

Our "Wake-Up Call"

What Contributes to Driver Fatigue?

There may be many outside influences that contribute to sleepy or fatigued driving: (1) long, monotonous drives; (2) driving in rural areas with blackness all around; (3) lulling vibrations from the road or your vehicle; (4) highway hypnosis; (5) new vehicles that are designed to be quieter, smoother, and easier to operate.

What are WARNING Signs that Tell Drivers They Are Too Tired to Drive?

- Difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open
- Eyes beginning to burn
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Can't stop yawning
- Inattention, daydreaming
- Muscular tension, restlessness, or inability to get comfortable
- Increase in driving errors; i.e., tailgating, missing traffic signs, can't remember driving the last several miles

What Should Drivers do if They Notice these Symptoms?

To avoid falling asleep at the wheel, you should pull off the road for a break or nap if you experience any of these warning signs. If you are at a roadside rest area, you should exit your vehicle. Take a brief walk and do some easy stretching exercises.

Don't rely on coffee or a caffeine drink to keep you awake. Studies show that the feeling of alertness from caffeine is short lived.

How to Avoid Driving While Fatigued

- Get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep the night before driving.
- Don't be afraid to stop along the way and stay overnight.
- Avoid driving straight through to your destination.
- Take a break every 2 hours, or 100 miles. Stop sooner if you feel tired. On your breaks, get out and stretch; take a short walk. If feeling tired, take a brief nap for 20-30 minutes.
- Don't allow yourself to become too comfortable while driving. Turn off the cruise control and drive with the window open.
- Whenever long distances or late hours are involved, consider traveling with a relief driver.