

Media Release

Rostering for the festive season

Have you ever had to tell your children that you have to go into work on Christmas to help Santa make it safely around the world to deliver his presents?

If not, then maybe you should spare a thought for those employees working or on call this Christmas in the power plants, hospitals, police stations, the media, airports and other essential services we require to feed our 24/7 appetites.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that there are 1.5 million employees that do shiftwork in their main job and 3.4 million employees that have varied weekly hours or on call responsibilities in their main job. Many of these operations require 24/7 coverage during the Christmas/New Year period when family and friends are getting together to catch up and celebrate.

Although working or being called in on a public holiday often provides additional pay to compensate for the social sacrifice, Christmas and Easter are the most valued public holidays for sharing time with family and friends.

So, how do individuals and families cope during the festive season?

- Employees are either rostered off making it easy to fit in activities with family and friends; or
- Employees are rostered on for a shift or on call responsibilities and need to make adjustments to their holiday activities to be with family and friends.

Examples include:

- **Being rostered on for a day shift Christmas Day from 7:00am to 3:00pm** – You will probably get to see your children open their presents prior to your shift, but you will not be able to help them assemble or play with anything until later that afternoon (by then the dog will have eaten the instruction sheet).
- **Being rostered on to work the night shift Christmas Eve from 11:00pm to 7:00am the next morning** – You will miss midnight mass, but will most likely have time to get presents placed under the Christmas tree before your shift. You will need your children to have a sleep in on Christmas Day to see them open their presents. After your shift, you can help them assemble and set up their new toys, but you will feel additional fatigue and lack concentration as the day continues and you postpone your sleep. Eventually, you will need to break away from the festive holiday activities to get some sleep and likely prepare for another night shift.

Rostering for the festive season requires additional communication and understanding from family and friends and adjustments to personal activities to work around your hours of work and on call responsibilities. Be creative with your strategies and communicate your work times to family and friends and don't be afraid to sneak away and get some sleep.