

Night shift without burnout: how people last on US hours

An offshore hire who quits at month four costs more than the whole first year saved. Almost every time, the shift was the reason.

About 7 minutes to read

Working nights is ordinary in the Philippines. An entire industry has been staffed around American business hours for two decades, so nobody here is shocked by the question and most of our candidates have done it before. But ordinary is not the same as safe. Night work is done well or it is done badly, and the difference is almost entirely decisions somebody made before the person started.

This is the guide we would rather you read before the hire than after the resignation. Some of it is our job. A surprising amount of it is yours.

What actually breaks people

Burnout on a night shift is rarely caused by the hours themselves. It is caused by four specific things, and each one has a fix.

What goes wrong	Why it happens	The fix
Sleep debt	Daylight, heat and household noise make daytime sleep shallow. The deficit accumulates for weeks before anybody notices.	A fixed shift, a proper sleeping setup, and no casual requests outside the agreed hours.
The double shift	They sleep days, but family, errands and appointments still expect a daytime person. They end up awake for both.	Household expectations set early, and leave that is actually taken rather than banked.
Isolation	Awake while everyone they know is asleep, and invisible to a team that is asleep while they work.	A weekly call with a camera on, and being named in the places the work is discussed.
Rotation	A shift that moves week to week never lets the body settle. This is the single most damaging pattern in the industry.	Pick one shift and keep it. See the warning below.

Never rotate the shift

A person on a stable 10pm to 7am is fine for years. The same person moved between days and nights every fortnight is exhausted within months, and it will read to you as them getting worse at the job. If your coverage genuinely needs both, that is two people on two fixed shifts, not one person on a rota.

What we do about it

- We pay two to three times the local going rate, which is the least glamorous item on this list and by far the most important. Somebody paid properly does not need a second job, and a second job is where most burnout actually comes from.
- The shift is fixed and written into the arrangement before anybody is introduced to you.
- We ask candidates directly whether they want night work, and we take no for an answer. Somebody talked into a shift they did not want is a resignation with a delay on it.
- On the Managed plan the equipment, the backup internet and the backup power are ours. Nobody should be solving a blackout at 3am on your behalf.
- A named account manager checks in monthly, with them and not only with you. That is how you find out somebody is struggling while it is still fixable.
- Leave is agreed in advance and we expect it to be taken.

Night differential, and who it actually applies to

Philippine law requires a night shift differential of at least ten percent of the regular hourly wage for every hour worked between 10pm and 6am. It is Article 86 of the Labor Code, the ten percent is a floor rather than a target, and it cannot be waived by agreement.

This is where the two plans genuinely differ

The differential is an entitlement of EMPLOYEES. On Managed we are the employer, so it is calculated, paid and evidenced by us and you never handle it. On Direct Hire, whether it applies depends on how you have engaged the person, and a contractor agreement does not settle that question by itself. Our compliance guide covers what actually decides it.

Your half of it

None of the above survives a client who messages at midnight their time. The habits below are the ones that decide whether somebody is still here in two years.

The things that keep somebody off a burnout track

- ☐ Pick one shift before you interview, and do not move it afterwards
- ☐ Do not message outside their hours. If you work when they sleep, write it down and let them read it when they start
- ☐ Say explicitly that you do not expect a reply outside the shift. The default assumption is that you do
- ☐ Pay on time, every time, without being chased
- ☐ Agree leave in advance and never cancel it once agreed
- ☐ Give feedback within a day, so it lands as a correction rather than a complaint
- ☐ Do not install screenshot or keystroke monitoring. It measures nothing useful and it tells somebody you do not trust them
- ☐ Know which Philippine public holidays apply to your arrangement before one arrives

The signs, before the resignation

Somebody on the way out rarely says so. What you see first is a change in the texture of the work, and it is easy to misread as declining ability.

- Replies get slower and shorter, and the daily check-in starts arriving late or not at all
- Questions stop. Not because things are clear, but because asking has started to feel expensive
- Small errors appear in work that was reliable for months
- Leave is available and never taken
- Camera goes off on the weekly call

If you see two of these together, ask about the shift rather than the work. If you are on Managed, tell your account manager, because we would rather rebuild somebody's schedule than replace them, and so would you.

If you are in Australia, most of this barely applies

Manila runs two hours behind Sydney, three during daylight saving. An Australian east-coast day is covered by an ordinary Philippine working day starting at six or seven in the morning, which is a normal shift and not a night shift at all. The differential does not arise, and neither does most of this guide.

We have put it in front of you anyway, because the reason people ask about burnout is that they have read about the industry at its worst, and you should be able to see what we do about it before you decide whether to believe us.

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