



# *Risk Control* BULLETIN

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June 2017

## Sleep and Impairment

We all know the danger of driving while impaired. While we usually equate this to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, studies have shown that being sleepy is also a form of impairment, this has been a focus of the National Sleep Foundation, National Safety Council, and others.

### Did you know?

- One hundred thousand crashes each year are caused by fatigued drivers.
- Fifty-five percent of drowsy driving crashes are caused by drivers less than 25 years old.
- Being awake for 18 hours is equal to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent, which is legally drunk and leaves you at equal risk for a crash.

### How can you tell if you are “driving while drowsy”?

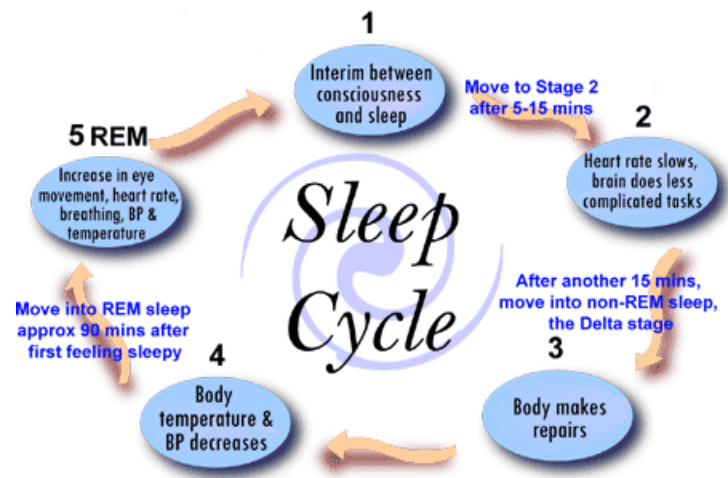
Although not everyone is the same, there are signs that should tell a driver to stop and rest:

- *Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or heavy eyelids*
- *Daydreaming, wandering/disconnected thoughts*
- *Trouble remembering the last few miles driven, missing exits, or traffic signs*
- *Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes*
- *Trouble keeping your head up*
- *Drifting from your lane, tailgating, or hitting a shoulder rumble strip.*
- *Feeling restless and irritable*

### Are You at Risk?

Before you drive, check to see if you are:

- *Sleep-deprived or fatigued (six hours of sleep or less triples your risk).*
- *Suffering from sleep loss (insomnia), poor quality sleep, or a sleep debt.*
- *Driving long distances without proper rest breaks.*
- *Driving through the night, mid-afternoon, or when you would normally be asleep.*
- *Taking sedating medications (antidepressants, cold tablets, antihistamines).*
- *Working more than 60 hours a week (increases your risk by 40 percent).*
- *Working more than one job and your main job involves shift work.*
- *Drinking even small amounts of alcohol.*
- *Driving alone or on a long, rural, dark or boring road.*



## Specific At-Risk Groups

Research has identified some groups as being at a higher risk:

- Young people—especially males under 25 years old.
- Shift workers and people with long work hours—working the night shift increases your risk by nearly six times. Rotating-shift workers and people working more than 60 hours a week need to be particularly careful.
- Commercial drivers—especially long-haul drivers. At least 15 percent of all heavy truck crashes involve fatigue.
- People with undiagnosed or untreated disorders—people with untreated obstructive sleep apnea have been shown to have up to a seven times increased risk of falling asleep at the wheel.
- Business travelers—who spend many hours driving or may be jet lagged.

## Adequate Sleep and Planning

Before hitting the road, drivers should:

- **Get a good night's sleep.** While this varies from individual to individual, sleep experts recommend between 7-9 hours of sleep per night for adults and 8.5 to 9.5 for teens.
- **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 awake to talk to the driver.
- **Schedule regular stops** every 100 miles or two 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. Antihistamines, such as Benadryl, are a key component of some sleep aid medications.
- **Consult their physicians** or a local sleep disorders center for diagnosis and treatment if you suffer frequent daytime sleepiness, often have difficulty sleeping at night, and/or snore loudly every night.

## How can you prevent drowsy driving?



Here are some suggestions:

- Take a 15 to 20 minute nap. More than 20 minutes can make you groggy for at least five minutes after awakening.
- Consume the equivalent of two cups of coffee. Caffeine is available in various forms (e.g. soft drinks, energy drinks, coffee, tea, chewing gum, tablets) and amounts; remember, caffeine takes about 30 minutes to enter the blood stream and will not greatly affect those who regularly consume it.
- Drink lots of water. It helps thin the blood, increasing circulation to the brain. It also increases the need to pull over and use the rest room. When that happens you are forced to stretch your legs, get some exercise, and increase circulation.
- Chew gum. Doing so rather vigorously can improve circulation of blood to the brain.
- Chew sunflower seeds (if the salt does not bother you). The act of chewing the seeds, separating, and spitting out the hulls can improve your concentration.

## Sleep Deprivation in the Workplace

Although sleep deprivation is particularly problematic for drivers, it seems this is the norm for many of us in the other “stuff” we do as we try to balance work, family, and other activities. In 1942, Americans reported getting an average of eight hours sleep each night. Today's sleep studies reveal that about 40 percent of Americans say they sleep under seven hours per night.

We rely on coffee and energy drinks to keep us going. But this can have a negative impact

on our concentration, work performance, safety, health, and quality of life.

Here are some of the identified problems:



When investigating accidents or near misses, employees simply not following rules and explaining their actions with a simple “I forgot,” could be a result of sleep deprivation.

Although most safety enforcement agencies, such as OSHA, do not have a regulation for sleep deprivation, they do require that employers know if an employee is fit for duty. So, what can employers do?

### Educate and Observe

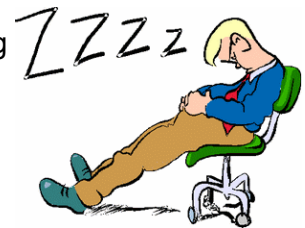
Every year the National Sleep Foundation names a sleep awareness week to shed light on the importance of getting a good night’s sleep. This provides information for newsletters, discussion topics for safety meetings, and for literature in break rooms. The campaign focuses on the health benefits of sleep, and WIFM or the “What’s in it For Me.”

This may be enough to motivate some employees to get more sleep. Benefits of a good night’s sleep include:

- Weight loss—Many studies have proven that lack of sleep can promote weight gain.
- You may live longer—Although researchers are not sure why, people that sleep at least eight hours tend to outlive those who regularly get less sleep than eight hours.
- Your immune system works better—Previous studies have associated sleep deprivation with the development of diseases like obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Others have shown that sleep helps sustain the functioning of the immune system, and that chronic sleep loss is a risk factor for immune system impairment.
- You feel better—When you’ve had enough sleep, you tend to feel better emotionally and physically. Just as not getting enough sleep creates a host of health and safety issues, getting enough sleep is essential for a happy and healthy lifestyle.

### There Is No Replacement for Sleep

Most of us have gone sleep deprived at one time or another. This is part of the reason energy drink sales are at an all-time high with estimated sales of 13 billion U.S. dollars for 2015. Caffeine has become the world’s drug of choice for dealing with less sleep. Coffee will help short term, but there is a cumulative effect to sleep deprivation.



Every time you cheat your brain of needed sleep, it is like borrowing from your sleep bank. This leads to what is called “sleep debt.” This is characterized by mental, emotional, and physical fatigue. It can lead to problems in performing day-to-day activities; particularly the high-level cognitive functions that are carried out in the frontal regions of the brain. You must pay it back by catching up on sleep at some point in time.

It is up to us to ensure we are getting a good night’s sleep. Avoid becoming a “caffeine zombie.” You’ll feel better, look better, and most likely be more fun to be around.

# ERGO CORNER

Slips, trips, and falls are major causes of ergonomic injuries. Improper or inadequate lighting is a major contributing factor to those accidents.

The right light can make your workplace safer and more productive by:

## **Making Hazards Visible**

Workers are more likely to see obstructions and tripping hazards and avoid collisions and falls when light levels are adequate. Light levels need to be adjusted to the type of work and location. Cal/OSHA addresses this specifically in their regulations Title 8, Section 3317.

## **Improving Alertness**

Studies have shown that workers on third shift are more alert under bright lighting than dim, and alertness can reduce accidents, which are more likely to occur on third shift. You may need to provide more lighting for them than for workers on first or second shift.

## **Improving Security**

High quality security lighting can reduce the possibility of assault and reduce theft and vandalism.

## **Reducing Eyestrain**

For tasks requiring attention to detail, bright lighting is a must. Without it, workers will experience headaches, nausea, and other symptoms of eyestrain.

## **Controlling Physical Hazards**

In a flammable atmosphere, the wrong lighting can be a fire hazard. In a damp atmosphere, the wrong lighting can be an electrocution hazard. If you must light up potentially dangerous environments, choose your lighting with care.

## **INEXPENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS**

Some simple, lower cost options for improving lighting in your workplace include:



**Cleaning Fixtures.** The cost is negligible, and the benefits can be enormous to improve the light output from your existing bulbs.



**Painting Walls and Ceilings.** Light-colored paint will reflect the light from your existing fixtures, improving illumination.



**Allow Sunlight In.** Open windows that have been painted over or walled off. Consider adding skylights to improve natural lighting.



**Installing Dimmers.** After dark, bright artificial light can help workers stay alert. Add timers or dimmers or install new light fixtures exclusively for use by third-shift employees.



**Installing Task Lighting.** Arrange task lighting based on the job being performed.



**Backlighting**—sets an object off from the background.



**Overhead Lighting**—that hits an object at an angle reveals detail and texture.



**Front Lighting**—that hits an object directly reveals details but can conceal texture.



**Reduce Shadows and Glare.** Blinds or curtains enable workers to control glare from windows. Flexible arms on task lights permit them to be moved so they provide the best light with the least glare.



**Using motion sensors.** For security purposes, the “right” lighting doesn’t always mean light that is uniformly bright. In some applications, motion-sensing security lighting may be the better option.

# What's Wrong With This Picture?

Look at the photo below and identify what is wrong in the picture. You may want to review this picture during your next safety meeting.



## H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Program

We are now accepting applications for the fall round of safety awards. Submit your nomination form to [tlofinq@acwajpia.com](mailto:tlofinq@acwajpia.com). The nomination forms can be found on the JPIA's website at [http://www.acwajpia.com/filecabinet/rmnopw/Safety\\_Incentive\\_Nomination\\_Form\\_3-17.pdf](http://www.acwajpia.com/filecabinet/rmnopw/Safety_Incentive_Nomination_Form_3-17.pdf)

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### Answer (What's Wrong With This Picture?)

Air compressor is unsecured and has no posted permit.