

Preventing driver fatigue

Even the best drivers get fatigued. It's important that drivers take preventative measures to reduce the frequency/severity of preventable crashes. About 5 – 10 per cent of all North American accidents involving heavy trucks are fatigue-related, and 30 – 40 per cent of heavy truck fatalities are due to operator fatigue.

"Someone who has not slept for 18 hours is as impaired as someone with a .05 blood alcohol level (for which, in most provinces, police can take away your driver's license for 12 to 24 hours)."

*From Canada Safety Council website www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/fatigue-06.html.



What is fatigue?

Fatigue is weariness or exhaustion caused by work, exertion, or stress. Fatigue causes drowsiness and a loss of alertness so it impairs a driver's ability to perform tasks that require attention.

Effects of fatigue

- Reduced alertness. People aren't as capable of responding to the demands of their jobs.
- Reduced concentration. People have more trouble making decisions.
- Impaired memory. People exhibit shorter attention spans.
- Irritability. People are depressed and cranky.
- Weaker task performance. People do not respond as quickly or accurately to tasks.

Hours of service

- As a carrier, you're responsible for ensuring drivers obey the hours of service.
- Ensure drivers don't drive longer than permitted by the law.
- Ensure drivers have proper rest periods.
- Keep accurate records that show drivers are working within the legal limits.
- Ensure drivers operating in other jurisdictions know the federal hours of service regulations.

Statement of Limitation

The information in this publication is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to provide legal or professional advice. We have used plain language to summarize some of the terms of the policy that is the topic of the publication or help readers understand some of the laws affecting the topic of this publication at the date it was written. You should follow the more detailed wording and requirements of current applicable statutes and regulations or policy, even if they contradict the wording and requirements set out in this publication.

The law

- The Motor Vehicle Act Regulations Division 37 (Part 3) set minimum amount of off-duty time for drivers
 - A driver must take 10 hours off in a day; eight of which must be consecutive
 - A driver must take eight hours off between work shifts
 - Off-duty time other than the eight consecutive hours may be taken in increments no shorter than 30 minutes each; and all drivers must take 24 consecutive off-duty hours every 14 days
 - A driver must operate under one of the two cycles under the Hours of Service Regulations: Cycle 1 – 70 hours on duty over seven consecutive days or 120 hours on duty over a period of 14 consecutive days
 - For hours of service training visit <http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/cvse/nsc-Course>

Best Practices

- Provide training on the perils of driver fatigue.
- Discuss the impacts to innocent people when preventable crashes happen.
- Premium impacts to your fleet: Understand potential downtime if specialized equipment is not available.
- Manage driver schedules to minimize risk.
- Reiterate the laws and company policy.
- It's better to deliver a load late than have a crash.
- Ensure all drivers understand the signs of fatigue.
- Promote healthy eating to maximize energy levels.
- Encourage drivers to consult their family physician if experiencing sleep problems.
- When drivers are travelling through various time zones, consider consulting a sleep expert.
- Establish an anonymous employee reporting system. Benefits include:
 - allows fellow employees to report drivers they're concerned about
 - reduces cost to company
 - reporting early can save lives
 - Respects privacy of the complainant.

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