

Driver Fatigue - English

OCTOBER WEEK 4



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that the main causes of police-reported road crashes each year are related to driver drowsiness and fatigue. Extra precaution from both employees and employers is needed to assure safety on the road.

Symptoms of driver fatigue:

- Burning sensation in the eyes
- Eyelids feel heavy
- Twitching and/or muscle tension
- Thoughts wander and are disconnected
- Limbs feel heavy, or light and tingly, or numb

Factors contributing to fatigue:

- Length of shifts worked – the length of shifts worked can contribute to fatigue.
- Previous hours and days worked – the effects of fatigue are cumulative (drivers may have sleep debt due to the previous hours and days worked, which can contribute to fatigue).
- Time of the day when the work is being performed – remember that disrupting the “body’s clock” can cause fatigue and also impact job performance.
- Delays loading or unloading.
- Roster design and scheduling that does not allow for rest and recovery between shifts.
- Human factors – capability, skill, experience, age, physical fitness and health status.
- Work environment – vibration, noise, climate/temperature, etc.
- Consuming heavy meals.
- Cold or allergy medicines.

Worker Solutions:

- Exercise on a regular basis. Maintaining a balanced exercise program can help improve stamina and decrease fatigue.
- Improve sleep patterns; ensure you receive plenty of sleep.
- Get the proper nutrition. Eat a well-balanced and healthy diet that includes the major food groups. Avoid heavy and greasy foods.
- Improve your working environment. Your cab and sleeping quarters should be as comfortable as possible. Check for noise, poor ventilation, high or low temperatures, lighting and other issues that could disrupt your sleep.

- Reduce your caffeine intake. Caffeine is a drug that may over-stimulate the body and mind, interfering with sleep and increasing anxiety levels. Use caffeinated beverages (coffee, teas and energy drinks) in moderation. Limit consumption to a couple of drinks a day to minimize fatigue.
- Get and stay fit. Extra pounds carried around every day are taxing to the body and may increase fatigue. Set a weight loss plan that includes proper diet and exercise.
- Schedule relaxation time. Spend your free time doing something you enjoy (sports, traveling, family time, etc.) to reduce stress.
- Quit smoking. Nicotine produces an initial stimulation, but is followed by a depressant phase of action. It is a drug that creates dependency and is incompatible with good health. Effects of tobacco smoke have been linked to many of the diseases that cause fatigue.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is a drug that depresses bodily functions, causing lethargy and fatigue. Alcohol consumption, especially close to bedtime, can disturb sleep and cause emotional distress which can lead to daytime fatigue.

Employer Solutions

- Give drivers sufficient notice to prepare for working periods.
- Ensure drivers have the opportunity for at least 7 hours of continuous sleep in a 24 hour period.
- Minimize irregular or unfamiliar work shifts.
- Operate flexible schedules to allow for short break times or discretionary sleep.
- When drivers return from leave, minimize night-time schedules to give drivers time to adapt to any change in sleep patterns.
- Give sufficient notice of a change between night and day shift, to provide adequate time for employees to alter sleep patterns.

Employee Training

Training should be provided on causes and controls of fatigue and should include drivers, supervisors, schedulers and any other person whose actions may affect road safety. Training should address:

- Common causes of fatigue, including shift work, extended working hours, demands placed on drivers and delays in loading and unloading.
- Tips to identify signs of fatigue.
- Potential health and safety impacts of fatigue.
- How drivers are responsible for making appropriate use of their rest days and breaks to assure they are fit for duty at the beginning of every shift.
- Company policy and procedures.
- Medication safety requirements.
- Employee Solutions/ Best Practices outlined above.

Supervision

Adequate supervision to ensure that control measures are being used correctly is a must. This can include activities such as monitoring fatigue levels of drivers or ensuring compliance with company and regulatory safety requirements. Driver ride-alongs and on-the-road assessments should be done on a regular basis. For drivers working alone, employers should consider providing a means of communication and a procedure for regular contact.

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This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: ELECTRICAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, Inc.

Trainer: _____ Trainer's Signature: _____

Class Participants:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

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