

Drowsy Driving

Just like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, and impairs judgment. Just like drugs or alcohol, it can be fatal when driving.

- Death rates based on mileage were 2.3 times higher at night than during the day in 2003.
- 37% of drivers surveyed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration admitted to falling asleep at the wheel at some point in their driving career.
 - 8% admitted doing so in the past six months
 - 60% admitted falling asleep while driving on an interstate- type highway with posted speeds of 55 MPH or higher.

The drivers at highest risk are: third shift workers, people that drive a substantial number of miles each day, those with unrecognized sleep disorders, and those prescribed medication with sedatives.

Recognize the symptoms of fatigue:

- Eyes closing or going out of focus
- Persistent yawning
- Irritability, restlessness, and impatience
- Wandering or disconnected thoughts
- Inability to remember driving the last few miles
- Drifting between lanes or onto shoulder
- Abnormal speed, tailgating, or failure to obey traffic signs
- Back tension, burning eyes, shallow breathing or inattentiveness

Safety Tips

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule that allows adequate rest.
- When the signs of fatigue begin to show, get off the road. Take a short nap in a well-lit area. Do not simply stop on the side of the road.
- Avoid driving between 12am and 6am
- When planning long trips:
 - Share driving responsibilities with a companion
 - Begin the trip early in the day
 - Keep the temperature cool in the car
 - Stop every 100 miles or 2 hours to get out of the car and walk around; exercise helps to combat fatigue
 - Stop for light meals and snacks
 - Drive with your head up, shoulders back and legs flexed at about a 45 degree angle



Chesapeake Region Safety Council
17 Governor's Court, Suite 185
Baltimore, MD 21244
P: 1-800-875-4770 F: 410-281-1350
www.chesapeakeesc.org safety@chesapeakeesc.org



**Chesapeake
Region
Safety
Council**