**Toolbox Talk Shift Work**

In the road construction industry, an unavoidable fact is that you will be exposed to shift work. Working different shifts often leads to fatigue, and fatigue can:

1. Make it hard to concentrate, which increases the likelihood of mistakes and accidents.

2. Affect your attitude and temper.

The body has an internal clock that tells you when it is time to be active and when it is time to slow down. Getting your body adjusted to a different time schedule takes time, and when you rotate through different shifts or when you switch back and forth between day and night shifts it can make things a lot tougher. Fortunately, there are some things you can do that can help you stay more alert at night and help you get sleep the next day.

**Sleep**

- Make it a priority to get plenty of undisturbed sleep.

- Make sure your family is aware of how important sleep is to you, so they can rearrange their schedules or limit certain activities while you sleep.

- Keep the bedroom dark and quiet. Wear earplugs or eye covers.

- Disconnect the phone and doorbell.

- Avoid sleeping pills as they can leave you feeling drowsy after you wake up and they do not give you normal sleep

**Health, Diet and Exercise**

- Avoid eating heavy meals before going to bed as this will keep you awake while your meal digests.

- Ensure that you eat in moderation (at set times if possible).

- Avoid fatty, fast food.

- Drink plenty of water.

- Avoid alcohol before going to sleep. It may help you fall asleep; however, it disturbs sleep by preventing you from entering a deep sleep.

- Never drink and drive, especially after working your shift.

- Avoid drinking coffee within 4 hours of going to sleep. Even if you can fall asleep right after drinking a pot of coffee, it will still affect your sleep.

- Stay physically fit to help you fight off stress illness and give you energy.

**Tips for Driving Home**

- Consider car pooling with other shift workers so you can keep each other awake.

- Keep the temperature cool inside the car and listen to lively music to help you stay alert.

- Never drive if you start to nod off, pull over in a safe location and take a short nap. Trying to fight drowsiness can lead to a fatal mistake.