



Sleepover Shifts

Worker Alert

March 2025

Key Points

- ◆ A sleepover shift is when a worker is required to sleep overnight at a participant's home. The span for a sleepover is a continuous period of eight hours.
- ◆ NDIS pricing arrangements provide for up to two hours of active NDIS supports for a worker to support a participant within the eight-hour sleepover shift.
- ◆ The Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS) Award determines the amount a worker is paid for a sleepover shift and the amount they are to be paid if they are required to perform work during the sleepover.
- ◆ A sleepover and the hours worked before and/or after the sleepover are counted as one continuous shift.
- ◆ Sleepover shifts are different to **active overnight supports**, which is where workers are awake during normal sleeping hours to provide supports to a participant due to their disability.
- ◆ NDIS workers have an obligation to ensure a safe working environment during sleepover shifts.
- ◆ The NDIS Commission has published an online resource on sleepover shifts, to support workers to be aware of and understand the importance of issues related to management of sleepover shifts: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/rules-and-standards/quality-practice/sleepover-shifts

Sleepover Shifts

A sleepover shift is when a worker is required to sleep overnight at a participant's premises. The span for a sleepover is a continuous period of eight hours. Premises can include a group home or a private home.

The Fair Work Ombudsman provides guidance as to how SCHADS works, and the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits (PAPL) assists providers and participants to understand NDIS pricing for this support.

The SCHADS Award requires that workers on sleepovers who perform work during the sleepover period are paid for the time worked at the prescribed overtime rate with a minimum payment as for one hour worked. Where that work exceeds one hour, workers are paid the prescribed overtime rate for the duration of the work.

Under the PAPL, sleepover shifts are referred to as Night-Time Sleepover Supports. A Night-Time Sleepover Support is any support delivered to a participant on a weekday, a Saturday, a Sunday or a Public Holiday that commences before midnight on a day and finishes after midnight on that day, and is for a continuous period of eight hours or more.

It is expected that workers can sleep during the eight-hour sleepover shift and if required, NDIS pricing arrangements provide up to two hours of active supports to the participant when needed (e.g., going to the bathroom).

Sleepover shifts should not be confused with active overnight supports, which are funded for participants who require more than two hours of support overnight (see www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/supported-independent-living-provider-guidance/supported-independent-living-roster-care-submissions). In addition, a sleepover is different to a 24-hour care shift or an excursion under the SCHADS Award.

Disruptions During a Sleepover Shift

If a participant's needs change and workers are required to be awake for more than two

hours a night, they along with their provider should contact the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to talk about whether there is a need to change the amount of supported independent living in their plan.

It is also important to monitor sleeping patterns of participants. If participants are waking up regularly during the night or experiencing unexpected changes in their sleeping patterns, the provider must work with professionals such as an occupational therapist for review and conversion to active night supports.

Where a participant has behaviour support needs during a sleepover shift, workers should be responsive to such needs and implement person-centred, proactive, and evidence-informed strategies as outlined in their behaviour support plan.

Where a participant does not have a Behaviour Support Plan, the provider should take steps to minimise any identified risk of harm, document the changes in behaviour and work with the participant's support team to find ways to best support the person.

Additionally, providers are required to make sure their workers, have systems and procedures that provide a safe, predictable and stable environment, are aware of environmental aspects that may pose risk factors, and provided with reasonable supports and adaptations to understand a Behaviour Support Plan and follow it correctly: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/rules-and-standards/behaviour-support-and-restrictive-practices/positive-behaviour-support#paragraph-id-8420

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Obligations

NDIS workers WHS rights and obligations are set out in Australia's model work health and safety laws and state and territory WHS legislation: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation/model-whs-laws. Workers must take reasonable care of themselves and not to do anything that would affect the health and safety of others at work. Workers must follow any health and safety instruction from their employer.

Workers have responsibilities to:

- ◆ perform duties in a safe manner for oneself and others
- ◆ ask if they are not sure about how to safely perform any aspect of the work
- ◆ if required, use Personal Protective Equipment correctly
- ◆ take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- ◆ take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- ◆ report all injuries and unsafe and unhealthy situations to a manager or employer.
- ◆ comply with any reasonable instructions, policies and procedure given by a manager or employer.

For more information, visit www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/health-care-and-social-assistance/work-health-and-safety-guidance-for-ndis-providers.

Understanding these obligations will assist workers to do their day-to-day work lawfully and competently and know when a violent incident needs to be reported.

Workers can also ask for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to assist them in discussions about work health and safety: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/managing-health-and-safety/consultation/health-and-safety-representatives-and-work-groups.

This includes managing fatigue during a sleepover shift. Safe Work Australia offer a list of strategies to help workers: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/fatigue-management-a-workers-guide.pdf.

NDIS Code of Conduct

All NDIS providers must comply with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 (Code) and support workers must also understand and apply the Code in the course of their daily work.

The Code requires, among other things, workers and providers who deliver NDIS supports to:

promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability

More information can be found via this link: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndiscode-conduct.

The NDIS Practice Standards

The NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators (NDIS Practice Standards) specify the quality standards to be met by registered NDIS providers and workers who provide supports and services to NDIS participants: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/rules-and-standards/ndis-practice-standards.

Workers engaged by registered NDIS providers must demonstrate compliance with the NDIS Practice Standards including the following standards:

Risk Management

Workers provide supports and services in a way that is consistent with the provider's documented risk management system, including in incident, complaints, emergency and disaster management.

WHS risks are identified and managed during sleepover shifts.

Incident Management

Workers are aware of, trained in, and compliant with the required procedures in relation to incident management.

Workers are consulted on incident management processes.

Emergency and Disaster Management

Workers are trained in the implementation of participant's emergency and disaster management plan.

Provision of Supports Environment

Work is undertaken with each participant, and others, in settings where supports are provided (including their home), to ensure a safe support delivery environment for them.

Governance and Operational Management

Strategic and business planning requirements consider worker needs.

Human Resource Management

Timely supervision, training support and resources are available to workers relevant to the scope and complexity of supports delivered.

Records of worker pre-employment checks, qualifications and experience are maintained.

Providers record details of workers' secondary employment.

Case study

Bea from Boorloo, Western Australia

Bea is a young worker for a large disability provider (AABBCC Homes) in Boorloo (Perth). They love working with participants and assisting with daily activities in group homes. AABBCC Homes staff work with Bea to look at the bedroom set up and what a good night's sleep looks like for Bea. The staff also check the quality of the mattress, ensure the linens are clean and that the staff bedroom door has a lock so that Bea can sleep with the door locked if needed.

AABBCC Homes residents are also informed on the conditions of the sleepover shift. Previously, the three residents in the home made sure to use the two hours each sleepover shift from 10pm to midnight. They really wanted to maximise their time with Bea.

AABBCC Homes management explains that a sleepover shift means that Bea is available to assist during the night, but the expectation is that she

will be sleeping during this time. For this reason, it is not appropriate to schedule the washing and drying of their laundry from 10pm to midnight, for example. However, Bea does set an alarm so that later that night she can assist with delivering medication at a set time.

Bea also gets up during the night to assist one of the residents to use the bathroom and to return to bed. The management team explain that if Bea is consistently required to work on a sleepover, and is not getting enough sleep, they will work with participants and the NDIA to discuss whether active night supports are more appropriate or if other changes need to be implemented to better support participants during the night.

Setting expectations appropriately for the sleepover shift helps Bea get enough sleep to meet the requirements of her day shift and meets the needs of participants as well.

Resources

NDIS Commission

- ◆ Worker training modules and resources <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workforce/online-training-modules>
- ◆ NDIS Code of Conduct (<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-code-of-conduct>) including the [NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers](#) and the [NDIS Code of Conduct for Providers](#) guidelines
- ◆ The complaints process <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints/complaints-process>
- ◆ Managing complaints <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/complaints-and-incidents/managing-complaints>
- ◆ Resources to support incident reporting, management and prevention <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/resources/provider-and-worker-resources/resources-support-incident-reporting-management-and#paragraph-id-1263>
- ◆ Positive Behaviour Support Capability Framework For NDIS providers and behaviour support practitioners <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/rules-and-standards/behaviour-support-and-restrictive-practices/positive-behaviour-support#paragraph-id-8420>

- ◆ Policy Guidance: Working within your knowledge, skills, and experience [https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/Policy Guidance - Working within your knowledge%2C skills%2C and experience - July 2024_0.pdf](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/Policy%20Guidance%20-%20Working%20within%20your%20knowledge%20and%20experience%20-%20July%202024_0.pdf)

Fair Work Ombudsman

- ◆ Sleepovers in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award; examples of provisions:
 - » Work before or after a sleepover
 - » Sleepover and shift allowances not on a weekend
 - » Sleepover and shift allowances on weekends<https://library.fairwork.gov.au/viewer/?krn=K600551>
- ◆ Pay for sleepovers in the SCHADS Award; examples of provisions:
 - » Not working during a sleepover
 - » Working during a sleepover<https://library.fairwork.gov.au/viewer/?krn=K600726>
- ◆ SCHADS Award Web Page <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/disability-support-and-aged-care-services/understanding-schads>

NDIA

- ◆ Supported Independent Living Guideline <https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/supports-you-can-access-menu/home-and-living-supports/supported-independent-living>
- ◆ Guide to using the provider SIL roster of care tool; and Supported Independent Living Roster of care submissions <https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/supported-independent-living-provider-guidance/supported-independent-living-roster-care-submissions>
- ◆ Directly engaging your own staff <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/self-management/self-management-policy>

Resources on sleep support

- ◆ Health Direct - Guidance on Sleep <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/sleep#what-is>
- ◆ Better Health Channel - Sleep Hygiene <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sleep-hygiene#where-to-get-help>
- ◆ Centre for Clinical Interventions - Sleep hygiene <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental-Health-Professionals/Sleep/Sleep---Information-Sheets/Sleep-Information-Sheet---04---Sleep-Hygiene.pdf>

Commonwealth, State and Territory WHS agencies

Safe Work Australia

- ◆ Fatigue | Safe Work Australia <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/fatigue>
- ◆ Glossary | Safe Work Australia <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/glossary#pcbus>
- ◆ Fatigue - WHS duties | Safe Work Australia <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/fatigue/whs-duties>
- ◆ Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work | Safe Work Australia <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risk-fatigue-work>
- ◆ Fatigue management - a worker's guide | Safe Work Australia <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/fatigue-management-workers-guide>
- ◆ Model WHS Act cross-comparison table <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-whs-act-cross-comparison-table>

SafeWork NSW

- ◆ Disability support <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/health-care-and-social-assistance/disability-support>
- ◆ Home Safety Risk Assessment https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1215207/home-safety-risk-assessment.pdf

- ◆ Work health and safety guidance for NDIS participants

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/health-care-and-social-assistance/work-health-and-safety-guidance-for-ndis-participants>

- ◆ Work health and safety guidance for NDIS platform providers

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/health-care-and-social-assistance/work-health-and-safety-guidance-for-ndis-platform-providers>

WorkSafe Victoria

- ◆ Occupational health and safety – your legal duties

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-your-legal-duties>

SafeWork SA

- ◆ Primary duty of care

<https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workers/primary-duty-of-care>

WorkSafe Qld

- ◆ Guide to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Queensland (worksafe.qld.gov.au)
https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/22289/guide-to-work-health-and-safety-act-2011.pdf

WorkSafe Tasmania

- ◆ Common work health and safety terms
<https://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/Health-and-Safety/managing-safety/starting-a-business-with-safety-in-mind/common-whs-terms>
- ◆ How PCBUs must support HSRs
<https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/Health-and-Safety/managing-safety/health-and-safety-representatives-hsr/how-pcbus-must-support-hsrs>

WorkSafe WA

- ◆ Fatigue:
<https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/fatigue-0>
- ◆ PCBU:
<https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/person-conducting-business-or-undertaking-pcbu>

WorkSafe ACT

- ◆ Workplace rights and responsibilities
<https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/health-and-safety-portal/managing-safety/workplace-rights-and-responsibilities>

WorkSafe NT

- ◆ PCBU duties
<https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/workplace-mental-health/pcbu-duties>

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