



NRSF NEWS

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A WAKE-UP CALL TO DROWSY DRIVERS AS DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS

NEW YORK, Nov. 4, 2010 -- When clocks go back an hour early Sunday morning, roads and highways may become more dangerous as people are prone to drive drowsy, says The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc. (NRSF).

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

Studies show 60 percent of U.S. motorists have driven while fatigued and nearly 37 percent admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel. Sleepiness can impair drivers by causing slower reaction times, vision impairment, lapses in judgment and delays in processing information. In fact, studies show that being awake for more than 20 hours results in an impairment equal to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08%, the legal limit in all states. It is also possible to fall into a 3-4 second micro-sleep without realizing it and at highway speeds a car can travel the length of a football field in that time. Dozing for even a few seconds can send a car out of its lane into oncoming traffic or off the road and into a tree.

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.

A FEW TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Get a good night's sleep before you hit the road. You'll want to be alert for the drive, so be sure to get adequate sleep (seven to nine hours) the night before you go.
- Don't be too rushed to arrive at your destination. Many drivers try to maximize the holiday weekend by driving at night or without stopping for breaks. It's better to allow the time to drive alert and arrive alive.
- Use the buddy system. Just as you should not swim alone, avoid driving alone for long distances. A buddy who remains awake for the journey can take a turn behind the wheel and help identify the warning signs of fatigue.
- Never drink alcohol before driving and be aware of any medications you take that might induce drowsiness.
- Avoid driving at times when you would normally be asleep.

WARNING SIGNS OF A DROWSY DRIVER

- 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
- Inability to clearly remember the last few miles driven
- Missing exits or traffic signs
- Feeling restless, irritable, or aggressive

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE ABOVE SIGNS

- Pull over safely and have a cup of coffee or a caffeinated snack or take a 20-minute nap. Allow 30 minutes for caffeine to enter your bloodstream.
- Take a break every 100 miles or 2 hours. Do something to refresh yourself like getting a snack or switch drivers.

For more than 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 and aggressive driving. To download or receive a free copy of the Foundation's program on drowsy driving, "Almost Home," and other free driver safety programs, [click here](#)