

# FATIGUE

## THE PROBLEM

Fatigue can have a significant impact on your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. A tired driver is an unsafe driver.

## THE DRIVER

### SIGNS OF FATIGUE

No one is immune to the effects of fatigue. If you notice any of the following behaviors, you may be too tired to drive safely:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or heavy eyelids
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes
- Daydreaming; wandering/disconnected thoughts
- Trouble remembering the last few miles driven
- Missing exits or traffic signs
- Tailgating or failing to maintain speed
- Drifting from your lane or hitting a rumble strip

## THE RECOMMENDATION

### EXTREME DRIVING CONDITIONS

Adverse weather conditions and extreme road configurations require special driving techniques and greater alertness. These stressors may cause fatigue more quickly than usual. Reducing the potential for fatigue in these situations requires preparation.

For cold weather driving, remove snow and ice from windows, mirrors, brakes, lights, and hand and toe holds. Install tire chains if necessary. For large trucks, expel moisture from the air tanks after each trip, and check for ice accumulation on the brakes, slack adjuster, air hoses, wiring, and radiator shutters. Once on the road, anticipate poor conditions and adjust your speed and driving technique accordingly. For hot weather driving, inspect the tires, lubrication, and cooling system components.

### It Happens

*A fatigued driver had stopped to buy coffee and snacks. The driver later fell asleep and crossed the center line striking a car head-on. One of the other car's two occupants was killed and the other was severely injured.*

## SLEEP ROUTINE

Driving on six hours of sleep almost doubles your chances of being involved in a motor vehicle crash and less than four hours of sleep increases your chances more than eleven times\*. To help prevent fatigue and drowsy driving, make sleep a priority. Reserve adequate time for sleeping and encourage others to not disturb you. Trying a relaxing routine before going to bed, reducing light and sound, limiting caffeine and alcohol intake, or purchasing a new mattress may help.

You may also want a medical consultation if a sleep problem persists. A periodic medical exam may also reveal a sleep disorder. Discuss appropriate treatment options with your provider.

## NIGHT OPERATION

Fatigue often occurs while driving at night when your ability to see clearly is already diminished. Adjust your speed, following distance, and gap selection to nighttime conditions. Make sure you don't overdrive your headlights. Use high beams where permitted, but dim them when meeting an oncoming vehicle. Should other vehicles use their high beams, look toward the right side of the road and do not retaliate.

### Employee Survey

- Do you drive when sleepy and find it hard to keep your eyes open?
- Have you ever been unable to recall changing lanes?
- Do you stay up late and go to work tired?



\*USA Today article at <http://usat.ly/2gKoLQD>. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Acute Sleep Deprivation and Risk of Motor Vehicle Crash Involvement Fact Sheet, page 2. <https://www.aaafoundation.org/sites/default/files/AcuteSleepDeprivationCrashRiskFS.pdf>

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