

Drowsy Driving Prevention Fact Sheet

Did you know that more than half of American adult drivers have admitted to driving drowsy, and almost one in five admit to having fallen asleep behind the wheel?

This document is a compilation of drowsy driving resources intended to help journalists and interested parties gather information. Please help the National Sleep Foundation in our mission to bring awareness to the very real dangers of drowsy driving. Together we can help Americans take back their sleep and make our roads safer.

Drowsy Driving Facts

Most people are aware of the dangers of drinking and driving but don't realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal. Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. It is estimated that some 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).

Key Statistics

- 36 percent of Americans have fallen asleep at the wheel while driving, according to the [2008 Sleep in America® Poll](#).
- 60 percent of Americans said that they have driven a vehicle while feeling drowsy, according to the [2005 Sleep in America® Poll](#).
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates [2.5 percent of fatal crashes and 2 percent of injury crashes](#) involve drowsy driving – this is thought to be an underestimation.
- Cognitive impairment after approximately 18 hours awake is similar to that of someone with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.05 percent.
- Cognitive impairment after [24 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content \(BAC\) of 0.10 percent, which is](#) higher than the legal limit in the U.S.

Drowsy Driving Warning Signs

- Yawning, rubbing your eyes or blinking frequently
- Trouble focusing, keeping your eyes open or your head up
- Difficulty remembering the past few miles driven
- Drifting from your lane or hitting the rumble strip
- Slower reaction time, poor judgment

Drowsy Driving Prevention Tips

- Get a good night's sleep
- Plan to drive long trips with a friend or companion
- Schedule regular stops
- Avoid alcohol and medications
- Consult your physician
- Take a nap; if you feel fatigued, find a safe place to pull over and take a 15-20 minute nap

Resources

- National Sleep Foundation [2007 State of the States Drowsy Driving Report](#)
- National Sleep Foundation [Drowsy Driving Prevention Toolkit](#)
- National Conference of State Legislators: [Current Drowsy Driving Regulations](#) (updated Feb. 2014)
- National Sleep Foundation [White Paper on Drowsy Driving](#)
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: [The Prevalence and Impact of Drowsy Driving](#)

About the National Sleep Foundation

Alerting the public, healthcare providers and policymakers to the significance of adequate sleep is central to the mission of the National Sleep Foundation (NSF). The NSF is dedicated to improving Americans' health and quality of life by promoting the benefits of sleep. This means helping the public better understand the importance of sleep and good sleep habits.

The NSF is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Mission

The NSF mission is to improve health and wellbeing through sleep education and advocacy. As the global voice for sleep health, the organization's priority goals are to ensure that:

- Sleep is used as a vital sign of health by medical professionals and the public;
- The biological sleep/wake process is common knowledge;
- Workplaces, schools, homes and transportation infrastructures are designed to be sleep-friendly; and
- Sleep science is rapidly incorporated into products and services.

Related Education

The NSF's websites, www.sleepfoundation.org, and drowsydriving.org provide a wealth of facts and information on a variety of topics.

Related Programs

- Far-reaching public education and awareness initiatives such as Sleep Awareness Week® and Drowsy Driving Prevention Week®.
- Government relations and advocacy efforts to address legislative and regulatory issues related to sleep, alertness and safety.

Need an Expert?

Please contact Anna Beaty to schedule an expert interview at nspfmedia@sleepfoundation.org or 720.726.5440.