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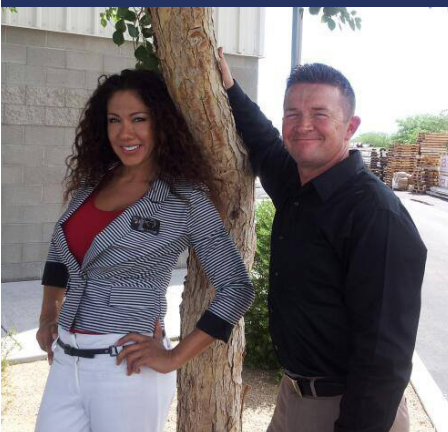
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Driver fatigue

Poor job performance can be related to something that may have little to do with work: Fatigue. According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), sleep deprivation is a widespread problem in America.

When workers have not had enough sleep, fatigue takes over. According to an NSF sleep in America poll, 65 percent of American adults link inadequate sleep with impaired daytime performance and behavior. More than 60 percent associate difficulty doing daily activities such as producing quality work, making carefully thought-out decisions, and listening carefully to others with not getting enough sleep.

Causes of fatigue

Sleep loss is considered one of the two major causes of fatigue for the professional driver. Most adults need between 7 and 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep in order to feel well rested. Occasionally, the human body can function well on fewer hours of sleep, but after a couple of days, a "sleep debt" can develop. Laboratory tests show a sleep loss of as little as 2 hours can have a negative impact on alertness and performance including reduced judgment, slowed reaction time, lack of concentration, and poor mood/attitude.

The other major cause of fatigue is a change to the body's biological or internal clock called **circadian rhythm**. Generally speaking, most



people's internal clocks run on a 24-hour basis with some high points and low points during that time span.

Time cues, including sunlight and the work/rest schedule, keep the body's internal clock set to a certain schedule. If your internal clock is moved to a different schedule (changing time zones, changing from a day to night work shift) you need time to adjust to the new schedule. During the transition, disruption in the body's internal clock can produce the same negative impact as sleep loss.

No matter what shift you work or what sleep pattern you follow, most everyone's clock is set for two low points. They are between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. and between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. The more dangerous of the two low points is between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. Most people are programmed to sleep when it's dark.

Fatigue can be hazardous

A good night's sleep has been characterized as fuel for the brain, and sleep is as important as

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proper nutrition and regular exercise. Those who have trouble getting enough sleep report a greater difficulty concentrating, accomplishing required tasks, and handling minor irritations.

Both short sleep duration and insomnia can have negative consequences:

- Insufficient sleep can lead to excessive sleepiness, negative mood changes, reduced performance on standardized tasks, increased accident risk, and acute negative effects on glucose metabolism and immune function.
- Insomnia can lead to increased risk of depression; problems with memory, family/social relationships, and mood; poorer quality of life; increased health care costs; increased absenteeism; and increased risk for coronary disease.

Symptoms of insomnia can include difficulty falling asleep, frequent awakenings during the night, waking too early and being unable to go back to sleep, or waking unrefreshed. If insomnia symptoms persist, it is important to seek medical help.

Drowsy driving

A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that significant risk factors for drowsy driving included working more than one job, working the night shift, and being awake for more than 20 hours. Half of American drivers say they have driven while drowsy, according to the NSF poll, and about 20 percent say they have fallen asleep at the wheel. About 25 percent of the respondents said they drove to or from work at least a few days a month while feeling drowsy, and four percent said they drive to work feeling drowsy almost every day.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), drivers should recognize these warning signs of drowsy driving:

- You can't stop yawning.
- You have trouble keeping your eyes open and focused, especially at stop lights.
- Your mind wanders, or you have disconnected thoughts.
- You can't remember driving the last few miles.



- Your driving becomes sloppy – you weave between lanes, tailgate, miss traffic signals, or hit the grooves or rumble strips on the side of the road.

NHTSA says the following won't keep you awake while driving: Turning up the radio, singing loudly, eating or chewing gum, getting out of the car and running around, or even slapping yourself.

NHTSA offers these tips for avoiding drowsy driving:

- Avoid driving home from work if you're drowsy. Some experts recommend drinking two cups of coffee, then taking a short 15- to 20-minute nap before you drive.
- Avoid alcohol or any medications that could make you drowsy.
- Pull off the road to a safe place if you hit a rumble strip – it's a sure sign that you are drowsy and need to take a nap or get some coffee.

The NSF emphasizes that substantial research serves as the basis for the recommendation that adults obtain an average of 7-9 hours of sleep each night, recognizing that each person has an individual requirement for his/her own amount of sleep. If lifestyle changes aren't enough to keep you from having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking too early – see a doctor. A physician or a sleep specialist can prescribe the right treatment for you.

Getting adequate sleep

A few simple lifestyle changes can help most people get close to the recommended eight hours of uninterrupted quality sleep they need each night for optimum health, safety, and productivity.

Here are some suggestions:

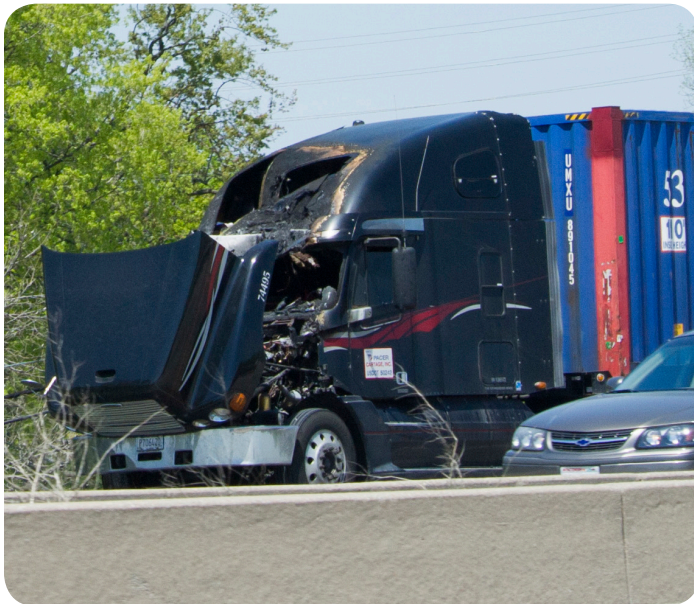
- Keep a regular sleep schedule – go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
- Create a sleep-friendly environment – a cool, quiet, and dark bedroom.
- Engage in a relaxing, non-alerting activity at bedtime – read, listen to music, or take a hot bath.
- Limit eating and drinking right before bedtime – avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.
- Exercise regularly – preferably in the afternoon, but not close to bedtime.
- Take a nap – a short 20-30 minute nap can help promote short-term alertness, but don't substitute a daytime nap for a good night's sleep.
- Get in bed only when you're tired – if you can't fall asleep within 15 minutes, relax in another room until you're sleepy.

Safety focus: Fire prevention

The National Fire Protection Association has designated October -13 as Fire Prevention Week. Fire Prevention Week was established in the 1920s to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire (which was responsible for over 250 deaths in 1871) by educating the public on the importance of fire prevention.

Cab

Good housekeeping is important. The cab should be clean and free of debris at all times. Trash should be disposed of and ashtrays (if used) cleaned out on a regular basis. Make sure that you have a fire extinguisher on board that is of the correct size and type. Also be sure that it is properly secured and labeled, and readily accessible for use. It must be designed, constructed, and maintained to permit visual determination of whether it is fully charged.



Engine

The engine compartment should be checked regularly. The engine should be clean. Any oil or fluid spilled on the engine should be immediately wiped up. Regular checks should be made of the wiring and electrical system, fuses, battery, and exhaust system.

When refueling, the engine should be turned off, smoking materials should be extinguished, and cell phones should be turned off. The fuel tank should be checked for signs of leakage. Also, there should be metal to metal contact when fueling.

Tires

An overheated tire can cause a vehicle fire. An underinflated tire can overheat, increasing fire risk. A soft or flat tire should be changed as soon as possible. If the tire is hot to the touch it should not be placed in the spare rack.

Brakes

Brakes should be checked regularly. Worn brakes can overheat and cause a fire. All brakes should be fully released before the vehicle is moved. Never ride the brakes as this can cause a fire in the brake linings that could spread to the tires.

Cargo

Smoking materials should never be used around a vehicle hauling hazardous materials or in the cargo area as freight is being loaded or unloaded. Know what type of cargo is in the trailer. This information is important so emergency crews can respond properly.

Type of fire extinguisher required

A power unit must be equipped with a fire extinguisher that is securely mounted in or on the vehicle and readily accessible for use. It must be designed, constructed, and maintained to allow visual determination of whether it is fully charged.

Power units must be equipped as follows:

- If transporting hazardous materials, power unit must be equipped with a fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories' (UL) rating of 10 B:C or more.
- If transporting nonhazardous materials, power must be equipped with either: One fire extinguisher with a UL rating of 5 B:C or more, or Two fire extinguishers, each with a UL rating of 4 B:C or more.



If a fire occurs

If a fire occurs in a commercial motor vehicle, the driver should take the following actions:

- Get the truck off of the roadway and into an open area if possible. Park away from buildings, trees, vehicles, or anything else that may catch fire.
- Call 911 to report the fire and location.
- If the fire is already to a size that cannot be extinguished, get away from the truck. Your life and the life of the general public is your first responsibility.



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Sleep apnea: It's more than a snore

"We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid."

Benjamin Franklin,
American
Statesman
1706-1790

Snorting, snoring, and gasping for breath during the night may be signs of sleep apnea, a breathing interruption caused by a blocked airway. The condition is sometimes called OSA or obstructive sleep apnea.

A person with sleep apnea actually stops breathing repeatedly during sleep. A short deep breath, gasp, or sudden sensation of choking occurs when the airway reopens. Usually the sleeper is unaware of these sleep interruptions, which can occur hundreds of times each night.

A common symptom of sleep apnea is daytime sleepiness due to interrupted sleep at night. Additional symptoms include:

- Restless sleep or insomnia
- Difficulty concentrating
- Waking up several times a night to urinate
- Waking up with a dry mouth or sore throat
- Morning headaches
- Heartburn
- Decreased libido

Sleep apnea is dangerous because, left untreated, it can contribute to serious health conditions including high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, and diabetes.



In addition to medical conditions, the daytime sleepiness caused by sleep apnea can decrease work or school performance and increase the risk of accidents while driving or working.

If you are experiencing symptoms of sleep apnea, talk to a physician who may order a sleep apnea test to be done in a sleep center or possibly at home. After sleep apnea is diagnosed, treatment options can be discussed.

Are you at risk for sleep apnea?

Some people are at higher risk for sleep apnea. Risk factors include:

- Back sleeping
- Obesity
- Chronic sinusitis
- Large neck circumference (greater than 17 inches for men/15 inches for women)
- Large tonsils or adenoids
- Smoking
- Family history of sleep apnea
- Recessed chin

Lifestyle changes can be a first step in treating sleep apnea. These include: avoiding alcohol, giving up smoking, losing weight, and changing one's sleep position from back sleeping to side sleeping.



Sleep apnea can contribute to other serious health conditions.