

AMTA's Psychosocial Hazards Initiative:

A Health and Safety Association's Efforts to Address Psychosocial Hazards in Carrier Operations

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Introduction

- Dave Elniski
 - Industry Advisor in Safety & Compliance
 - Occupational health and safety and transportation-specific safety
 - Previous long-haul flatbed truck driver
 - MA student examining equity in trucking safety systems
- Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA)
 - Nonprofit industry and safety association
 - Involved in environmental, business, and safety-related projects
 - Provides operational support for truck and bus carriers in Alberta
- AMTA's Psychosocial Hazards Initiative



AMTA's Psychosocial Hazards Initiative

- Background

- Canada is shifting towards employer-centric occupational psychological injury prevention:

Voluntary

- **2007** – the Mental Health Commission of Canada is established
- **2009** – *Guarding Minds @ Work* is launched
- **2013** – the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* is published by CSA

Mandatory

- **2017** – preventing psychological injuries becomes a purpose of the *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- **2018** - PTSD presumptions greatly expanded in *Alberta's Workers' Compensation Act*
 - Partially walked back in 2021
- **2019** - preventing psychological injuries becomes a purpose of the *Canada Labour Code*

Preventing psychological hazards in the workplace

Hazard Assessment

Psychological hazards must be included in the workplace hazard assessment process. The CSA Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard provides guidance for conducting a hazard assessment.



Identify hazards

Identify existing & potential hazards for every job and every task at a work site.



Assess hazards

Asses the level of risk it presents & put in place appropriate control measures.



Common hazards

- Violence
- Traumatic events
- Job demands
- Role ambiguity



Training

Worker training should include assessment and control of psychological hazards.



Prevention

Focus on prevention by fostering a respectful workplace.

Scan to learn more



- Background (continued...)

- In 2019, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (department of the Government of Alberta) started their Prevention Initiative, a program designed to target:

- Musculoskeletal Injuries
- Slips, Trips, and Falls
- Psychosocial Hazards

Categories of occupational injuries resulting in highest Workers' Compensation Board overall costs and individual claim numbers

- AMTA participated in the Prevention Initiative and, as a trucking safety association, was asked to produce trucking-specific resources to supplement the more generic resources produced by the Government of Alberta

AMTA's Psychosocial Hazards Initiative

- AMTA must be able to assist carriers and safety professionals in occupational health and safety matters
- Prior to our psychosocial hazards initiative, AMTA lacked resources to assist carriers with this topic
- Our intention:
 - To support employers in addressing occupational psychosocial hazards in ways that are reasonably practicable for truck and bus carriers
 - Not to position ourselves as mental health experts



PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARD CONTROL IN ALBERTA'S TRUCKING INDUSTRY

A GUIDE TO IMPROVING
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR SMALL-
AND MEDIUM-SIZED CARRIERS

Alberta Motor Transport Association

AMTA

Informed by:

Provincial and federal OHS legislation

Alberta Labour and Immigration's Prevention Initiative's Psychosocial Hazards Working Group

CSA's *Psychological health and safety in the workplace* (a national standard) and its implementation guide

External contributors and subject matter experts

AMTA's interactions with carriers and safety professionals throughout Alberta

Full reference list available in the Guide and upon request

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Practice 6: Fatigue Management

Addressing fatigue may be the best practice in this paper about which most carriers are best equipped to implement. Hours-of-service (HOS) rules are well-known, understood, and applied in Alberta's trucking industry; this section will describe how psychosocial hazards can be addressed through fatigue management and the role of HOS compliance in this effort.

Overview

HOS rules are legal limits to how much work and driving a commercial driver can do in a given period of time; they also provide minimum rest times and specify how drivers and carriers are supposed to document these times to demonstrate compliance. In Alberta, commercial drivers are required to follow the HOS rules that apply to their carrier's operations. Provincially-regulated carriers must comply with Alberta's *Drivers' Hours of Service Regulation*⁶⁶; federally-regulated carriers follow Canada's *Commercial Vehicle Drivers Hours of Service Regulations*⁶⁷.

Fatigue, according to the implementation guide for the North American Fatigue Management Program (NAFMP), "can best be defined as combinations of symptoms that include mental and physical elements, impaired performance, and subjective feelings of alertness"⁶⁸. There are many reasons why someone may experience acute and chronic fatigue, and being tired is not the same as being fatigued⁶⁹ - even though these terms are often used interchangeably.

It is important to understand the differences between a carrier's management of their compliance with HOS rules and their management of fatigue. HOS rules were built based on the belief that

"Reducing fatigue is a combination of sufficient workplace incentives to minimize stress on drivers that might lead to risk."

- Dr. Michael H. Belzer, Professor of Economics

"Getting enough sleep at the right time is as essential to survival as food and water."

- Sadia Naqshbandi, Program Lead





Industry Response

Praise

- A needed resource (it's about time!)
- Moves the conversation from *What* and *Why* to *How*
- Evidence trucking is moving in the right direction

Criticism

- How is this my (the employer) responsibility?
- Other, more pressing issues to address (mainly electronic logging devices)
- Psychological injuries aren't real; trucking is what it is

Questions for carrier consideration:

- How can ELDs and other driver monitoring equipment be used to address psychosocial hazards? How might they create new ones?
- How should a roadside inspection violation or ticket be handled with psychosocial safety in mind?
- What could a carrier do to address psychosocial hazards at a customer's site?

Future directions, open to suggestions

- Regular bulletins
- Micro-Learn videos
- Regular and ongoing promotion of the Guide and other related resources

- For questions, comments, and references, please contact:
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