

Overtime Leading to Workplace Depression?

The economy has changed the way many employers do business. When the number of employees is reduced due to budget cuts or downsizing, companies can be forced to do more with less. When important tasks are to be performed, employees are often required to work overtime to make sure the project is completed on time. With so many people losing their jobs during this recession, employees are nervous about stability in the workplace.

Mental health concerns often do not get a lot of attention when it comes to on the job injuries. Many employers emphasize a balance between work and life to prevent their employees from suffering from burn-out. More time at work means it is more likely that an employee's stress level will increase. Workers' compensation claims for stress-related illnesses are very difficult for employees to prove.

The challenge for employees is being able to demonstrate that the resulting mental health problems are directly connected to issues at the workplace. The resulting changes to a person's health or job role can lead to additional stress, making it difficult to focus on job functions.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has extensively studied depression in the workplace, and states that 20 percent of the U.S. workforce suffers from some type of mental illness. A study in PLoS ONE reports that those who work more than 11 hours a day are two times more likely to suffer from depression.

It is extremely important for workers suffering mental health issues to seek treatment. Depression is a serious illness that impacts many people throughout the workforce. The additional

stress that many workers are currently facing could lead to more workplace accidents or long-term mental health concerns.

Source: Huffington Post "Overtime Work Linked With Higher Depression Risk: Study" Amanda Chan, Jan. 26, 2012.