Fatigue

LACK OF SLEEP IS NOT A BADGE OF HONOUR, BUT A LICENSE TO KILL

Driver fatigue contributes to ~20% of road crashes*. And 62% of fatigue crashes or near-misses occur within a 2-hour drive, often on everyday trips from home.

* Source: Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

Fatigue can be as dangerous as drinking.

Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving drunk/impaired.

Main causes of fatigue are sleep debt and driving during normal sleep times.

Contributing Factors

- Poor quality sleep
- Insufficient sleep
  < 7-9 hours of continuous sleep
- Time of day
  Especially 12-6 am and 2-4 pm
- Shift work
  Nights, rotating/irregular shifts
- Medical conditions
  Sleep apnoea, chronic fatigue
- Lifestyle
  Poor diet, low exercise
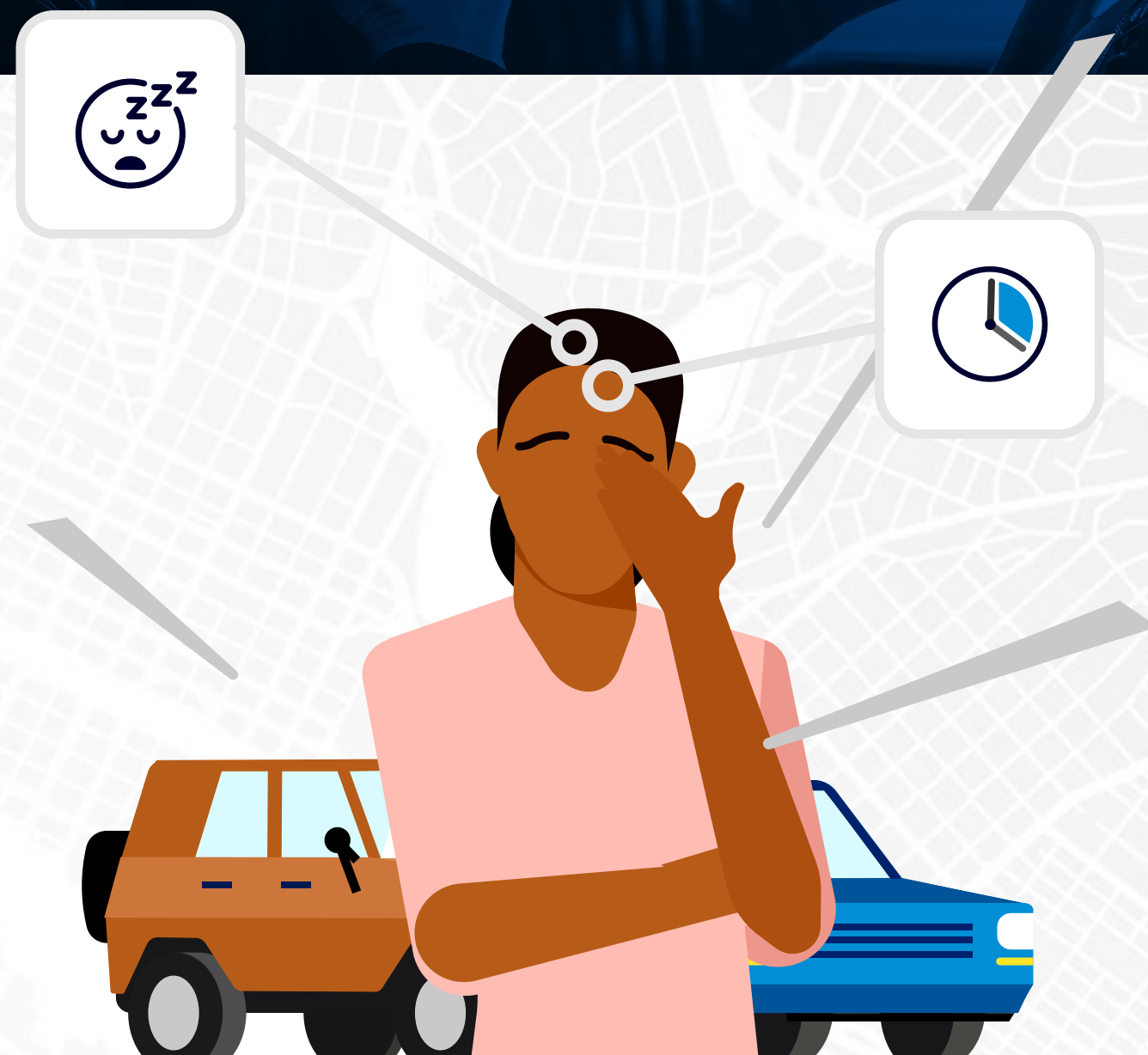
The Danger Signs

- Constant yawning/getting the 'nods'
- Drifting in the lane
- Sore or heavy eyes
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Delayed reactions
- Daydreaming
- Difficulty remembering the last few miles/kilometres driven
- Variations in driving speed
- Irritability

Worst Times to Drive

**Early morning 12-6 am**
When you would normally be sleeping

Afternoon lull 2-4 pm
When your 'biological clock' makes you feel sleepy

How much sleep do I need?

- Healthy adults should aim to get 7-9 hours of sleep per night.
- About one-half of adult drivers (about 100 million people) say they've driven a vehicle in the past year while feeling drowsy. Almost 32 million people have actually fallen asleep at the wheel.
- Young adults DO NOT need less sleep.

Source: National Sleep Foundation
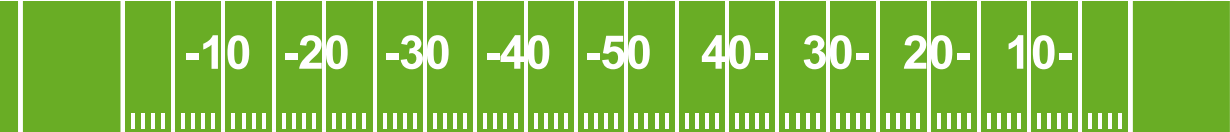
Beware of micro-sleep.

Some people may also experience micro-sleep – short, involuntary periods of inattention. In the 4 or 5 seconds a driver experiences micro-sleep, at highway speed, the vehicle will travel the length of a football field.

Source: National Safety Council

⚠ Warning

Sleep-related crashes tend to be more severe, resulting in death or serious injury, because the crashes tend to occur at high speeds, with the driver being unable to take any crash avoidance action, such as braking, before the collision.

Speeding + Distraction + Fatigue = **THE TRIPLE THREAT**

The only cure for fatigue is sleep.

The following are NOT reliable methods for helping you stay awake:

- Consuming coffee or energy drinks/bars
- Opening a window for fresh air
- Playing loud music or listening to podcasts
- Talking on phone
- Taking a short break

What to do if you start to feel tired while driving

If you start to feel tired, take a 'power nap' of at least 10 minutes, which can significantly lower the risk of a fatigue-related crash in the immediate short term. Do so only in a safe, legal place to park with doors and windows locked and valuables secured.

Avoiding Fatigue

Fatigue management requires you to balance the following four factors in your life: SLEEP, WORK, HEALTH, and what your BODY CLOCK is telling you.

- Make sure you regularly get enough sleep - a SLEEP factor.
- Plan your trips diligently - a WORK factor.
- Avoid travel between midnight and 6 am - a BODY CLOCK factor.
- Refrain from starting a big trip after a long day's work - a WORK factor.
- Take regular rest breaks to help avoid the onset of fatigue - a BODY CLOCK factor.
- Eat well-balanced meals at your normal mealtimes - a HEALTH factor.

FATIGUE

- **F** Frequent blinking and yawning are signs of tiredness.
- **A** Avoid driving during 'tired' hours.
- **T** Take regular breaks - 15 minutes for every 2 hours of driving.
- **I** Impairment through drugs, alcohol or prescription medicine will worsen fatigue.
- **G** Get enough sleep - 7-9 continuous hours each night.
- **U** Using coffee or energy drinks as a quick fix does not prevent fatigue.
- **E** Examine lifestyle factors which could be causing fatigue.