

Safety and health alert

10/09 Long working hours a high risk in security industry

Incident

A young security worker on a student visa was fatally injured on his way to work when the car he was driving crashed into a safety barrier on the Graham Farmer freeway. There was no evidence of brakes being applied before the car crashed. It was identified that the security worker was employed by two security companies. The security worker had finished a seven-hour shift for the first security company. After a five hour break, the security officer started a 12.5-hour night shift for the second security company, which he finished at 6.30am. The incident occurred as he was on his way to another three hour shift for the second security company commencing at 9.00am that morning.

Factors to consider

- Irregular shifts and long working hours
- Insufficient recovery time between shifts
- Length and timing of shifts increases the impact of fatigue
- Security officer was employed by more than one employer.

Recommendations

1. Employers have responsibilities to identify hazards in relation to working hours, assess the risks and implement control measures in consultation with staff in accordance with the Code of Practice Working Hours.
2. Work schedules, working times, sufficient recovery times, individual and other relevant factors related to the job need to be taken into account when reducing the risk of fatigue to employees.
3. Information and training should be provided to employees in relation to the hazards and risks associated with working hours arrangements, their responsibilities for safety and health, health and lifestyle choices, fatigue indicators and other relevant information in relation to policies on working hours, fatigue management, drugs and alcohol and fitness for work.
4. Employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and health and that of others affected by their work.
5. Employees should be aware of their responsibilities and that lifestyle and individual choices (such as second jobs) may contribute to fatigue and impaired performance.

Further information

- Code of Practice Working Hours 2006

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

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