

Drowsy Driving

As a driver, your number one responsibility is to get yourself and your passengers to your destination safely. When behind the wheel, you always need to be alert and focused. At 55 mph, a vehicle travels the length of a football field in 3.7 seconds. This is no time for a "mini" snooze. Being an attentive driver, and looking out for the driver who isn't, is increasingly important. Drive focused. Stay safe.



Safety Facts for the Road

- ◆ Drowsy driving causes more than 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths.
- ◆ Crashes caused by drowsy driving are often serious crashes and occur most often on high-speed rural highways when the driver is alone.
- ◆ Drowsy driving can happen to anyone. A recent National Sleep Foundation study revealed that one half (51%) of adults have driven while drowsy and 17% report having fallen asleep while driving within the past year.

Drive Focused. Stay Safe. Avoid Aggressive Driving.

- ◆ Be aware of your behavior and the behavior of others on the road during the late night, early morning and mid-afternoon hours when drowsy driving crashes are most likely to occur. Plan a rest stop during these hours.
- ◆ Get a full night of rest before driving. If you become tired while driving, stop. A short nap (15 to 45 minutes) and consuming caffeine can help temporarily.
- ◆ Stop at regular intervals when driving long distances. Get out of the car every 2 hours to stretch and walk briskly.
- ◆ Set a realistic goal for the number of miles you can safely drive each day.
- ◆ Avoid taking medications that cause drowsiness.

Do you know when you're driving drowsy?

Some warning signs of fatigue:

- ◆ You can't remember the last few miles driven.
- ◆ You hit a rumble strip or drift from your lane.
- ◆ Your thoughts are wandering and disconnected.
- ◆ You yawn repeatedly.
- ◆ You have difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open.
- ◆ You tailgate or miss traffic signs.
- ◆ You have trouble keeping your head up.
- ◆ You keep pulling your vehicle back into the lane.

If you're tired and are in danger of falling asleep, then you cannot predict when a "mini" sleep may occur. A driver cannot react to road dangers when tired. Getting enough sleep will not only help you feel better, it can save your life.