

Information Item	Fatigue: keeping your finger on the pulse
Sponsor	CEO
Date	November 2019

Fatigue: keeping your finger on the pulse

*The Crane Association of New Zealand's Past President, Scott McLeod, discusses why fatigue and its oncoming signs should not be ignored in this month's **The Technical Corner**.*

Russian roulette is a term Scott McLeod doesn't use lightly.

But being the risk adverse McLeod Cranes & Hiabs Managing Director that he is, the reference's imagery helps Scott nail his point home – operating while fatigued is like playing Russian roulette.

He's not talking about being tired, but describing the extreme tiredness that results from mental or physical exertion or illness.

"Being tired is certainly a concern, who isn't tired sometimes? But it's the first warning sign of becoming fatigued – being worn out or disengaged from what you're doing," Scott says.

"Tired is concerning but fatigue is the enemy."

Fatigue, like most things, can occur to anybody, at any time and for a myriad of reasons. The key, Scott says, is being aware of the signs and addressing them appropriately.

Some of the industry's most common mechanisms to tackle it are written in law, mainly the Land Transport Amendment Act 2005 (the Act).

It states that a cumulative workday means a period that doesn't exceed 24 hours and begins after a continuous period of rest time of at least 10 hours.

While there is also some innovative technology that can monitor fatigue, these advancements are still in their infancy.

So, the main instrument through which to effectively manage fatigue comes down to personal responsibility – responsibility of both the employee and the employer.

"Individuals need to recognise the signs, while managers need to consider their employees' wellbeing and recognise the disengagement should it occur," Scott says.

"What we do within my business is get employees to fill out a 'Fit for duty' questionnaire every morning, with fatigue appearing on it. Because it is about personal responsibility and effective communication.

"Your manager also needs to listen and hear those words, then accommodate for that."

Scott knows the Act has proven an effective method to safely undertake even a maximum 70-hour working week, because there doesn't tend to be massive issues occurring with drivers of heavy vehicles on roads.

It's a good baseline, he says.

However, crane operators are slightly different. While mobile crane drivers aren't required to carry and complete logbooks, they are required to apply the work time rule when driving one on a road with their heavy transport licence.

The Land Transport Rule: Work Time and Logbooks 2007 sets out how the limits to the work time hours for a driver of a vehicle that requires a class 2, 3, 4, or 5 licence.

It states that a driver must take a rest break after five and a half hours of continuous work time.

"Great health and safety lends itself to great workplaces, and therefore great workforces who are engaged, rather than those who are just ticking the boxes or in autopilot," Scott says.

"And that's the crux of it really, to create a safe work environment. It is also important to think about where someone works and lives.

"Some businesses allow their employees to well and truly exceed the maximum working hours. But I would say that's like playing Russian roulette with fatigue. As an employer of this industry, which is high risk, you always need to keep your finger on the pulse."

Scott McLeod
CANZ Immediate Past President

Newsletter Disclaimer:

The information in any CANZ newsletter is for general use only. The information has been provided by CANZ and by third parties including CANZ members. While CANZ has reasonably endeavoured to provide accurate information, neither CANZ nor the third parties provide any guarantees regarding the correctness, currency, completeness or suitability of the information for any particular purpose. It should not be relied on in place of appropriate specific advice or verification. Opinions provided by third parties on any matter do not necessarily represent the opinion or policy of CANZ.

The newsletter also contains promotional information about third parties and their products and services, including references to CANZ sponsors, and links to third party websites. CANZ does not endorse third party products or services, and any dealings with third parties, including accessing their websites, will be at the user's sole risk.