

“Driving While Drowsy...Are You at Risk?”

Statistics and Information



SLEEP STUDY



In the past century, Americans have reduced their average time asleep by 20% and, in the past 25 years, added a month to their average annual work/commute time.

In its 1999 survey “Sleep in America”, the National Sleep Foundation found that 40% of American adults report feeling so sleepy during the day that it interferes with their daily activities.

Sixty-two percent of adults say they have driven while drowsy, and 27% of adults admitted they have fallen asleep behind the wheel.



CRASHES



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that approximately 100,000 police-reported crashes annually (about 1.5% of all crashes) involve drowsiness/fatigue as a principal causal factor.

A conservative estimate of related fatalities is 1,500 annually or 4% of all traffic crash fatalities.

At least 71,000 people are injured in driver fatigue crashes each year.



COST



NHTSA estimates that vehicle crashes due to driver fatigue cost Americans \$12.5 billion per year in reduced productivity and property loss. The greatest cost, however, are the 1,500 lives that are taken every year in fatigue-related crashes.

*All information provided by
the National Sleep Foundation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

Who is Most at Risk?

? Young People ?

Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people, who tend to stay up late, sleep too little, and drive at night.

? Shift Workers ?

Studies suggest that 20-30% of those with non-traditional work schedules have had a fatigue-related crash within the last year.

? Commercial Drivers ?

In addition to the high number of miles driven each year, many truck drivers may drive during the night when the body is the sleepiest.

? All Drivers Who Are: ?

- sleep-deprived or fatigued
- driving long distances without rest breaks
- driving through the night, the early afternoon, or at other times when they are normally asleep
- taking medication that increases sleepiness or drinking alcohol
- driving alone
- driving on long, rural, boring roads
- frequent travelers (e.g., business travelers)

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Driving

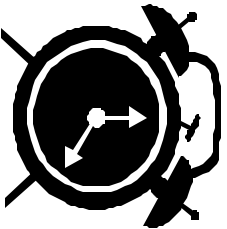
While

Drowsy



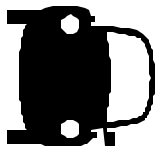
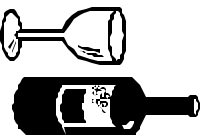
Are you at risk?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, in the past century Americans have reduced their average time asleep by 20% and, in the past 25 years, added a month to their average annual work/commute time. It's no wonder more people are driving drowsy than ever before.



Sleep need and patterns are controlled by an internal biological "clock" that is located in the brain. Most people's "clocks" run on a cycle of about 24 hours and seem to "run down" between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. and between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Many people know the dangers of drinking and driving, but few realize that driving drowsy can be just as dangerous. Sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, and impairs judgment, just like drugs or alcohol. And, just like drugs and alcohol, sleepiness can contribute to a crash.



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that approximately 100,000 police-reported crashes annually (about 1.5% of all crashes) involve drowsiness/fatigue as a principal cause.

According to a 1999 poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation:



40% of adults report feeling so sleepy during the day that it interferes with their daily activities.



62% of adults say they have driven while drowsy.

27% of adults admitted they have fallen asleep behind the wheel.

60% of children complained of feeling tired during the day and 15% admitted to falling asleep in school.



Get a Good Night's Sleep!

You can do the following to help ensure a good night's sleep:



Near bedtime, avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soft drinks chocolate) and nicotine (cigarettes, tobacco products).



Do not drink alcohol to “help” you sleep.



Exercise regularly, but complete your workout at least three hours before bedtime.



Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine (such as taking a bath or reading a book).



Associate your bed with sleep – do not use it to work or watch television.

Information provided by the National Sleep Foundation.

“Driving While Drowsy...Are You at Risk?”

TEENS ARE HIGH-RISK!!

Exhaustion figures into more than **100,000** car crashes each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. **Drivers age 15 to 24** account for more than half of those, several studies show.



Beginning at about age 15, kids need more sleep than younger children or older adults, said Mary Carskadon, a sleep researcher at Brown University. **Nine hours** at night should be a **minimum**, she says; however, **teenagers sleep an average of six**.



A 1999 National Sleep Foundation survey found that **60% of children** complain of **feeling tired during the day**.

15% of children admitted to **falling asleep in school**.

DROWSY DRIVING CAMPAIGN

Facts:

- A 1998 National Sleep Foundation poll found that more than one in three adults (37%) is so sleepy during the day that it interferes with daily activities. (*NSF*)
- In the past century, we have reduced our average time asleep by 20% and, in the past 25 years, added a month to our average annual work/commute time. (*NSF*)
- Sleep need and patterns are controlled by an internal biological “clock” that’s located in the brain. Most people’s “clocks” run on a cycle of about 24 hours and seem to “run down” between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. and between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (*NSF*)
- Almost everyone’s clock is programmed to make them feel sleepy in the middle of the afternoon and this can be a dangerous time. Many fatigue-related crashes happen between 1 and 4 p.m., during the “afternoon lull.”
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that vehicle crashes due to driver fatigue cost Americans \$12.5 billion per year in reduced productivity and property loss. The greatest cost? At least 1,500 people die every year in fatigue-related crashes. (*NSF*)
- Sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, and impairs judgment, just like drugs or alcohol. And, just like drugs and alcohol, sleepiness can contribute to a crash. (*AAAFTS*)
- Nighttime is especially risky for drivers. Most people are programmed to sleep when it’s dark, and sleep becomes irresistible late at night. Avoid driving during the “low” period between 2 and 6 a.m. (*AAAFTS*)
- Sleep-related crashes costs the American government and business \$46 billion each year, estimates the National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research. (*NSF*)
- Drowsy drivers take the blame for at least 100,000 police reported crashes in the U.S. annually, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (*NSF*)
- Thirty-one percent of fatal-to-the-driver commercial truck crashes are caused by drowsiness, the National Transportation Safety Board reports. (*NSF*)

- In its 1999 omnibus survey “Sleep in America,” the National Sleep Foundation found that 40% of American adults report feeling so sleepy during the day that it interferes with their daily activities. (*NSF*)
- The NSF survey found that 60% of children complain of feeling tired during the day; 15% of children admitted to falling asleep in school. (*NSF*)
- Sixty-two percent of adults say they have driven while drowsy, and 27% of adults admitted they have fallen asleep behind the wheel. (*NSF*)
- NHTSA estimates that approximately 100,000 police-reported crashes annually (about 1.5% of all crashes) involve drowsiness/fatigue as a principal causal factor. A conservative estimate of related fatalities is 1,500 annually or 4% of all traffic crash fatalities. (*NSF*)
- At least 71,000 people are injured in fall-asleep crashes each year. NHTSA estimates these crashes represent \$12.5 billion in monetary losses each year. (*NSF*)
- Drowsiness/fatigue may play a role in crashes attributed to other causes. About one million crashes annually – one-sixth of all crashes – are thought to be produced by driver inattention/lapses. Sleep deprivation and fatigue make such lapses of attention more likely to occur. (*NSF*)
- In a 1999 NSF poll, 62% of all adults surveyed reported driving a car or other vehicle while feeling drowsy in the prior year. Twenty-seven percent reported that they had, at some time, dozed off while driving. Twenty-three percent of adults stated that they know someone who experienced a fall-asleep crash within the past year. (*NSF*)
- People tend to fall asleep more on high-speed, long, boring, rural highways. (*NSF*)
- Although most people know how dangerous drinking and driving is, they may not fully realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal as driving drunk. Like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of a crash. (*New York State Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee*)
- Drowsy driving can mean a number of things, including falling asleep while driving or simply not paying attention while driving due to fatigue or lack of sleep. (*NYSGTSC*)
- Exhaustion figures into more than 100,000 car crashes each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Drivers age 15 to 24 account for more than half of those, several studies show. (*Washington Post*, 2/6/00, A14)

- Beginning about age 15, kids need more sleep than younger children or older adults, said Mary Carskadon, a sleep researcher at Brown University. Nine hours a night should be a minimum, she says, but teenagers sleep an average of six. (*Washington Post*, 2/6/00, A14)
- Working the night shift increased the odds of a sleep-related (versus non-sleep-related) crash by nearly 6 times. Working more than 60 hours a week increased the odds by 40%. (*AAAFTS*)
- Compared to sleeping 8 or more hours a night, sleeping 7 to 8 hours was associated with a 1.2 times higher risk, 6 to 7 hours 1.8 times higher, 5 to 6 hours 3.3 times higher, and less than 5 hours a 4.5 times higher risk for involvement in a sleep-related versus non-sleep-related crash. (*AAAFTS*)
- Sleep and fatigue crash drivers report longer daily driving times, higher percentages of driving in the dark, and higher percentages of driving between midnight and 6 a.m. than other crash-involved drivers. (*AAAFTS*)
- Finally, the current research suggests that although there are clearly certain segments of the population that are at increased risk for involvement in a sleep-related crash, it is not just the shift workers, the young males, the persons taking sedating medications, or those with sleep disorders who are crashing. In many cases it is the average “driver next door” who just happens to be putting in extra hours at work, adjusting to a new baby in the household, staying out late for a party, or trying to make it back home after an out-of-town trip. (*AAAFTS*)

Who is most at risk?

- All drivers who are:
 - sleep-deprived or fatigued
 - driving long distances without rest breaks
 - driving through the night, the early afternoon, or at other times when they are normally asleep
 - taking medication that increases sleepiness or drinking alcohol
 - driving alone
 - driving on long, rural, boring roads
 - frequent travelers, e.g., business travelers
- Young people
 - Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people, who tend to stay up late, sleep too little, and drive at night.
- Shift Workers

- 25 million Americans are rotating shift workers. Studies suggest that 20 to 30% of those with non-traditional work schedules have had a fatigue-related driving mishap within the last year.
- Commercial Drivers
 - Truck drivers are especially susceptible to fatigue-related crashes. In addition to the high number of miles driven each year, many truckers may drive during the night when the body is sleepiest.
- People with undiagnosed sleep disorders
 - The presence of a sleep disorder increases the risk of crashes. Disorders such as chronic insomnia, sleep apnea and narcolepsy, all of which lead to excessive daytime sleepiness, afflict an estimated 30 million Americans. Most people with sleep disorders remain undiagnosed and untreated.

Safety Tips:

- While a short nap cannot “make up” for a lost night of sleep, a 15 to 20 minute snooze can improve alertness, sharpen memory, and briefly reduce the symptoms of fatigue. (*NSF*)
- Don’t believe the myths that chewing gum, playing loud music, or opening the windows can keep you awake while driving. If your sleep debt is large enough, you can fall asleep anytime, anywhere. (*NSF*)
- For maximum alertness, get enough sleep before your trip. Take a mid-afternoon break and avoid driving between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. (*NSF*)
- Take a passenger to keep you talking, watch for signs of sleepiness, and share the driving. (*NSF*)
- Schedule a break every two hours or 100 miles to take a quick nap or get some exercise. (*NSF*)
- Enjoy a caffeinated drink or food to boost your short-term alertness. (*NSF*)
- Make sure both people in the front of the car are awake. A driver who needs rest should go to the back seat, buckle up, and sleep. (*AAAFTS*)
- Avoid caffeine during the last half of your workday as it may contribute to sleeping problems. (*NYSGTSC*)

Tips for Good Sleep: (NSF)

- Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) and nicotine (cigarettes, tobacco products).
- Don't drink alcohol to "help" you sleep.
- Exercise regularly, but complete your workout at least three hours before bedtime.
- Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine (such as taking a bath).
- Associate your bed with sleep – don't use it to work or watch television.
- If you often have insomnia, don't nap during the day.

Danger Signals for Drowsy Drivers: (AAFTS)

- Your eyes close or go out of focus by themselves.
- You have trouble keeping your head up.
- You can't stop yawning.
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts.
- You don't remember driving the last few miles.
- You drift between lanes, tailgate, or miss traffic signs.
- You keep jerking the car back into the lane.
- You have drifted off the road and narrowly missed crashing.
- If you have even one of these symptoms, you may be in danger of falling asleep. Pull off the road and take a nap.

What are effective countermeasures? (NSF) Before motorists embark on their trips, they should:

- Get a good night's sleep. While this varies from individual to individual, the average person requires about 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Plan to drive long trips with a companion. Passengers can help look for early warning signs of fatigue or switch drivers when needed. Passengers should stay away to talk to the driver.
- Schedule regular stops, every 100 miles or 2 hours.
- Avoid alcohol and medications (over-the-counter and prescribed) that may impair performance. Alcohol interacts with fatigue; increasing its effects – just like drinking on an empty stomach.

Actions for the Drowsy Driver - Once driving motorists should: (NSF)

- Look for the warning signs of fatigue: Drivers who
 - can't remember the last few miles driven
 - drift from their lanes or hit a rumble strip
 - experience wandering or disconnected thoughts
 - yawn repeatedly
 - have difficulty focusing or keeping their eyes open

- tailgate or miss traffic signs
 - have trouble keeping their head up
 - keep jerking their vehicles back into the lane
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- Recognize that they are in danger of falling asleep and cannot predict when a microsleep may occur.
 - Not count on the radio, open window or other “tricks” to keep them awake.
 - Respond to symptoms of fatigue by finding a safe place to stop for a break.
 - Pull off into a safe area away from traffic and take a brief nap (15 to 45 minutes) if tired.
 - Drink coffee or another source of caffeine to promote short-term alertness if needed. (It takes about 30 minutes for caffeine to enter the bloodstream and wears off after a few hours).

Parents who have suffered through a child's driving crash, offered these suggestion:
(Washington Post, 2/6/00, A14)

- Don't let teenagers drive if you suspect they are tired or have reason to be tired, for example, if they've just played a grueling game of football or field hockey.
- Teach them to pull over in a safe spot to nap – or to call someone to come get them – if they are driving and feel drowsy.
- Help them to recognize fatigue in friends who drive them around. Tell them to call home for a ride if they harbor any doubts about a driver, just as they would if they suspected drinking.
- When they stay late at a friend's house, suggest they sleep there. If they cannot, pick them up. Don't make them drive home.