

Driver Fatigue

A fatigued driver is a dangerous driver. Each year, thousands of accidents occur as a result of a driver losing focus from being tired or falling asleep behind the wheel. Statistics indicate most accidents occur between 2 and 6 a.m. Unfortunately, drivers often do not recognize losing focus on the road or that they are tired. Common symptoms of driver fatigue include swerving while driving, heavy eyelids, yawning, varying speeds when there is no change in speed limit, and even "seeing things" that are actually not there on the road. Below are several tips you can follow to avoid causing a tragic accident while driving your vehicle:

- Do not be afraid to pull over in a rest area, truck stop, or a public parking lot to rest. Avoid resting more than 30 minutes, as long periods of rest can make you feel groggy. If you feel like you need more sleep, check into a motel or hotel and get a normal night rest.
- If you are taking a long trip, plan ahead for stops at hotels or motels. Give yourself enough time to rest at these stops. If driving with others on a long trip, take turns driving and get some rest during the time you are not driving.
- Taking a break and stopping for food at a sit-down restaurant can be beneficial, but avoid eating a lot of heavy foods if you're driving long distances. Eating heavy foods can cause fatigue.
- Get a good night's rest before driving. This is especially important if you are taking any long trips. Driving without adequate sleep is dangerous.
- Take breaks frequently from driving. It is recommended that drivers rest at least once every two hours of driving.
- If you are taking any medicine, be aware of the side effects. Many medicines often come with warnings of drowsiness and fatigue. Consumers of these medicines should not be driving after consumption.
- Avoid alcohol consumption if you plan on driving. Not only does alcohol impair your judgment, it leads to drowsiness.
- Keep the interior of the automobile cool and well ventilated. Opening the windows is a good way to help keep the driver focused. Music is also a great way to keep a driver from getting tired. Avoid playing light music.
- Driving at night is much more hazardous than driving in the day. If you plan on driving a long distance, start the journey early in the morning.

Don't be one of the thousands of Americans each year involved in an accident caused by driver fatigue. While driving, avoid being in a rush to reach your final destination. It is much more important to focus on the safety of passengers in the vehicle, mainly children. Passengers can be beneficial to drivers by chatting with them while driving. If you find yourself staring at the white line for too long while driving, don't be afraid to pull over. Using the tips provided can and will drastically decrease the chances of the driver becoming fatigued.