

Workplace Stress

Stress is a growing concern across many industries because it can affect not only workers' well-being but also safety and productivity in the workplace. It affects employees in a number of ways including their mental and physical health, staying focused on the job at hand and maintaining awareness of their surroundings. Whether stress comes from our personal life or from work, we need to be able to understand what causes stress and how to minimize or eliminate it. Let's discuss some of the causes of workplace stress and how we can manage them.

Some causes of workplace stress include:

- *Heavy workload
- *Poor communication
- *Unclear job expectations
- *Challenging relationships with colleagues
- *Poor management
- *Inadequate training
- *Lack of support from upper management
- *Tight deadlines
- *Lack of control over work or personal life
- *Job insecurity
- *Bullying or harassment
- *Organizational changes
- *Working long hours

Addressing workplace stress is crucial for maintaining a healthy work environment and preventing burnout, absenteeism and high turnover. If you find yourself becoming overwhelmed and are feeling signs of workplace stress, here are some strategies that may help you manage it.

- 1) Communicate – Discuss concerns with your manager or someone in the Safety or Human Resources department.
- 2) Prioritize Work-Life Balance – Be sure to separate your work life and home life. Do not bring your work home. Use that time to enjoy with family and/or friends.
- 3) Develop Coping Skills – There are a number of coping skills that you can incorporate into your life such as yoga, breathing exercises or meditation.
- 4) Eat Healthy – Healthy eating habits and exercise not only benefit us physically but can help us mentally.
- 5) Company Health Programs – Take advantage of company sponsored well-being programs, stress reduction activities and healthy lifestyle campaigns.
- 6) Committees & Teams – Participate in company committees or programs such as a safety committee or party planning team to feel more connected to the company and your peers.
- 7) Professional Help – Seek professional help from a doctor or therapist, if you feel it necessary.

As an employer, you can encourage employees to manage stress by incorporating some of the following:

- Foster a culture of open communication, teamwork and respect. Encouraging a supportive work environment can reduce stress.
- Offering flexible work schedules, remote work options or accommodations for personal obligations can help employees balance work and life responsibilities.
- Ensure workloads are manageable and employees have the resources they need to succeed.
- Ensure that job roles, responsibilities and performance expectations are clearly communicated. Regular feedback and reviews by management can help everyone stay on track and focused.
- Promote regular breaks, mental health days and vacation time to help employees recharge. Stress levels decrease when employees feel they can step away when needed.

- Provide resources such as employee assistance programs (EAPs), counseling services or mental health workshops to help employees cope with stress.

It is important that both employees and management work together to reduce stress, foster a supportive work environment and maintain open communication channels so everyone can significantly improve their well-being and the success of the organization. For more information on workplace stress, go to <https://www.osha.gov/workplace-stress> or <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stress/about/index.html>.

If you have further questions regarding safety in your workplace or would like more information, please contact Andy Sawan at Sedgwick at Andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com or 330-819-4728.