



FATAL FATIGUE NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2012

Greetings! As we once again approach a new year and the holidays, please tell your loved ones and others you know, about the dangers of driving while drowsy or tired. We all know too well the senseless tragedies' that occur as a result. Please take a minute to read the information and visit the links below, and visit our website at FatalFatigue.com

Thank you!
Fatal Fatigue

National Sleep Awareness Week - March 3-10, 2013

National Sleep Awareness Week™, which takes place March 3-10, 2013, is an annual public education and awareness campaign to promote the importance of sleep. The week begins with the announcement of the National Sleep Foundation's Sleep in America poll results and ends with the clock change to Daylight Saving Time, where Americans lose one hour of sleep.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help in your own community to raise awareness during National Sleep Awareness week, see the website below for helpful information.

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/event/national-sleep-awareness-week-2013>

What can be done in advance to avoid drowsy driving altogether?

Get a good night's sleep: The amount needed varies from individual to individual, but sleep experts recommend between 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

- Plan to drive long trips with a companion: Passengers can help look for early warning signs of fatigue, and switching drivers may be helpful. Passengers should stay awake and monitor the driver's condition.
- Take regular breaks: Schedule regular stops - every 100 miles or 2 hours, even if you don't feel tired, and more often if you feel like you need it.
- Avoid alcohol and medications: If medications warn that they cause or may cause drowsiness, avoid taking them before driving. If you must take certain prescription medications that cause drowsiness, don't drive immediately after taking them.
- You should never consume alcohol before driving in the first place, but it is especially important to realize that alcohol interacts with fatigue, increasing sleepiness. If you are already tired, even a small quantity of alcohol may exacerbate your sleepiness and increase your risk of crashing, even if your BAC is well below the legal limit for a DWI conviction.

What are the warning signs of drowsy driving?

Some warnings signs you may experience that signify drowsiness while driving are:

- The inability to recall the last few miles traveled,
- Having disconnected or wandering thoughts,
- Having difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open,
- Feeling as though your head is very heavy,
- Drifting out of your driving lane, perhaps driving on the rumble strips,
- Yawning repeatedly,
- Accidentally tailgating other vehicles,
- Missing traffic signs.

In fact, drowsy drivers sometimes drive so poorly that they might appear to be drunk. In a [survey of police officers](#), conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, nearly 90 percent of responding officers had at least once pulled over a driver who they expected to find intoxicated, but turned out to be sleepy (and not intoxicated). (AAA Traffic Foundation Safety)

<http://www.aaafoundation.org/resources/index.cfm?button=drowsyfaq#serious>

What the Research Says About Sleep Duration

(From National Sleep Foundation website)

The first thing experts will tell you about sleep is that there is no "magic number." Not only do different age groups need different amounts of sleep, but sleep needs are also *individual*. Just like any other characteristics you are born with, the amount of sleep you need to function best may be different for you than for someone who is of the same age and gender. While you may be at your absolute best sleeping seven hours a night, someone else may clearly need nine hours to have a happy, productive life. In fact, a 2005 study confirmed the fact that sleep needs vary across populations, and the study calls for further research to identify traits within genes that may provide a "map" to explain how sleep needs differ among individuals.

For example, short sleep duration is linked with:

- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Increase in body mass index – a greater likelihood of obesity due to an increased appetite caused by sleep deprivation
- Increased risk of diabetes and heart problems
- Increased risk for psychiatric conditions including depression and substance abuse
- Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals or remember new information

How Much Sleep Do You Really Need?	
Age	Sleep Needs
Newborns (0-2 months)	12-18 hours
Infants (3 to 11 months)	14 to 15 hours
Toddlers (1-3 years)	12 to 14 hours
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	11 to 13 hours
School-age children (5-10 years)	10 to 11 hours
Teens (10-17)	8.5-9.25 hours
Adults	7-9 hours

Source: National Sleep Foundation

US Department of Transportation - TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

Crash Stats DOT HS 811 449 A Brief Statistical Summary March 2011 (Table 1)
<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811449.pdf>

Fatal Crashes, Drivers, and Fatalities in Crashes Involving Drowsy Driving, by Year, 2005-2009

Year	Overall Fatal Crashes			Fatal Crashes Involving Drowsy Driving		
	Crashes	Drivers	Fatalities	Crashes	Drivers	Fatalities
2005	39,252	59,220	43,510	1,033 (2.6%)	1,034 (1.7%)	1,194 (2.7%)
2006	38,648	57,846	42,708	995 (2.6%)	995 (1.7%)	1,091 (2.6%)
2007	37,435	56,019	41,259	926 (2.5%)	926 (1.7%)	1,050 (2.5%)
2008	34,172	50,416	37,423	746 (2.2%)	747 (1.5%)	854 (2.3%)
2009	30,797	45,230	33,808	730 (2.4%)	730 (1.6%)	832 (2.5%)
2005-2009	180,304	268,731	198,708	4,430	4,432	5,021
5-Year Average	36,061	53,746	39,742	886 (2.5%)	886 (1.6%)	1,004 (2.5%)

Safety Rest Area Preservation

Washington's safety rest areas are conveniently located. They provide the opportunity for Traveler's to rest and take a much-needed break to increase alertness and safety during long trips. WSDOT prioritizes planned facilities based on locations where collisions due to fatigue are occurring, and where no nearby rest facilities (public or otherwise) are present. Sleepy driving and inattentive driving are among the leading causes for vehicle collisions in Washington State. Together they account for 20 percent of all fatal accidents from 1993 to 2001. Unfocused drivers are a danger to themselves, their passengers, and other drivers. (Taken from the 2007-2026 Highway System Plan)

Safety rest areas offer an opportunity for sleepy and inattentive drivers to get off the road and rest along highways that otherwise have no good stopping points such as all-night restaurants. **From the Washington State Department of Transportation website, please go here for more information.** <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

How Can You Help?

Won't you contact your local representative and let them know you want more public education on the dangers of drowsy driving? Let them know you want our roads safer by creating accountability through a "sleeping-driver homicide" amendment to Washington State's Vehicular Homicide Statute. Go to: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature>

You can also write your senators and congressman to ask for support of funding for sleep activities. You can do this through NSF's website at www.sleepfoundation.org/advocacy.

Remember the National Sleep Foundation, is dedicated to lowering the incidence of drowsy driving crashes by raising awareness! They now have *new* tools available to help with education related to drowsy driving, such as a PowerPoint presentation, informative sleep sheets and an article entitled *Tired Cops* by Brian Vila, Ph.D. Here is the link to the site to obtain the educational items related to drowsy driving:

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/catalog/drowsy-driving-education>.

To join this life-saving campaign, please go the National Sleep Foundation's website and make a tax-deductible contribution: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/donate>.

Contributors of \$15 or more receive their free "Sleepy? Pull Over!" bumper sticker and a year's subscription to a quarterly newsletter, *Sleepmatters*. They also offer a free, bi-weekly e-mail newsletter with information on sleep and new developments in research. Sign up at www.sleepfoundation.org/signup.html. They also now offer *Facebook* and *MySpace* as well in their online community section!

What's New on Our Website?

Over 6,900 hits to our website!

Updates were completed for Ronnie Thompsons in Memoriam page; and please see the new articles on our home page, as well as our newsletters. Please show your support by e-mailing us or, if you know of someone who would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please let us know. Our e-mail address is: Fatalfatigue@hotmail.com.

***Look for our next seasonal newsletter.
Fatal Fatigue***