



Sleeping Habits of the Offshore Shift Worker

Safety and Environmental Management System

SEMS 9-3

Not everyone working offshore is on an operation that works 24 hours a day, like on a drilling operation or a job that is doing some kind of construction work. But if you work offshore long enough, sooner or later, you will work on this type of job.

If and when you do, it is important when working the night shift, to develop a sleeping routine. You need enough rest to not only be productive on your next shift, but also ***not become a safety liability because you did not get enough sleep the night before.***

Working on the night shift may mean getting less sleep. Sleeping after working a 12-hour shift at night is not often as restful as if you were working days and sleeping at night. This can cause stress, which can lead to difficulty in concentrating and possibly an accident.

To head off this potential problem, reduce it, or eliminate it altogether, *you must get the most of the hours you set aside for sleep.*

Decide how much sleep you need (at least 8-9 hours) and then experiment on how to develop your sleep routine offshore. You may be able to go to sleep immediately after coming "off tower." Other people may take a few hours before they are able to get into a deep, restful sleep. Note when you go to bed, and how ***rested or tired*** you feel when you get up. Some people even prefer their sleep broken up into two shorter sleep periods. Over time, you will develop what method works best for you. If you are starting shift work or are already accustomed to shift work, try to sleep the same number of hours you are used to at home, but not less than 8 hours.

Once your routine is set, make sure you do nothing but sleep during the time set aside for that. Avoid interruptions. Put a sign on your door, ***SLEEPING, QUIET!***

Follow the same routine each time before going to sleep. Eat, shower, brush teeth, and prepare for bed. By doing the same thing every day, it is a signal to your body that you are getting ready for sleep and your body will prepare itself.

Many veterans, working offshore on 24-hour operations, have adjusted to shift work. The new person is the one who has to develop the routine best for him/her.

Regardless whether working days ***or*** night, ***GET ENOUGH SLEEP***, so you can be rested for your next shift and the lack of sleep does not become a safety concern.