

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS END INCREASES DROWSY DRIVING RISK

NEW YORK, Oct. 29, 2009 -- When clocks go back an hour Saturday night, our roads and highways may become more dangerous as people drive drowsy, according to The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF), a non-profit group that offers free driver safety programs.

"Drowsy driving is a significant factor in traffic crashes. The risk increases as daylight savings time ends and we spend more time driving at night," says David Reich of NRSF. **"Drowsy driving is as dangerous as drunk driving,"** he notes.

Studies show 60 percent of U.S. motorists have driven while fatigued and nearly 37 percent admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel.

Drowsy driving is especially prevalent among teens, who tend to keep late hours and think they can function on minimal sleep. Teens actually require more sleep than adults.

NRSF urges drivers to be alert to signs of drowsiness while driving which can be:

- ⇒ Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, rubbing eyes**
- ⇒ Daydreaming or not remembering the last few miles driven**
- ⇒ Head snaps, yawning**
- ⇒ Drifting out of your lane, tailgating or hitting rumble strips**

If you experience any of these warning signs, pull over safely and take a break. Have a cup of coffee or a caffeinated snack or take a 20-minute nap. Allow 30 minutes for caffeine to enter your bloodstream. Never drink alcohol before driving and know if any medications you take might induce drowsiness.

The National Road Safety Foundation, with National Organizations for Youth Safety, is sponsoring a competition for young people ages 13 - 22, inviting ideas for public service announcements that address drowsy driving or other safety issues including speeding, seat belt usage, and driving while drunk or distracted. The individual will receive \$1,000 and a trip to New York to see their concept professionally produced into a public service announcement that will air on TV nationwide.

Entry information is at www.drivetolife.com. Deadline is November 21st, 2009.

Over the last 45 years, The National Road Safety Foundation has produced films and teaching materials that have been used to train millions of young drivers about the dangers of drinking and driving, speeding, aggressive driving and drowsy driving. To download or receive a free copy of the Foundation's program on drowsy driving, and other free driver education programs, visit the NRSF website at www.nrsf.org.

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