



Daily Planning Checklist

It's day one of Drive Safely Work Week. Each day we look at our calendars to map out what's ahead of us. Some of us drive as a part of making a living while others just feel like we live in our cars. Knowing where we're going and getting there safely is a big part of the job.

The most important leg of your journey may take place before you get behind the wheel. Be sure to take time to pause and think through the day ahead.

START THE DAY RIGHT

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

If you drive when you're fatigued, you put yourself and others at risk. In fact, 20% of motor vehicle crashes are attributed to drowsy driving.¹

While most adults need about 7-8 hours of sleep per night, listen to your body's signals to find what's right for you.

Get better sleep so you're not just dreaming of good sleep.

- ✓ Steer clear of caffeine and alcohol at least 4-6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine can keep you from falling asleep and while alcohol may make you feel sleepy, both hinder your ability to get deep sleep and can cause you to wake repeatedly through the night.²
- ✓ Unplug. Reading is a great way to unwind but if you're holding an e-reader you may be sabotaging your sleep. **Research shows that the blue light emitted by laptops, tablets and e-readers suppresses melatonin, which helps us fall asleep. Compared to people who read traditional books, people who used e-readers at night took longer to fall asleep and were more tired and less alert the next morning—even after 8 hours in bed.** Turn off all electronics at least 1, but preferably 2 hours, before bed.³
- ✓ Create a bedroom for sleeping...quiet, dark and cool.
- ✓ Be consistent with your sleep schedule to regulate your body's clock.



EAT BREAKFAST

There are numerous health risks associated with skipping breakfast, including low blood sugar, obesity and even high blood pressure, yet studies show more than 30 million Americans skip breakfast.⁴ That's a lot of people who may be behind the wheel groggy, hungry and operating with less than ideal reflexes.

Set an alarm to give yourself plenty of time for a healthy breakfast before heading out to tackle the morning commute. A fueled body and a focused mind are your best assets behind the wheel.



hangry

/ˈhæŋɡri/ adjective -grier, -griest

1. (jocular) irritable as a result of feeling hungry

Even the best parents and care givers become distracted. A child left in the car can suffer heatstroke, one of the leading causes of death among children. Plan ahead to avoid this deadly mistake by putting safeguards in place. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests these tips:

1. Look before you lock.
2. Never leave a child alone in a car.
3. Take action if you notice a child alone in a car.
4. Get involved by sharing this information with others.



more on next page



¹ Teft, B., AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2014, Prevalence of Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Drowsy Drivers Report
² Epstein, Dr. Lawrence, 2015, Caffeine and Sleep, Harvard Medical School and WGBH Educational Foundation, Division of Sleep Medicine.
³ Chang, Anne-Marie, PhD, Brigham and Women's Hospital, 2014, Light-Emitting E-Readers Before Bedtime Can Adversely Impact Sleep.
⁴ Morning MealScape Study, The NDP Group, Oct 2011.

Daily Planning Checklist

KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING

- ✓ What's the weather forecast for today? Is it changing? Check the weather online so it factors into your plans.
- ✓ Are you in charge of car pool today? Are there any early morning meetings?
- ✓ Do you have calls scheduled during your drive time? Reschedule or check your route for places you can safely park such as a rest stop, parking lot or cell phone lot. Never participate in a conference call while driving.
- ✓ How long will you be in the car? Take a break every two hours or 100 miles. Include time in the schedule to stop, stretch your legs, get something to eat and return calls or texts.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Is there construction on the route? Are there time restrictions to get to where you are going? While you cannot control for everything, looking at alternate routes for your day can help. There are a number of free apps that can help you make the best plan possible. Do a quick online search for traffic apps to find something that fits your needs. Just be sure to use them **before** you head out.

DRESS FOR THE DAY AND DRESS FOR THE DRIVE

Don't get into your car until you're ready to start the day. Finish getting dressed and any personal grooming before you turn the key.



WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT... IN THE FRONT AND BACK SEAT.

No matter how much planning goes into ensuring a safe trip, no one ever plans to be in a crash. The single most effective thing you can do for a safe journey is to wear your seat belt—every trip, every time, regardless of whether you are driving, or a passenger in the front or back seat. Wearing a seat belt can cut your risk of crash-related injury or death in half.⁵

WEAR APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR FOR DRIVING.

When you drive, put your best foot forward—and make sure it's wearing a sensible shoe. Certain types of footwear can add risk to your drive.



- ✓ Avoid barefoot driving. If you need to stop quickly, a bare foot may not provide enough braking force—and heavy force can lead to injury.



- ✓ Flip flops can easily slide off your feet and off the pedals—decreasing your reaction time.



- ✓ High heels can get stuck in floor mats and force feet into unsafe angles that impact reaction time and braking force.

- ✓ Shoes with very smooth soles can slip off gas and brake pedals—impacting driving safety.

The best shoes for driving have non-slip soles and allow the foot to feel the pressure needed by the pedals to achieve the desired braking or acceleration. #PlanAhead. You can always change shoes once you arrive at your destination.

DON'T OVERDRESS WHEN DRIVING.

It may be cold when you start your drive. However, if you are in the car for long, staying in your warm coat can cause drowsiness. Drowsy drivers are less attentive, have slower reaction time and their ability to process information is affected.⁷ Take off outer layers before heading out to acclimate your body temperature and help you to stay alert while driving.



DID YOU KNOW?

30% of 20–54 years olds don't buckle up in the back seat. Yet with technological advances in occupant protection features, much of the attention has been on front seat passengers and addressing safety in the back seat may have taken a back seat. The risk of injury is 8 times greater for people riding unrestrained in the back seat, compared to those with seat belts buckled.⁶



YOUR PLAN: Get 7-8 hours sleep, leave time for breakfast and to plan your day and route, pick shoes that are safe for driving and wear your seat belt on every trip, every time.

⁵ NHTSA, 1984 DOT-HS-806-572

⁶ Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute, Dec. 2014, Status Report Vol. 49, No. 11.

⁷ Jackson ML, et al., 2012, Cognitive components of simulated driving performance: sleep loss effects and predictors, *Accid Anal Prev.* 2012; 50:438.