**TOOLBOX TALK - Fatigue on the Roadways**

## ****Fatigue on the Roadways Safety Talk****

It is no secret that our roadways can be a dangerous place. Year after year, vehicular accidents are responsible for a countless number of injuries and fatalities. Just over 35,000 people lost their lives on U.S. roadways in 2015 according to the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**. They also estimate that 2.44 million people were injured in crashes in 2015. One common **unsafe act** that can lead to accidents on our roadways is driving while fatigued.

### **Driving While Fatigued**

[](https://www.safetytalkideas.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Fatigue-Safety.jpg)We have all been there- our eyes get heavy, we begin to close them, and then our head suddenly jerks up after hitting the rumble strips on the side of the road. When this occurs, it will wake an individual up, but only for a short period. This is an unsafe act that is quite common on our roadways. In fact, the **CDC states on their website**that an estimated 1 in 25 adult drivers (aged 18 years or older) report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days. While there is a lot of research available on fatigued driving it is difficult to accurately estimate the number of crashes caused by it. The NHTSA estimates that it was responsible for 846 deaths in 2014.

Fatigued driving can be caused by any number of factors. The most common cause of fatigued driving is lack of sleep. It can also be caused or made worse by untreated sleep disorders, medications, drinking alcohol, or shift work.

### **How to Avoid Being Fatigued While Driving**

* Get plenty of rest. It is recommended to get a minimum of seven hours of **sleep** a night.
* If your work schedule is too demanding or the hours you are working are making you feel fatigued every single day, talk with a supervisor. Sometimes responsibilities or schedules can be altered to improve productivity and safety.
* It is important to understand the side effects of medication before using it at work or while driving.
* Take care of your health. Addressing other health issues can greatly improve how you feel both at home and at work.
* Eat a better diet. Food to humans is as gasoline is to a car– if you put dirty gas in your car it will not run well. Same goes with your body!
* For short periods of less intense fatigue, use caffeinated beverages to help you wake up.
* Pull over somewhere safe and take a short nap if you find yourself tired behind the wheel.

### **Summary**

Driving is one of the more hazardous tasks we complete often. When you pair it with unsafe acts such as driving while fatigued, you not only put yourself at risk, but you also put everyone around you at risk. Be proactive in preventing fatigue and drowsiness. When it is affecting you while driving, pull over and get rest before continuing on.