "Fit for Duty" (Fit for Duty, Fit for Duty with Restrictions, or Unfit), based on these examinations and the position applied for / job role.

Where there are any restrictions or conditions mentioned on the Pre-employment Medical Report and the employer wishes to continue with employment, a formal, documented Health Management Plan must be put in place, signed by employer, employee and treating professional.

### Routine Medicals

Based on the risks of the job tasks performed and working environment, routine medicals may be conducted by CDU. These medicals may include Medical Surveillance elements (as described below), and shall meet any legislative requirements (risk based e.g. noise, asbestos, lead, hazardous substances, commercial driving etc.).

### Exit Medicals

Exit Medicals may be conducted by CDU. The content would be determined based on the individual's specific job hazards, injury and or illness experience and time since last Medical Assessment.

### Injury / Illness Medical Examinations

All injury and illness medical examinations will be addressed under the Workplace Rehabilitation and Return to Work Procedure. This is inclusive of work related and non-work related injuries and illnesses.

### Medical Surveillance

Medical surveillance is the process of evaluating the health of employees as it relates to their potential Occupational Exposures to hazardous agents.

CDU may develop, formalise and implement a Medical Surveillance Program based on the individual potential health risks associated with the scope of work, work environment and individual roles / job tasks, and any legislative requirements.

### **Sick Leave / Injury / Illness**

CDU requires workers to report the following situations to the Supervisor or CDU Health and Wellbeing prior to returning to work.

- Hospitalization for any reason
- Leave for 5 (five) consecutive days or more, due to personal injury or illness
- Any injury that affects the workers ability to walk easily and quickly for evacuation requirements (e.g. sprained ankle, sore knee, etc.)
- Any illness that may cause dehydration (e.g. fever, diarrhoea) for outdoor workers, especially during hotter months
- Any condition that affects the individual's ability to conduct their duties, (e.g. lacerated hand or sprained ankle for a field worker required to climb ladders, or sprained wrist for a computer worker)
- After a Communicable Disease (e.g. Chicken Pox, Mumps, Measles, Rubella, etc.) that may potentially be transmitted in the workplace. Please provide a clearance from your Doctor to indicate you are no longer 'infectious'.
- Psychological Condition where you require ongoing return to work assistance or a temporary change of duties
- Any other sickness, injury or condition, with or without absences that may affect the individual's ability to safely perform their duties (e.g. Body Mass Index for physical tasks e.g. ladders, Uncontrolled Diabetes)
- If unsure whether the condition may affect ability to safely perform duties, contact CDU Health and Wellbeing to discuss further

This provides due diligence in respect to conditions that potentially could affect the individual, or others health and safety (e.g. already dehydrated, still infectious, require suitable duties, etc.).

### **Compliance and assurance**

Compliance with the requirements established in this procedure will be reviewed as part of CDU's assurance activities.

## **ESSENTIAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Internal**

Health and Safety Policy  
Occupational Health Procedure  
Working in Heat Procedure

### **External**

### **External References**

- Overview of Work Related Stress – Work Safe – Queensland – Australia
- Preventing and Managing Fatigue Draft Model Code of Practice 2012–Safe Work Australia
- Fatigue Prevention in the Workplace 2008-WorkSafe Australia
- Managing Fatigue in the Workplace Fact Sheet-SafeWork South Australia
- Managing fatigue in the Workplace – A Guide for oil and gas industry supervisors and health practitioners:2007 – IPIECA
- Reducing Work Related Stress – A Staff Guide: Deakin University
- Workplace and Personal Stress: Law Institute of Victoria
- A Guide for the Office: Department of Trade, Industry & Resources: Division of Workplace Health & Safety

## Document History and Version Control

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