

Tired Driving

Falling asleep at the wheel is a serious concern on our roads. Research has found 20% of fatal collisions in Canada involve driver fatigue. Drivers who sleep for less than five hours per night have a crash risk comparable to someone driving impaired.

Fatigue

Causes

Inadequate Sleep - Most people need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

Environment - Warm or over-comfortable vehicle interior and vehicle vibrations can contribute to fatigue.

Working or Driving at Night - Most people are hard-wired to be awake during the day and asleep at night. It may take time to adjust your sleep cycle to another setting.

Medication - Some medications contain caffeine or other stimulants making it difficult to sleep, while others can make you feel drowsy.

Stress - Stressful driving situations or stress from home or work can leave drivers feeling frustrated and exhausted.

Lifestyle Choices - Good health and healthy lifestyle choices are a big part of avoiding fatigue.



Symptoms

- Feeling sleepy/drowsy
- Sore, heavy/droopy eyes
- Decreased ability to focus
- Reduced awareness of others
- Blinking/closing eyes for long periods
- Slow response time and decision-making
- Stiff/sore muscles

Results

- Driving too slow/too fast
- Missing turns/exits
- Drifting out of the lane
- Falling asleep at the wheel
- Taking more risks
- Reacting more emotionally/aggressively to situations

Reduce Fatigue

- Prioritize getting plenty of sleep (at least 7 hours) daily
- Keep the temperature on the cooler side; a warm vehicle makes it easier to fall asleep
- Pull over if needed, a short nap could save your life or someone else on the road
- Travel during the times when you are normally awake
- Keep your eyes moving about every 2 seconds
- Take a break about every 2 hours
- Keep hydrated and avoid eating a heavy meal prior to driving
- Travel with an alert passenger and take turns driving
- Avoid medications that cause drowsiness or other impairments
- Plan ahead - don't take a long drive when you're already tired from work