



PREVENTION MATTERS

THE CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION AND POLICY

Drowsy Driving Prevention

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that 2.5% of motor vehicle crash deaths and 2.0% of injuries are caused by drowsy driving. However, these numbers are likely low estimates of the true impact of drowsy driving. Some studies estimate that 15 to 33% of deadly crashes can be blamed on drowsy driving.



According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, **adults should get 7–8 hours of quality sleep each night.** About 30% of adults in the U.S. are sleep deprived — this can lead to long term sleep deprivation and cannot be fixed with one or two good nights of sleep.

Drowsy Driving Is a Growing Problem

It is estimated that 6,000 people a year die and many others are injured in this country in drowsy-driving related crashes — with the cost to society estimated at \$109 billion per year.



The impact is likely to be even higher than this. Why?

- Drowsy driving is often overlooked when other factors such as alcohol or speeding are present
- There's no sure-fire test to identify if someone is drowsy
- People often don't realize they are drowsy

What Happens When We Drive Drowsy?

Much like alcohol, drowsiness makes it harder to think, plan, and move. These skills are important when driving a car or truck:



- Process information and make decisions
- Pay attention and remember things
- Plan, watch, and change our actions to respond to our surroundings
- React and coordinate our responses

Sleep is NOT a Luxury, It is a Necessity

Far from being a luxury, sleep is a basic human need that is essential for our well-being. We have an "internal clock" that sends us messages over a 24-hour period. These messages tell us to become sleepy in the evening and more awake in the morning. If we don't listen to the signals our body is sending and our cycles are off, sleep can suffer.



Drowsy Driving is Like Driving Drunk

Studies have compared sleepy drivers to drunk drivers by looking at how drowsiness affects our reaction time, judgment, attention, memory, and coordination.



17 hours awake = BAC of 0.05%
 24 hours awake = BAC of 0.10%
 (a BAC of 0.08% is legally drunk)

With only 4–5 hours of sleep in a 24 hour period, you are 4 times as likely to be in a crash.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON:

- Center for Injury Prevention and Policy visit umm.edu/CIPP
- STC Prevention Matters visit umm.edu/PreventionMatters
- Drowsy Driving visit drowsydriving.org
- Sleep Disorders visit ummidtown.org/programs/sleep

Danger Ahead:

Shift Work and Drowsy Driving

Roughly 15% of U.S. workers are engaged in shift work, including nurses, doctors, police officers, and first responders. Up to 50% of shift workers report sleep disturbances and/or decreased alertness.



Recent research on safety hazards posed by the work schedules of nurses and doctors has revealed that:

- In a study of 1,000 emergency room residents :
 - 50% reported “near crashes”
 - Most of the “near crashes” and actual crashes occurred after a night shift
 - 8% had been in a crash (70% of these crashes were single vehicle, typical of drowsy driving crashes)
- Extended work hours for nurses can make it difficult to think clearly or pay attention. This can lead to job-related injuries, medication errors, and car crashes during the drive home.



Prevention and Ideas

- Stay on a set sleep schedule (even on weekends and days off)
- Set up a relaxing bedtime routine
- Exercise daily
- Make your bedroom as comfortable as possible and keep it dark and quiet
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows
- Limit alcohol and caffeine
- Turn off electronics before bedtime



Additional Sleep Tips for Shift Workers

- Avoid long drives to and from work and excessive overtime
- Get some activity during breaks, consider taking a walk
- Do not rely on caffeine or other “energy drinks”; they sometimes cause even more problems with sleep
- Avoid tedious or boring tasks toward the end of your shift
- Share ideas with co-workers on dealing with the difficulties that come with working odd shifts
- Ride share (carpool, Uber, Lyft, etc.)



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WHO IS MOST AT RISK TO DRIVE DROWSY?

YOUNG PEOPLE

(ages 18–29)

are more likely to drive drowsy.

71% of 18–29 year olds

52% of 30–64 year olds

19% of 65+ year olds

admitted to driving drowsy.



MEN

are more likely than women to **drive while drowsy** (56% vs. 45%).

Men are almost twice as likely as women to **fall asleep while driving** (22% vs. 12%).



Source: National Sleep Foundation, 2002



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