

Safety Facts: Fit for work*



“Fit for work” also known as “fit for duty” should be defined in your company’s Fit for Work policy and program. If your workplace is unionized, also check your collective agreement for a definition. For this toolbox topic, we will use the following definition:

“Fit for work” refers to the worker’s ability to safely undertake the demands of their job.

Why is it important?

If you are not able to safely undertake the demands of your job, you may cause an incident that might result in:

- Injury or death to yourself or others
- Property damage
- Environmental damage, etc.

You could be subject to disciplinary action.

You could also be in violation of the *Workers Compensation Act* (WCA). All workers in British Columbia have a general duty under WCA section 22 to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others, and not to come to work under the impairment of alcohol, drugs, or other causes. *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* section 4.19 requires workers to report any physical or mental impairment to their supervisor or employer.

Key characteristics

Being fit for work includes physical, physiological, and psychological considerations

Physical considerations: Are you suffering from a cold, muscle sprain or strain, back issue, non-work-related injury, etc.?

Physiological considerations: Many things can affect how your body functions, including fatigue, use of alcohol or drugs, and workplace exposures. Did you get adequate sleep? When was the last time you consumed alcohol or drugs?

Psychological considerations: How is your mental health and wellness? Are you suffering from depression, anxiety, etc.? What stresses are you under (relationship, financial, etc.)? Will these distract you from your job?

Preventive next steps

Learn your company’s fit for work policy/program requirements and if unionized, your collective agreement requirements.

Prior to starting your work shift, do a self-assessment. Do you have any physical, physiological, or psychological conditions that will cause an impairment at work? Will these conditions impact your ability to safely perform your work? If yes, call in and discuss these conditions with your supervisor.

If you get to work and realize you are not 100% ready for work, have a conversation with your supervisor. Explain your condition and if possible, agree on the limitations for today’s work. Is there light duty work or modified duties that you can perform today?

Seek help to deal with your condition(s). Use your medical benefits and your company’s health and wellness benefits, employee family assistance program, sick leave, etc. if you have them.



For additional resources visit:

[General duties of workers](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Physical or mental impairment](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Fit for Work](#) | Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety

