

Fatigued Driving is Impaired Driving

According to the American Sleep Foundation, about half of U.S. adult drivers admit to consistently getting behind the wheel while feeling drowsy or fatigued. About 20% admit to falling asleep behind the wheel at some point in the past year – with more than 40% admitting this has happened at least once in their driving careers.

These startling figures show how prevalent fatigued driving is. What drivers may not realize is how much fatigued driving puts themselves – and others – at risk. In fact, an estimated 6,000 fatal crashes each year may be caused by fatigued drivers.



Symptoms of Driver Fatigue

It is very difficult for drivers to assess their own level of fatigue. Nevertheless, there are some warning signs to look out for, including:

- Trouble focusing or narrowing of attention
- Head nodding, or inability to keep the eyes open
- Not remembering the last few minutes
- Poor judgement, slower reaction time
- “Zoning out”
- Daydreaming and wandering thoughts
- Constant yawning or rubbing your eyes
- Drifting in the lane

Keep in mind that if you are experiencing any of these symptoms of driver fatigue, it is very likely that your driving performance is already impaired. Stop and take a break before it is too late.

Interventions of Fatigued Driving

Fatigued driving affects everyone. Ways to reduce fatigued driving include:

- Getting more sleep: According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine adults should get seven or more hours of sleep per night
- Have someone else drive that isn't fatigued
- Pull over and take a nap

Numerous studies have found that sleep deprivation can affect driving as much as (and sometimes more than) alcohol. Researchers have found that driving after 17 to 18 hours of being awake is as harmful as driving with a blood alcohol level of .05%. Awareness is key to solving this issue for everyone. Stay safe, recognize these symptoms. None of us would let a friend or family member drive drunk, don't let them drive fatigued.