

DRAFT



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WITH END OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME, THE RISK OF DROWSY DRIVING INCREASES

The National Road Safety Foundation offers tips to stay awake at the wheel

NEW YORK, Nov. 2, 2021 -- As we move our clocks back an hour this weekend with the end of daylight savings, our streets and highways become more dangerous. There is an increased risk of drowsy driving as we do more driving in darkness.

“Fatigue is a factor in more than 328,000 crashes every year,” said Michelle Anderson of the National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit group that produces free driver safety materials used in schools and by parents nationwide. “Drowsiness results in about 6,400 traffic fatalities every year. That’s no small thing.”

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety estimates that fatigue-related crashes also result in 109,000 injuries and \$109 billion in financial losses each year.

Studies show more than 60 percent of U.S. motorists have driven while fatigued, and nearly 37 percent admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel. At highway speeds, a driver who dozes for only four or five seconds can travel more than the length of a football field, crossing 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. Ironically, experts say, teens require more sleep than adults.

Safety experts remind drivers to never drink alcohol before driving and to check any medications they take to see if they might induce drowsiness.

The National Road Safety Foundation urges drivers to be alert to these signs of drowsiness while driving:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, rubbing eyes
- Daydreaming or not remembering the last few miles driven
- Head snaps and 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. Some common remedies like blasting the radio or opening the car windows are not effective at avoiding drowsiness while driving.

"Fatigue can force you into 'micro-sleeps' lasting several seconds, which can have devastating results if you're driving," said Anderson. "We've seen too many examples of people trying to make it those last few miles, only to crash a block from home. Don't try to tough it out."

NRSF has free programs on drowsy driving, including "Almost Home," a compelling 18-minute video, as well as a drowsiness self-assessment quiz and a personal sleep log. All can be downloaded at www.nrsf.org/programs/drowsy-driving

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded nearly 60 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and other traffic safety issues. It distributes its programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities, partnering nationally with leading youth advocacy groups SADD and FCCLA and regionally with major auto shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington D.C.

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