

Reducing Driver Fatigue

You want to help reduce the risk of vehicle crashes and protect your employees and property. We are dedicated to providing the expertise, resources, and tools to help reduce driver fatigue.



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Driver fatigue is a major contributing factor in vehicle crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, fatigued or drowsy driving may contribute to 83,000 crashes per year, with 846 drowsy-driving-related deaths in 2014. Vehicle crashes can impact your company's operating costs, productivity, and employee morale.

Causes of Fatigue

Fatigue is defined as a state of being very tired or exhausted. Factors that cause fatigue can be varied and unique to the individual. The time of day; the nature of the task being performed; and an individual's mental and physical health, body temperature, circadian rhythm, driving experience, and age all can cause fatigue.

Reducing Fatigue

Employers and employees hold a joint responsibility to address driver fatigue. It's the responsibility of the employee to get the appropriate amount of sleep and take scheduled breaks. Employers are responsible for encouraging open communication so employees feel comfortable reporting an inability to drive due to fatigue. Consider planning ahead with the following:

- **Structural:** Measures pertaining to scheduling and wellness.
 - Schedule consistent work shifts, provide advance notice of schedule changes, and include rest periods in shifts. Be sure to consider employee commute time when complying with state- or federal-specific hours of service regulations.
 - Provide employees with information on health and wellness, particularly in relation to drug and alcohol use.
- **Technological:** Measures to prevent accidents, identify fatigue, or monitor driving performance.
 - Fitness for duty test: a computer-based test that detects diminished psychomotor skills
 - Lane-tracking devices: equipment that detects when a driver drifts into another lane and sounds an alarm if the driver changes lanes without using a turn signal
 - Electronic onboard recorders: devices that review time records and notifications to ensure that drivers are on schedule



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■ **Tactical:** Measures to temporarily reduce fatigue.

- Ingest caffeine.
- Take naps.
- Increase exposure to noise.
- Decrease vehicle compartment temperature.
- Increase exposure to light.
- Schedule breaks every 100 miles.
- Increase circulation by frequently changing hand positions.
- Avoid “the death grip” on the steering wheel.

While these actions can be helpful in the short term, they cannot replace the value of a full night’s rest.

An individual’s decision-making and thought processes can be impaired while he or she is drowsy. For this reason, it’s important to plan ahead to address driver fatigue. By understanding the causes and actions you can take to help minimize driving fatigue, you can help reduce the risk of vehicle crashes and protect your employees and property.

For more resources to protect your business, visit viewpoint.libertymutualgroup.com



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