



# FIT FOR DUTY

Toolbox Talk



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## FIT FOR DUTY

- » Fit for duty is about helping people, building capacity, and setting up workers and companies for the safe execution of work
  - Do your workers and controls have the capacity to handle an issue?
  - Where are your “rumble strips”?
- » This is not about blaming workers



Humans make mistakes: it is just a matter of time, even for the best employee or contractor. Just as our control strategies must be resilient, our workers must be resilient, too. We accomplish this by building a network of controls and ensuring we have open and honest communication with our workers.

Where are your rumble strips? This refers to control strategies that provide feedback to the worker just as rumble strips do when a vehicle drifts off the road. Where are the rumble strips in relation to workers being fit for duty? What weak signals exist and are we aware of them?

**VIDEO**



**WorkSafeBC Video**

<https://youtu.be/RhqUiqXY0eo>



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This video captures one aspect of fit for duty: mind on task and how the various aspects of our lives can interfere with our attention to the task at hand.

## WHY FIT FOR DUTY?

- » We know that fatigue, alcohol and drugs, mental health and a variety of other stressors impact worker performance and health and safety
- » Many companies formally manage only some of these
  - Often limited to alcohol and drugs and fatigue, and almost always in isolation of each other



## **FIT FOR DUTY – SOME EXAMPLES**

- » How do you manage the following situations? A worker:
  - With a pacemaker working around magnetic pumps?
  - Who is pregnant in a work environment with reproductive toxins (carbon monoxide, toluene, radiation, etc.)?
  - Who is fasting?
  - With phobias - fear of heights, claustrophobia, etc.
  - With reduced ability to handle stress because of family challenges?
  - Working with a chemical that can impact fitness for work and the only defense is a respirator?
  - Working alone in remote locations for extended periods?

## **FIT FOR DUTY DEFINITION**

A condition in which an employee's physical, physiological and psychological state enables them to continuously perform assigned tasks safely.

» This definition includes:

- Physical requirements – physical demands analysis, vision, hearing, etc.
- Physiological condition – fatigue, alcohol and drugs, workplace exposures, etc.
- Psychological condition – commitment, risk tolerance, emotional state, culture, etc.



## FIT FOR DUTY – A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH



## RISK FACTORS

- » Safety sensitive
- » Pre-existing conditions
- » Physical work
- » Driving
- » Workplace exposures
- » Fatigue
- » Confrontational work environments
- » High cognitive demands and pressure
- » Working alone
- » Remote working or living
- » Access to food and water
- » Unfamiliar environment or country
- » Violence, harassment and bullying
- » Bona fide occupational requirement



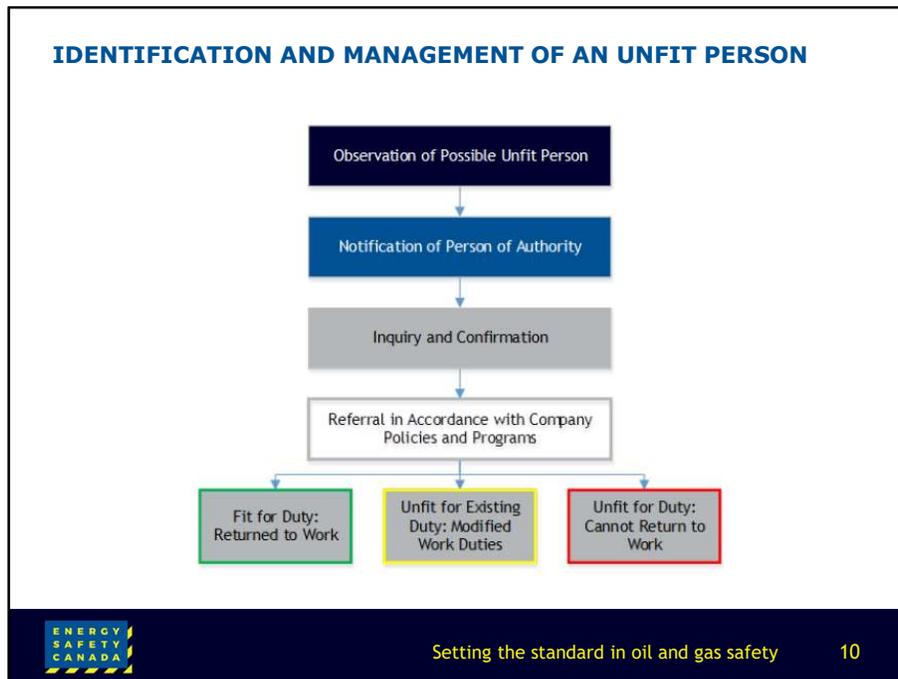
These are some of the aspects that industry needs to consider when assessing the fit for duty risks to workers.

## FIT FOR DUTY - LIFE SAVING RULE

- » Be in a state to perform work safely
  - I will be physically and mentally in a state to perform my assigned duties
  - I commit to not being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  - I will inform a supervisor immediately if I or a co-worker may be unfit for work



\*The Fit for Duty Task Group efforts influenced the creation of the Fit for Duty Life Saving Rule



If you observe someone who may be unfit let your supervisor know immediately. They will then inquire and confirm that your observations are in fact a fit for duty issue. The matter will be handled in accordance with company policies and will result in one of three possibilities: the worker is fit for duty: the worker is unfit for the existing duties and will be assigned modified work; or the worker is unfit and cannot return to work.

## FIT FOR DUTY WALLET CARD



The graphic shows a wallet card with two main sections. The left section is titled 'FIT FOR DUTY? Don't be a hazard' and lists criteria for physical, physiological, and psychological fitness. The right section is titled 'WHEN TO TAKE ACTION Signs or symptoms' and lists signs of physical and psychological issues. Both sections include a small Energy Safety Canada logo and a 'Fit for Duty - A Life Saving Rule' icon.

**ENERGY SAFETY CANADA**

**FIT FOR DUTY?**  
Don't be a hazard

**Physical - Physical Demands, Vision, Hearing**

- Know the physical demands of your job.
- Able to meet the physical demands.
- Require any assistance with the planned work.

**Physiological - Fatigue, Alcohol & Drugs, Workplace Exposures**

- Rested and ready to work.
- Free from the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Concerns about workplace exposures (chemicals, heat, etc.)?

**Psychological - Risk Tolerance, Culture, Emotional State**

- Concerns about the work?
- Distracted by something on your mind?
- Would you like someone to talk to today?

**WHEN TO TAKE ACTION**  
Signs or symptoms

**Physical Requirements - The Body Itself**

- Deterioration in appearance or personal hygiene.
- Unable to conduct the assigned work or it hurts to do so.

**Physiological Condition - Affects How the Body Functions**

- Difficulty staying awake or persistent/excessive yawning.
- Dizziness, slurred speech or inability to stand or walk straight.

**Psychological Condition - Mental State**

- Irritability, inappropriate responses or behaviours.
- Forgetfulness, judgement errors or difficulty staying focused.

**Observe any of these signs? Speak with a supervisor.**

Fit for Duty - A Life Saving Rule

The Fit for Duty wallet card is available at [EnergySafetyCanada.com](http://EnergySafetyCanada.com)



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This wallet card can help to facilitate conversations between workers and supervisors around signs and symptoms of an unfit person, as well as reinforcing the fit for duty definition.

### **FIT FOR DUTY – REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

- » Discuss past incidents where fit for duty was a causal factor.
- » What fit for duty risk factors exist in your operations?
- » Are your fit for duty controls good enough to prevent the next incident?

**QUESTIONS?**



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