

Evaluating Your Shift Schedule

The following guidelines are what is best for the majority of shift workers based on physiological and long term health consequences (not social, organizational or economic factors). How does your shift schedule measure up?

Guidelines	✓
1. You have a forward rotating schedule (e.g. Morning/Afternoon/Nights/Days off, or Morning/Nights/Days off) not a backward rotating schedule (e.g. Nights/Days/Days off)	
2. You utilize quick rotations (2-3 nights max) as opposed to slow rotations (more than 3 nights in a row)	
3. Length of break between shifts is a minimum of 10 hrs for day workers (break occurs during evening/night time hours), and longer for night workers (break occurs during daylight hours)	
4. Length of break following the last night shift is a minimum of 24 hrs (preferably 48 hrs)	
5. Your shift workers start their day shift at 7AM or later	
6. Workers are informed well in advance of work schedules or changes to work schedules (weeks ahead)	
7. You offer a consistent start and finish time for all shifts (day shift is consistent, night shift is consistent)	
8. During day shifts, your indoor operating areas (e.g. control rooms) increase light exposure to replicate normal daytime hours (open blinds, turn up light fixtures)	
9. During night shifts, light exposure is minimized as much as possible, yet still allowing the worker to work safely	
10. You avoid scheduling physically demanding and cognitively demanding tasks during the danger zones of 1-3PM and 3-6AM	
11. Older shift workers (45+) are weaned off shift work as soon as possible	
12. Overtime is not encouraged and rarely occurs for workers on 12 hour shifts	
13. Staffing levels have been designed to accommodate for vacation time, sick time, training time, unplanned events and emergencies in order to minimize overtime	
14. Working in excess of 48 hours in 5 days, or 60 hours in 7 days is avoided	
15. Employees were involved in the design and selection of their work schedules	
16. Employees were first educated in circadian factors and the impact of shift design before selecting a work schedule	

The more checks, the better.