

<b><u>POLICY</u></b> <b>REDUCING CONSECUTIVE SHIFTS TO MINIMIZE FATIGUE, ERRORS AND INJURIES</b>		Page 1 of 2
<b><u>EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP</u></b> Vice President, Employee Experience	<b><u>INITIALLY RELEASED:</u></b> November 2013	<b><u>VERSION:</u></b> April 2025

### **INTENT / PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to improve quality care by increasing safety of staff and the [people we serve](#) through reducing levels of staff [fatigue](#) associated with working too many consecutive hours or shifts including overtime.

This policy outlines organizational and individual responsibilities for reducing staff fatigue and encouraging wellness.

### **POLICY**

Applicability:

- This policy applies to all Fraser Health staff and staff scheduled by Fraser Health including:
  - Management and management support employees (management and leadership).
  - Unionized employees (both regular and casual).
- This policy does not apply to physicians, residents, students, consultants, contractors, and volunteers.

Fraser Health will enforce policies and practices to limit the impact of staff fatigue on both staff and patient safety. These include:

- Staff will not work more than **70 hours** without a day off.
- Staff will not work more than 16 hours of their scheduled or callback shifts in a 24-hour period.
- Hours worked anywhere within Fraser Health are included in the calculation of work hours.
- Efforts will be made to minimize the number of changes between shifts to allow for adaption of circadian rhythm and to provide for adequate rest and recuperation between shifts.
- Shift exchanges and/or swaps are also governed by this policy and should not be approved if they result in a schedule that would exceed the limits listed above.

The leader or manager is responsible for:

- Facilitating healthy work schedules for staff and for establishing staffing policies and processes that maintain safe staffing levels for quality care.
- Recognizing the rights and obligations of staff to decline an assignment if impaired by fatigue.
- Promoting work schedules that provide for adequate rest and recuperation between scheduled shifts.
- Collaborating with their staff to establish shift duration and shift rotations that meet the Collective Agreement provision.
- Denying request for shift exchanges that would exceed the maximum consecutive shift limits described in this policy.

Fraser Health staff are responsible for:

- Arriving at work adequately rested and prepared for duty.
  - Strategies to support staff self-care and reduce fatigue can include work-life balance, healthy nutrition, regular exercise, and social interactions.
- Recognizing personal limits and declining requests to do overtime if fatigued.

<b><u>POLICY</u></b> <b>REDUCING CONSECUTIVE SHIFTS TO MINIMIZE FATIGUE, ERRORS AND INJURIES</b>		Page 2 of 2
<b><u>EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP</u></b> Vice President, Employee Experience	<b><u>INITIALLY RELEASED:</u></b> November 2013	<b><u>VERSION:</u></b> April 2025

- Reviewing their work schedules and not submitting requests for shift exchanges that would result in their schedule exceeding the maximum consecutive shifts or hours for either employee.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Fatigue:** An overwhelming, debilitating, and sustained sense of exhaustion that decreases one's ability to carry out daily activities including the ability to work effectively and function at one's usual level in family or social roles.

**Shift Length:** The total length of the shift including unpaid breaks.

### **PROCEDURE**

Leaders, managers, supervisors, partnering with staffing services and human resources, will ensure, in collaboration with staff and union representatives the following:

- Shift schedules that meet this policy and respective collective agreement requirements; and
- Opportunities to discuss with their staff, shift schedules that decrease the impact of fatigue.

Operational and staffing service managers will establish a process to prevent employees being scheduled to work shifts or hours that would exceed the maximum consecutive shift limits described in this policy.

- This would include operational leaders, or delegates, checking employee schedules before approving shift swap requests.

During disasters, emergencies or other exceptional circumstances, this policy may be waived with the approval of the leader or director or administrator on-call.

### **RELATED RESOURCES**

- [Workplace Health and Safety - Corporate Policy](#)
- [Your health matters - Fraser Health Authority](#)
- [Workplace Stress Management: 11 Best Strategies & Worksheets \(positivepsychology.com\)](#)
- [First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness \(fnha.ca\)](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: Fatigue](#)

### **DATE(S) REVISED / REVIEWED SUMMARY**

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.0	November 2013	Initial policy released
2.0	December 2014	Changes made to the current wording around mixed (extended and regular) shift lengths and 6-day rotations.
3.0	March 2020	Temporary revision to policy.
4.0	April 2025	Removal of temporary revision and minor revisions to policy wording.