



Drowsy Driving is Impaired Driving

Sleep is a vital factor in overall health and safety, but more than 1 in 3 workers are sleep deprived.¹ Fatigue decreases our ability to think clearly and remain attentive and vigilant. Drivers who are tired or fatigued are much more likely to make critical errors resulting in crashes.

- Twenty-one percent of fatal crashes involve a drowsy driver¹
- More than 6,400 fatal drowsy-driving crashes occur annually²
- People are three times more likely to be in a car crash if they are tired³

Alarming, driving while drowsy is common, according to the National Sleep Foundation⁴:

- More than half of U.S. adult drivers admit to consistently getting behind the wheel while feeling drowsy
- About 37% admit to falling asleep behind the wheel, while 13% admit to falling asleep behind the wheel in the past month

Many researchers compare drowsy driving to drunk driving.

- Losing even two hours of sleep is similar to the effect of having three beers⁵
- The crash risk for driving on 4-5 hours of sleep is more than 4 times higher than someone who has slept 7 hours, which is the same crash risk as a drunk driver with a 0.08 alcohol concentration.⁶

Drowsy Driving is Costly

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates fatigue-related crashes resulting in injury or death cost society \$109 billion annually, not including property damage.⁷

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Causes of Employee Fatigue

Drowsy driving and workplace fatigue are interconnected. Many people drive as part of their job duties. Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of workplace death, and fatigue is a prominent factor in crashes. Second, most people drive to and from work every day. Fatigue acquired during a shift can manifest itself on the roads in the form of drowsy driving.

Fatigue can be caused by sleep loss, time of day, as well as repetitive tasks, job factors, medical conditions, and lifestyle.

1. Shift Work and Long Hours

Employees most at risk of fatigue are shift workers: those who work the night shift, long shifts, rotating shifts, or irregular shifts. Shift worker's schedules may require them to work during the night, a time when we are biologically programmed to be less alert. Because of their schedules, shift workers often find it difficult to get seven to nine hours of sleep a day. Fatigue can also be acquired if an employee works long hours or long weeks.

2. Sleep Disorders

Employees with sleep disorders have difficulties getting proper sleep and it puts them at higher risk for fatigue-related crashes.

3. Job Load & Work Environment

Fatigue can also occur if an employee has repetitive or demanding job tasks, or works in a loud or warm environment.

What Employers Can Do

Fatigue effects everyone, every day which means managing fatigue in the workplace can play a vital role in reducing the number of drowsy drivers on the roads. Employers should learn about fatigue in the workplace, its costs, its causes and how fatigue can lead to a higher rate of safety incidents. We also encourage employers to educate their employees on sleep health and fatigue.

¹Yong, Lee C., Jia Li, and Geoffrey M. Calvert. "Sleep-related problems in the US working population: prevalence and association with shiftwork status." *Occup Environ Med* 74.2 (2017): 93-104.

²Tefft, Brian C. (2014) Prevalence of Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Drowsy Drivers, United States, 2009 – 2013. Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

³Klauer, S. G., Klauer, S. G., Dingus, T. a., Dingus, T. a., Neale, V. L., Neale, V. L., . . . Ramsey, D. J. (2006). The Impact of Driver Inattention On Near Crash/Crash Risk: An Analysis Using the 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study Data. *Analysis*, (April), 226.

⁴National Sleep Foundation's 2005 Sleep in America

⁵Roehrs, T., Burduvali, E., Bonahoom, A., Drake, C., & Roth, T. (2003). Ethanol and sleep loss: a "dose" comparison of impairing effects. *SLEEP-NEW YORK THEN WESTCHESTER-*, 26(8), 981-985.

⁶Tefft, B.C. (2016). Acute Sleep Deprivation and Risk of Motor Vehicle Crash Involvement. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, December 2016

⁷Higgins, in press.

