

ALMOST HOME

Maggie's Law



Rusty's Regret



Kevin's Dad

Tom and Jane





*“I was 90 seconds from home.
Regret is a terrible thing. I know,
I live with it every day.”*

RUSTY’S REGRET

- Crash Profile:** Rusty drove off the road on his way home after prom.
- Crash Dynamics:** Rusty’s car crossed the center line, hit an embankment and flipped over. Rusty’s was a classic, single-car, and single occupant, fall asleep crash, in which the driver took no corrective measures to brake, slow down or avoid collision. Rusty was not wearing his seat belt. He was ejected from his car.
- Penalties:** He suffered severe spinal cord injuries and is paraplegic.
- Pre-Segment Quiz:**
1. Who had 8 hours of sleep last night? 7? 6? 5? Less?
 2. What are the characteristics of an impaired driver?
 3. What are ways a driver becomes impaired?
 4. What are the warning signs of drowsiness?
- Teaching Points:** Drowsiness equals impairment. Learn personal warning signs and what to do. How much sleep do you need?
- Discussion:** What were the warning signs that Rusty missed?
- Warning Signs:** Rusty fell asleep at his girlfriend’s house. He was dozing off and on the whole night before

Intervention Points:



Why do people ignore warning signs? In half of all drowsy driving crashes, the driver had no perceptible warning of danger. Rusty assumed he could make it home, based on prior experience, and because he didn't heed warning signs.

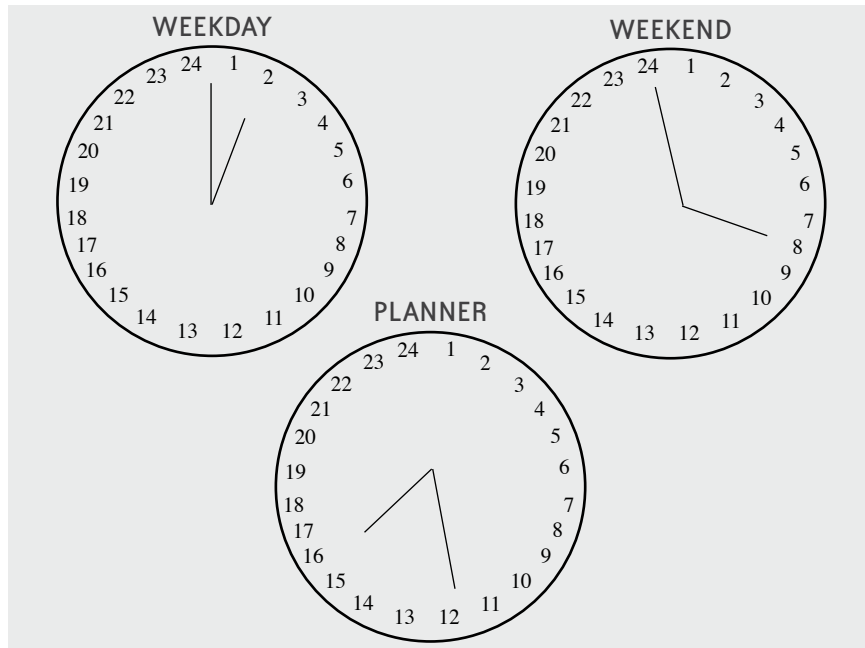
Teens need at least 8 hours of sleep each night. People fall asleep without warning. Most people ignore warning signs, believing they can overcome their brain's need for rest.

Now that you've seen what happened to Rusty, do you consider that he was an impaired driver?

50% of all drivers don't know they've fallen asleep. One night without sleep equals a BAC of .10.

Activities: Sleep clocks:

- 1. Weekday, 2. Weekend, 3. Sleep Planner



"I didn't want to wake her up. If I'd known then what I know now, it simply wouldn't have happened."

TOM AND JANE

Crash Profile:

Tom fell asleep at the wheel while returning home with his wife, Jane, from a long day. Just as he was about to wake her up, he entered a stage-four micro-sleep.

Crash Dynamics:

Tom fell asleep during his mid-afternoon "slump." The road was straight, monotonous. The weather was grey, drizzly. His passenger asleep.

Penalties:

Tom's wife died in the crash and Tom lives with the guilt and regret.

Pre-segment quiz:

How is your brain like a gas tank?

Teaching Points:

Circadian rhythm, sleep debt and physical fatigue all affect risk of drowsiness. You can crash during a micro-sleep. Learn daily down-times. Know proper in-car counter measures to keep you going.

Discussion:

What ineffective interventions did Tom use?

He turned on the radio, opened the window. He didn't wake his passenger.

Research shows that fresh air and loud noise do not keep drivers awake. Caffeinated drinks, 20-minute naps, briefly resting and stretching all provide only short-term respite. Passengers keep you engaged and monitor your performance. However, sleep and only sleep will reduce drowsiness.

Warning Signs:

50% of all drivers who had fall-asleep crashes had no warning signs.



The brain is an opportunistic sleeper. When tired, it seizes sleep in 1, 2, and 3-second intervals, which are called micro-sleeps. During a micro-sleep the brain shuts down entirely. The driver is completely unaware.

Tom assumed he wasn't impaired because he had taken no medication, no alcohol and wasn't speeding. He knew he was sleepy, but didn't associate fatigue with impairment of his driving skills.

Intervention Points:

What else could Tom have done?



1. He could have pulled over and slept for 20 minutes, without waking Jane.
2. Tom knew he was tired. He could have delayed his trip, slept first, eaten and refreshed both himself and his wife.
3. He could have asked her to stay awake to monitor his performance.
4. Know the limitations of coffee and caffeine-lade foods and drinks. A cup of Coffee takes 20 minutes to kick in and doesn't help habitual coffee drinkers. Learn your daily tired times and restrict activities then.
5. You must act as soon as you're getting sleepy. Stop. Take a nap. Or, don't go.

Activities:

Chart personal circadian rhythm, lowest function time.

12:00am _____ 3:00am _____ 6:00am _____ 9:00am _____

12:00pm _____ 3:00pm _____ 6:00pm _____ 9:00pm _____



“Her mistake was in not recognizing that she was tired and she was impaired.”

KEVIN'S DAD

Crash Profile:

Kevin was riding his bicycle along the side of the road during the middle of a sunny afternoon. Kevin was hit by a shift worker had slept only 3-4 hours in the prior 40.

Crash Dynamics:

She fell asleep at the wheel and, unaware that she had hit anything, left the scene. Kevin was thrown 20 feet, suffered massive brain injuries, and was removed from life support two days later.

Penalties:

The driver was charged with 3 misdemeanor counts. By law, her negligence wasn't considered as serious as if she had been drinking. She received 6-months work-release jail time and paid a \$1,000 fine. Kevin's father and mother happened upon the scene.

Pre-Segment Quiz:

Is drinking-induced impairment a more serious crime than fatigue-related impairment? Which type of impairment is harder to measure? Are the results any different for others on the road?

Teaching Points:

Shift workers need to accommodate their off-beat circadian rhythm. Tired drivers don't have the ability to think clearly. Everyone, including pedestrians and cyclists, underestimates the risk probability of drowsiness.

Discussion:

Who's at fault in this crash?

Warning Signs:

What was the driver’s first negligence?



She had not slept or eaten in several hours. The prototypical drowsy driver crash: she made no attempt to avoid Kevin. She didn’t even know she hit him. She was sound asleep at the time of impact. Most likely, the impact woke her up. Her sleepiness was so extreme; she didn’t know she had killed someone.

What was the driver’s second negligence?

She left the scene of the crime. She made no attempt to investigate why she stopped (what woke her up). Had she found Kevin, she might have been able to help him.

Intervention Points:

What is your legal responsibility at a crash?



The driver’s first legal responsibility is to avoid a collision in the first place. That means reducing personal impairment and risk of having one.

Secondly, the driver must investigate and remain at any crash scene, until police arrive.

The windshield must have cracked under impact. The driver saw the damage, and should have acknowledged the problem.

Activities:

Create a pre-drive checklist. List and rank risk factors as in a BAC chart.

“She’s going to have to live with that for the rest of her life.”



“I guess that ‘not guilty’ doesn’t mean innocent.”

MAGGIE’S LAW

Crash Profile:

Maggie was 20 years old, in college, hoping to become a social worker. She was driving to work when she was killed in a head-on collision.

Crash Dynamics:

The driver swerved across a NJ State Highway and slammed head-on into Maggie’s car. The driver had been awake for 30 hours, gambling in the casinos. He had traces of crack cocaine in his blood.

Penalties:

The driver got off with a \$200 fine. Maggie died instantly.

Pre-Segment Quiz:

Should people be held accountable for falling asleep at the wheel?

Teaching Points:

How should the law treat sleep-impaired drivers? Is the public adequately informed? What can we do to minimize personal and public risk?

Discussion:

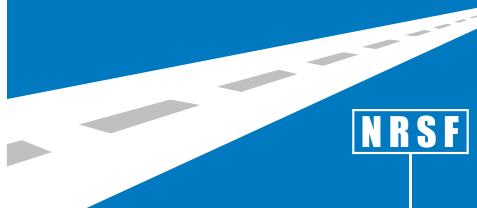
What are the commonalities between sleep and alcohol-impairment?

Legally and socially, are sleep-impaired drivers treated the same as alcohol-impaired drivers? Do they share the same responsibilities?

Warning Signs:

Alcohol is easier to measure than sleep as a causal factor in crashes. In alcohol-related crashes, we can measure the driver’s blood

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