



Report: Exhausted Employees Cost American Companies Millions of Dollars Annually

New research tool from the National Safety Council and Brigham Health Sleep Matters Initiative shows that U.S. employers of all sizes are hurt by employees' sleep deficiency



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INDIANAPOLIS, Sept. 25, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Sleep disorders and sleep deficiency are hidden workplace issues that affect employers across America. New research from the National Safety Council and the Brigham Health Sleep Matters Initiative reveals that a U.S. employer with 1,000 workers stands to lose about \$1.4 million each year in absenteeism, diminished productivity, and



healthcare costs because of exhausted employees, many of whom have undiagnosed and untreated sleep disorders. The costs of fatigue in an average-sized Fortune 500 company climbs to about \$80 million annually.

The research and calculations are captured in the Fatigue Cost Calculator for Employers – an online tool that provides companies with a snapshot of not only their losses, but also their return on investment if they implement employee sleep health education programs that screen for untreated sleep disorders, such as obstructive sleep apnea and insomnia.

"This research reinforces that sleepless nights hurt everyone," said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. "Many of us have been conditioned to just power through our fatigue, but worker health and safety on the job are compromised when we don't get the sleep we need. The calculator demonstrates that doing nothing to address fatigue costs employers a lot more than they think."

"Sleep, along with nutrition and exercise, is one of three pillars of good health," stated Charles A. Czeisler, PhD, MD, FRCP, director of the Sleep Matters Initiative at Brigham Health, and the Baldino Professor of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. "Promotion of healthy sleep is a win-win for both employers and employees, enhancing quality of life and longevity for workers while improving productivity and reducing healthcare costs for employers."

According to an NSC probability-based survey, 43 percent of Americans obtain insufficient sleep, jeopardizing safety, impairing their ability to think clearly, make informed decisions and be productive. The survey also found 76 percent of Americans say they feel tired at work – in step with research showing that most workers routinely get less sleep than they need.

Other findings revealed by the Fatigue Cost Calculator developed by the Brigham 

Health Sleep Matters Initiative for the NSC include:

- A national transportation company with 1,000 employees likely loses more than \$600,000 annually in decreased productivity because of tired employees. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of workplace deaths, underscoring the need for alert, attentive employees.
- More than 250 employees at a 1,000-worker national construction company likely have sleep disorders, which increase the risk of being injured or killed on the job. The construction industry has the highest number of on-the-job deaths each year.
- A single employee with obstructive sleep apnea can cost an employer more than \$3,000 in excess healthcare costs each year.
- An employee with untreated insomnia is present but not productive for more than 10 full days of work annually, and accounts for at least \$2,000 in excess healthcare costs each year.
- An average Fortune 500 company could save nearly \$40 million annually if half of its workforce were engaged in a sleep health program.

Employers can calculate the cost of fatigue on their workplace at nsc.org/tiredat-work. For more information about fatigue, visit nsc.org/fatigue.

About the National Safety Council

The National Safety Council (nsc.org) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public in areas where we can make the most impact.



About the Sleep Matters Initiative

The mission of the Sleep Matters Initiative, led by investigators from Brigham Health and Harvard Medical School, is to foster excellence in the treatment of sleep and circadian disorders in order to improve health, safety, and performance; and to promote widespread change in social norms that will engender a culture of sleep health.

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