



Managing Fatigue for the Fleet Safety Professional



Why Does Sleep Matter?

Rested drivers mean safer roads

Sleep is critical for optimal health and well-being. Yet, estimates from five industrialized countries (Canada, Germany, Japan, UK, and U.S.) show that substantial proportions of residents suffer from insufficient sleep, leading to billions of hours of lost productivity. Not getting enough sleep is also associated with workplace crashes and injuries, and negative physical and mental health effects.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults get 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night.

The quality of sleep you get also is an important factor in feeling rested. If you don't get enough sleep for multiple days in a row, you will begin to accumulate 'sleep debt.' Sleep debt can't be erased by one day with 8 hours of sleep; it takes several days of good sleep to regain optimal alertness.

Sleep disorders

Sleep disorders are a significant source of fatigue and are a global health challenge. Obstructive sleep apnea, the most common type of sleep disorder, is estimated to affect almost 1 billion people around the world, and the prevalence of sleep apnea exceeds 50% in some countries. A few signs and symptoms of a sleep disorder include excessive daytime sleepiness, irregular breathing during sleep, irregular sleep and wake patterns, and difficulty falling asleep. **People who experience these symptoms should speak to a health care provider for further assessment.** Employers should ensure that their employee healthcare plans include preventive care for sleep disorders.

Did You Know?

Your alertness depends on several sleep factors:

- ✓ How much sleep you've had recently and how long it has been since you had sleep.
- ✓ The time of day you obtained your sleep.

The lowest levels of alertness can occur when:

- ✓ It is between 2 and 6 am.
- ✓ You haven't had 7 or more hours of sleep for multiple days in a row.
- ✓ You have been awake for 20 hours or more.



10 Tips for Better Sleep

1. Have a consistent sleep/wake schedule.
2. Limit stimuli in bedroom (TVs, phones, etc.).
3. Make a “worry list” and a brief action item next to each item prior to bedtime.
4. Make a bedtime routine.
5. Create a comfortable sleep environment.
6. Simulate your home sleep environment when traveling.
7. Limit caffeine and alcohol intake within four hours of bedtime.
8. Avoid heavy meals within two hours of bedtime.
9. Avoid looking at the clock during wake-ups.
10. Get out of bed and go to a separate room within 20 minutes if you can't sleep.

Napping Tips for Fleet Drivers

During long periods of wakefulness, naps can significantly improve alertness and performance.

1. Only nap if you don't expect to get 8 hours of continuous sleep.
2. Time your nap ahead of your period of sleep deprivation if possible. For example, take a nap before your overnight shift, and make it as long as possible.
3. Naps are easiest to obtain when your body is in a circadian low.
4. Naps can often lead to sleep inertia, which is a feeling of grogginess and grumpiness when you wake up. Most sleep inertia goes away within approximately 35 minutes. The intensity of sleep inertia depends on a number of factors: how sleep deprived the person is, how long the nap was, and the timing of the nap. For example, in the early morning, it can take longer to wake up from a nap.
5. Keep naps less than 45 minutes to increase chances of being in a lighter stage of sleep when being awakened. This will decrease the likelihood of experiencing sleep inertia.