

THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

STRESS AT WORK

Stress is caused when excessive pressure or demand is placed on a person, and can be caused by situations at work, outside of work, or a combination of both. Regardless of the cause, prolonged stress can lead to increased health problems. Some of the potential effects include heart disease, back pain, anxiety, and depression.

Open communication is a key element in tackling the stress problem in any workplace. It requires an honest and open relationship between you, your supervisor, and your employer – one where you can say what you feel.

Management's Role to Prevent Job Stress

- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.
- Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
- Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
- Improve communications - reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers.
- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.

Your Role at Work to Prevent Job Stress

- Talk to your supervisor. If they don't know there's a problem, they can't help.
- Support your coworkers when they are experiencing job stress. Encourage them to talk to their supervisor about it.
- Focus your energies on solving the problem rather than worrying about them.
- Discuss with your supervisor the options to adjust your job responsibilities in ways that can reduce the stress.

Your Role Outside of Work

These ideas will not reduce the cause of stress, but can help you to manage their effects better:

- Eat healthy and watch your caffeine intake – which can make you feel more anxious.
- Stop smoking – even if you think it relaxes you, it doesn't help you to stay healthy.
- Be physically active – it stimulates you and gives you more energy.
- Try relaxation techniques – it helps some people to deal with pressures and stress.
- Talk to family and friends about what you are feeling – they may be able to provide support. Treat yourself to something new – rewarding yourself occasionally will help you feel better and improve your attitude.