



APPROACHABLE FATIGUE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN TRANSPORT COMPANIES

In transport, due to the growing economic pressure and flexible working circumstances, the need for effective measures to prevent the negative consequences of fatigue has grown. Fatigue (risk) management can be the answer, as long as it is a workable approach.

FATIGUE (RISK) MANAGEMENT IN TRANSPORT

Recent research has shown that approximately 10 – 25 % of all accidents in transport companies have been related to fatigue. Also fatigue can affect the health and wellbeing of drivers. Sectors like aviation, offshore and now also transport, have found an answer in Fatigue (Risk) management Systems. *Fatigue (Risk) management systems can be seen as a set of measures, incorporated in the processes of the company, to prevent the existence of fatigue.* A good fatigue management system identifies what exactly the fatigue risks in a company are, and what the organization can do to manage the risk of fatigue.

Important aspects of how a good fatigue (risk) management system should look like:

- the need to look at the chain of events further away
- a shared responsibility of management, schedulers and drivers together
- assessment of early warning signals
- integration within the organization's company's safety management systems, general policies and procedures.

Actually: fatigue should be seen as just one of the risks (financial, safety, business continuity) in an organization.

METHODS

In this study, 6 approachable fatigue management practices have been designed within transport companies, based on theoretical viewpoints of fatigue management. First, a literature study served as a framework for the design of approachable and effective fatigue management practices. Subsequently the framework was presented in an expert meeting to representatives from stakeholders in the Dutch transport sector. The participants of the meeting were each asked to prioritize the possible measures, based on their apparent effectiveness, approachability and 'fit' in the sector. Next we recruited 6 transport companies to conduct pilot studies with in the project.



RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: THREE EXAMPLES OF APPROACHABLE PRACTICES:

- **Prevention of workload and stress - Company A**
"A training is given by an experienced truck driver at the workplace, in which a lot of attention is given to the values and standards. The importance of maximum working hours and maintaining resting times during the day, and taking your own responsibility are part of these values."
- **Fatigue management by introducing a special night shift - Company B**
"The company decided to install a special night shift, with (ex-) truck drivers, to take over loading tasks from truck drivers, early in the morning. This will take away work stress from drivers and to give drivers a longer night rest. Also this provides

new job opportunities for employees who need to work in a more steady time schedule, due to for example family or personal circumstances) need to work in a more steady time schedule"

- **Condensed workshop in weekend hours – Company C**
"A condensed workshop was organized in weekend hours, in which representatives of all levels in the company (e.g. drivers, dispatchers and management) were present and discussed and voted upon the best ideas to be implemented in the future." Also a quick self-test questionnaire - derived from literature - was used, to confront participants with their own experiences and facilitate discussion.

By evaluating the practices we can conclude that fatigue management approaches are difficult to realize in small companies. A lot can be done in a short workshop setting. By initiating ideas in several organizational levels, a shared responsibility between management and drivers was promoted. Also, small creative/innovative changes in the working process appear to lead to a considerable improvement in fatigue related behaviour. The use of a quick questionnaire will help to give drivers insight into their own fatigue. Crucial for mitigating fatigue is: openness of culture, social dialogue and communication on the workfloor. This way there are approachable improvements to make, especially in the transport sector.