

Title: Three Ways Employers Can Address Workplace Burnout Before It Becomes A Safety Hazard.

Source: Risk & Insurance Magazine Staff Writer Courtney DuChene.

Category: Health and Wellness. Stress Management. Safety.



Three Ways Employers Can Address Workplace Burnout Before It Becomes A Safety Hazardⁱ

Burnout, which can cause employees to become distracted and feel lethargic, can create workplace safety issues.

Proper office ergonomics, workplace wellness programs and protective gear like hardhats, exoskeletons and safety glasses — are tools and practices that come to mind when employers think about preventing injuries.

But these days, employers need to look beyond physical risks and hazards when assessing the best ways to protect their employees. Addressing the risk of burnout and other byproducts of workplace stress can be a key to keeping employees both physically and mentally healthy.

Recognized by the World Health Organization as an “occupational phenomenon,” burnout affects nearly two-thirds of full-time workers, a Gallup poll reports.

The condition, which is characterized by feelings of exhaustion, mental distance from one’s job and an inability to focus on work related-tasks, can also become a hazard to an employee’s physical safety.

Studies have suggested that burned-out employees may be less aware of their surroundings and therefore more likely to forget common safety practices, misuse heavy machinery or become distracted while doing dangerous tasks such as driving, according to Material Handling and Logistics Magazine.

Burnout can also lead to other serious conditions. The Mayo Clinic notes that prolonged workplace stress caused by burnout can lead to heart disease, high blood pressure and type II diabetes.

Burnout can affect anyone, but it’s more commonly seen in white-collar professions where long hours can be the norm.

Workers in industries like tech and medicine, where overworking is often encouraged, are more susceptible to the condition. Studies have found that at least 50% of America’s doctors suffer from burnout, per the Financial Times.

While there isn’t yet a wealth of evidence-based studies on the phenomenon of burnout, there are still actions employers can take to combat stress in the workplace. Here are three ways employers can tackle burnout before it becomes a safety problem.

Title: Three Ways Employers Can Address Workplace Burnout Before It Becomes A Safety Hazard.

Source: Risk & Insurance Magazine Staff Writer Courtney DuChene.

Category: Health and Wellness. Stress Management. Safety.



1) Early Identification Is Key

Like many health conditions, burnout is better addressed when it is detected early.

Fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and low morale are common symptoms of burnout that employers, managers and supervisors should look out for during the early stages of burnout.

Regularly talking with employees about their roles and the stress they're feeling can also help employers identify who may be at risk for burnout.

Some employees may be more susceptible to the condition than others. A study by meQuilibrium found that employees with high agility, the ability to imagine future problems and solutions, and low resilience are more likely to be affected by the condition.

While some of the signs of burnout may be subtle, more serious symptoms like drug and alcohol use, irritability and violence can be more obvious.

2) Offer Employees Support When Issues Arise

If they can intervene early and provide their employees with resources to address workplace stress, companies can reduce the potential safety risks of burnout.

Encouraging employees to take breaks throughout the day to relax, offering benefits, and encouraging them to use their paid time off and seek support from their managers can help individuals reduce burnout.

Employee mentoring programs can also help reduce workplace burnout because they workers somewhere to turn to when workplace stress arises.

Other benefits, such as an on-site gym or reimbursement for yoga and meditation classes can help workers build healthy routines. According to the Mayo Clinic, regular physical activity and exercises rooted in relaxation can help employees reduce burnout.

The Mayo Clinic also recommends that employees who are suffering from burnout work with their managers to create reasonable expectations for reducing workplace stress.

3) Create Awareness in Your Workplace

Since burnout still isn't widely understood by most people, educational campaigns can go a long way in helping employees understand the problem. Office-wide educational resources, such as pamphlets and talks, and training sessions for managers on how to address burnout, can help employers combat the issue.

Additionally, it's important for employees to know where to report the safety issues that can arise from burnout. Employers and workers' compensation program managers should make

Title: Three Ways Employers Can Address Workplace Burnout Before It Becomes A Safety Hazard.

Source: Risk & Insurance Magazine Staff Writer Courtney DuChene.

Category: Health and Wellness. Stress Management. Safety.



sure that their workers know who they should report injuries and illnesses to.

Burnout and workplace stress may feel like a stigmatized topic at first. Employees often have trouble discussing behavioral health in the workplace.

To make sure employees are comfortable discussing the condition, it can help to establish a language for discussing burnout.

Creating a common language for discussing feelings of burnout can help employees feel more comfortable discussing the topic, and it sends the message that employers are willing to listen and help them.

ⁱ DuChene C. (January 7, 2020). Three Ways Employers Can Address Workplace Burnout Before It Becomes A Safety Hazard. Risk and Insurance Magazine Downloadable Document. Accessed August 30 from <https://riskandinsurance.com/3-ways-employers-can-address-workplace-burnout-before-it-becomes-a-safety-hazard/>