

Drowsy Driving



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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

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Just like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, and impairs judgment. And like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness can be fatal when combined with driving.

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration survey found that:

- 37% of drivers surveyed admitted to dozing off while driving at some point in their driving career
- 8% admitted to dozing off while driving in the past six months
- 60% admitted dozing off while driving on an interstate-type highway with posted speeds of 55 MPH or higher

The drivers that are at the highest risk are:

Third shift workers, people that drive for a substantial number of miles or amount of time each day, those with unrecognized sleep disorders, and those prescribed medication with sedatives.

Recognize the Symptoms of Fatigue (for you and other drivers)

- Eyes closing or going out of focus
- Persistent yawning
- Irritability, restlessness, and impatience
- Wandering or disconnected thoughts
- Inability to remember driving the last few miles
- Drifting between lanes or onto shoulder
- Abnormal speed, tailgating, or failure to obey traffic signs
- Back tension, burning eyes, shallow breathing, or inattentiveness

General Safety Tips

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule that allows adequate rest (around 7-8 hours)
- When the signs of fatigue begin to show, get off the road. Take a short nap in a well-lit area. Do not simply stop on the side of the road.
- Avoid driving between 12am and 6am
- Keep the temperature cool in the car
- Stop every 100 miles or 2 hours to get out of the car and walk around; exercise helps combat fatigue
- Stop for light meals and snacks if you become tired
- Drive with your head up, shoulders back, and legs at about a 45 degree angle

Please contact EH&S at 213-740-6448 for more information.

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