

Every week around 200 road deaths and serious injuries involve someone using the road for work purposes. It is estimated that driver fatigue may be a factor in up to 20% of all road accidents and up to a quarter of fatal and serious accidents. Please read the tips within this leaflet that will help you avoid the dangers of fatigue to ensure you have a safe journey.

‘FOR THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE, THE MOST DANGEROUS THING THEY DO WHILE AT WORK IS DRIVE ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY’

(ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS)

Factors that can contribute to increased fatigue¹:

Work factors

- Time of day and impact of body clock
- Shift work and roster design
- Length of working day (including travel time, eg long journeys home after long working hours)
- Inadequate rest breaks
- Previous hours and days worked (eg reduced opportunity for sleep and recovery)
- Nature of task and working conditions (eg long journeys on monotonous roads, poor weather and traffic conditions)
- Company culture (eg job demands, time pressure)
- Vehicle engineering and ergonomic design

Non-work factors

- Individual differences (eg ‘morning types’, ‘evening types’, age)
- Sleep loss/poor quality sleep (eg domestic and family circumstances, social life and second jobs)
- Sleep disorders (eg Obstructive Sleep Apnoea) and health conditions
- Medication that can cause drowsiness (be aware that some medication, particularly over-the-counter drugs, may not carry clear warnings about causing drowsiness)
- Poor driver fatigue awareness and management



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DRIVER

Before you set off

- Manage your sleep and alertness to ensure fitness to drive. Do not start a long trip if you are already tired.
- Avoid driving between 2am–6am, when fatigue is more of a problem, unless absolutely essential. Be aware that people are also generally more sleepy between 2pm–4pm – if you must drive at these times, make sure you are adequately rested.
- Make sure you do not have a sleep disorder or other medical condition that could affect your ability to drive safely.
- If any medication you are taking makes you drowsy, inform your employer and ensure you are not fatigued when you are driving.
- Check company provisions for overnight accommodation and alternative transport.
- Plan time for a 15 minute break every two hours of driving.
- Check for delays (www.transportdirect.info) and plan alternative routes before you set off.
- Allow time for unexpected delays, peak traffic hours and poor weather.
- Plan time for overnight rest stops if necessary.

A REST BREAK ALONE WILL NOT OVERCOME THE NEED FOR SLEEP. PROPER SLEEP IS THE ONLY REAL CURE FOR SLEEPINESS.

During a journey

- Take regular breaks - the Government advice recommends you take a break at least every two hours for at least 15 minutes **or sooner if you feel tired**. Ensure you use your breaks to relax, not to carry out other work.
- Share the driving if possible.
- Stay hydrated and eat sensibly throughout the journey.
- Keep the vehicle well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature.
- Poor concentration, repeated yawning, heavy eyelids, head drooping, restlessness, boredom, lane drifting, poor speed or steering control, slower reactions – these are symptoms of a microsleep. You need to stop driving long before you reach the point of being at risk of falling asleep at the wheel.
- If you start to feel sleepy get off the road as soon as possible and find somewhere safe to stop (not on the hard shoulder).
- The ideal activity when fatigue is experienced is a proper sleep. But drinking two cups of strong coffee, or a high caffeine drink, followed by a nap no longer than 20 minutes is an effective **emergency** countermeasure to fatigue that will help get you to a safe place where you can get proper sleep. Caffeine takes about 20 minutes to take effect. This is time for a short nap. You should allow time to get over the groggy sensation on waking up from a nap. A nap of no more than 20 minutes will minimise this.
- If you are still tired, do not drive on.
- Fatigue will return if you do not stop driving in a fairly short period of time.
- Do not rely on opening the window, turning up air conditioning, listening to radio or music, or conversation to keep you awake – these are **not** effective countermeasures to fatigue.
- Stay calm and relaxed while driving.

The law

If you kill someone when tired behind the wheel, you may be charged with causing death by dangerous driving, which has a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

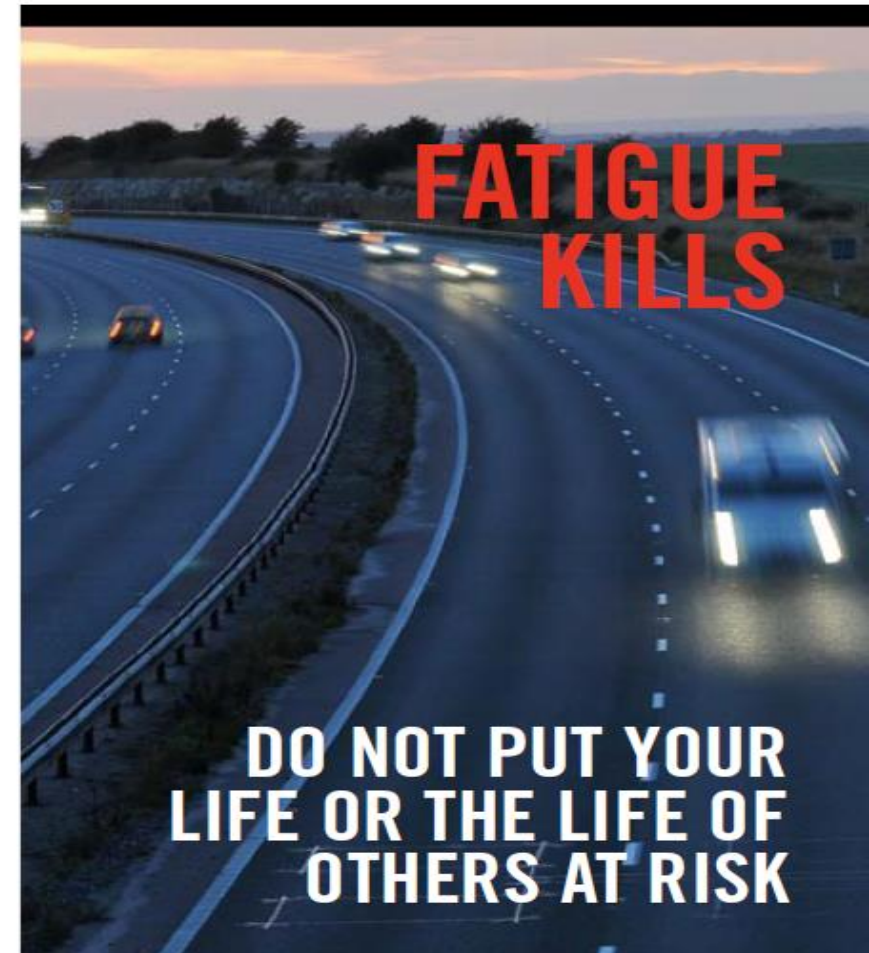
RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR EMPLOYER

- Your employer has a duty of care to ensure that you are fully alert when driving as part of your work. This means ensuring that your schedules are well planned and sensibly routed, with adequate time for rest breaks. They should also check if drivers take medicinal drugs that can affect alertness, and provide information on symptoms of sleep disorders.
- They must comply with regulations on daily and weekly driving hours. However, following these regulations is not enough to prevent driver fatigue.
- Make provision for alternative transport, overnight accommodation for potentially fatigued drivers, or a well-rested relief driver where necessary.
- Ensure that you can easily and without judgement report fatigue issues.
- Provide you with relevant driver fatigue management information.
- Company managers can be prosecuted under health and safety or general criminal law for failing to exercise their 'duty of care'.

In the event of an emergency or need to report a fatigue-related issue, contact:

Resourcing Solutions Ltd
24 hour On call
07786 265531

(Write in company details in the above box)



**FATIGUE
KILLS**

**DO NOT PUT YOUR
LIFE OR THE LIFE OF
OTHERS AT RISK**

**DO NOT DRIVE IF YOU ARE SLEEPY -
YOU MAY NEVER ARRIVE AT YOUR DESTINATION, OR FACE OTHER CONSEQUENCES**