

TIP SHEET

A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the trucking industry



Drowsy Driving is Dangerous Driving



Being well-rested is the best way to prevent drowsiness. Check out these [quick sleep tips for truck drivers](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The last thing a truck driver needs is to doze off while at the wheel. Drowsy driving creates a dangerous collision course with injury and death. When driving at 60 miles per hour, each second a rig covers the length of a basketball court—that's nearly 100 feet. Drowsiness affects a driver much like alcohol and drugs. It slows overall reaction time because of reduced hand-eye coordination, vision, judgement and situational awareness. Nodding off for just a second or two can end in a deadly crash.

The good news is that drowsy driving is entirely preventable. When you feel sleepy it's time find a rest area or not get in the truck in the first place.

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) reports that drowsy driving crashes:

- Often occur between midnight and 6 a.m., or in the late afternoon—when our internal clock takes a natural dip in the rhythm that regulates sleep;
- Often happen on long stretches of roadway, such as rural roads and major highways, where the monotony can lull a drowsy driver to sleep.

Signs you're following a drowsy driver include:

- Distracted driving.
- Following too closely.
- Lack of braking.
- Going over the center line.
- Failure to yield right-of-way to other vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists.
- Disregarding signals (e.g., stop signs, red lights, yield signs, turn signals, etc.).



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TIPS TO LIVE BY

When you're on the road

- **Take a break:** About every two hours or 100 miles.
- **Take a nap:** Just 20 minutes can help you stay alert.
- **Avoid tricks:** Smoking, caffeinated drinks, rolling down the window, turning up the radio—all these are just “tricks” that really don't work in the long run.
- **If you MUST:** If you must drive during peak sleepy periods, stay alert for drowsiness signs, such as crossing center lines or hitting the rumble strip, especially when alone.

Before you go

- **Get good sleep:** You need about seven to eight hours before getting behind the wheel.
- **Read the labels:** Avoid medications that cause drowsiness as a side effect.
- **Know the signs:** These are frequent yawning, heavy eyes, and blurred vision. If you're drowsy, often, it may signal a serious health condition, like sleep apnea or heart disease.
- **Your good health matters:** No alcohol before driving, and follow a healthy lifestyle.
- **The statistics don't lie:** Avoid driving at peak sleepiness periods, from midnight – 6 a.m. and late afternoon.

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[KeepTruckingSafe.org](#)

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