

KWORDS *from* KWORCC

FIRE SAFETY

October is National Fire Safety Month

There's some good news about fires in the workplace! Even though there are 70,000-80,000 workplace fires in the U.S. annually, only 15% result from a catastrophic failure of equipment. Meaning, 85% of fires are caused by factors related to human behavior and are totally preventable with the proper pro-active fire prevention plan in place.

Common Fire Hazards & Their Control

• **Heating Equipment** - Improperly installed, operated or maintained furnaces and other heating equipment can lead to a fire.

*Equipment should be installed and serviced annually by a licensed technician.

*Combustible material should never be kept in furnace rooms.

*Temporary heating units should not generally be used in public buildings.

• **Electrical** - Misused, damaged, improperly maintained or overloaded electrical equipment is a common cause of fire.

*Extension cords should only be used for temporary power to equipment in current use and should not left in place long-term.

*Cords should never be left coiled up while plugged in. Inductive heating can be caused resulting in insulation damage.

*Circuit breakers should be turned off and on every six months to ensure they are functioning properly.

• **Mechanical Friction** - Equipment that is not properly maintained or cleaned can lead to fires.

*Bearings on ventilation equipment and conveyors should be kept properly aligned and lubricated.

*Loaders and forklifts should be kept cleaned and free of combustible material.

• **Proximity Hazards** - Hazards outside of buildings can expose them to the risk of fire.

*Fuel tanks near buildings should be installed to current codes and protected from vehicle collisions by a barricade.

*Dumpsters should be at least 30 feet from buildings.

*Weeds/brush/grass should be kept mowed back at least 30 feet from building.

*Despite all the precautions, fires do happen so **be prepared**. Remember the **Fire Defense Triad**:*

1. Detection/Notification - discovering the fire and alerting the fire department.

2. Emergency Egress - well-marked and safe ways to leave the building.

3. Incipient Suppression - sprinkler systems, fire hoses and portable extinguishers.





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CLAIMS REPORTING

For assistance with on-the-job injuries, contact IMA at 1-800-333-8913. Questions on claims should be directed to Annette Duncan. All correspondence, bills or other documentation for your claims can be mailed to Annette's attention at: 250 North Water, PO Box 2992, Wichita, Kansas 67201.

TRUSTEES

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November is Drowsy Driving Prevention Month!

What is Drowsy Driving?

Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. Most people are aware of the dangers of drinking and driving but don't realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal. Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of crashing.

It's nearly impossible to determine with certainty the cause of a fatal crash where drowsy driving is suspected. However, there are a number of clues at a crash scene that tell investigators that the person fell asleep at the wheel. For example, drowsy driving accidents usually involve only one vehicle where the driver is alone and the injuries tend to be serious or fatal. Also, skid marks or evidence of other evasive maneuvers are usually absent from the drowsy driving crash scene.

Unlike alcohol-related crashes, no blood, breath or other objective test for sleepiness behind the wheel currently exists that investigators could give to a driver at the scene of a crash. This makes police training in identifying drowsiness as a crash factor very difficult.

Definitions of drowsy driving or driver fatigue rely on how the concept of "fatigue" is defined. Fatigue is a general term commonly used to describe the experience of being "sleepy," "tired," "drowsy" or "exhausted." While all of these terms have different meanings in research and clinical settings, they tend to be used interchangeably in the traffic safety and transportation fields.

There are many underlying causes of sleepiness, fatigue and drowsy driving. These include sleep loss from restriction or too little sleep, interruption or fragmented sleep, chronic sleep debt, circadian factors associated with driving patterns or work schedules, undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorders, time spent on a task; the use of sedating medications and the consumption of alcohol when already tired. These factors have cumulative effects and a combination of any of these can greatly increase one's risk for a fatigue-related crash.

Sleepiness or Fatigue Causes the Following:

- Impaired reaction time, judgment and vision.
- Problems with information processing and short-term memory.
- Decreased performance, vigilance and motivation.
- Increased moodiness and aggressive behaviors.

To combat the dangers of driving under the influence of fatigue, several states are considering special legislation that would allow police to charge drowsy drivers with criminal negligence if they injure or kill someone while driving if they have not had adequate sleep. In Kansas, the charge of vehicular homicide has been used to convict sleepy drivers.

Who's at risk?

In general, since all humans require sleep on a daily basis, any driver can succumb to fatigue or be at higher risk for experiencing a decrease of alertness or for "microsleep" when they have not obtained adequate sleep (both in quality and quantity).

Specific At-Risk Groups

- Young people — especially males under age 26.
- Shift workers and people with long work hours — working the night shift increases your risk by nearly 6 times.
- Commercial drivers, especially long-haul drivers — at least 15% of all heavy truck crashes involve fatigue.
- People with undiagnosed or untreated disorders — people with untreated obstructive sleep apnea have been shown to have up to a seven times increased risk of falling asleep at the wheel.
- Business travelers.
- Adults with children in the household.
- Men are more likely to drive while drowsy (56% vs. 45%) and are almost twice as likely to fall asleep (22% vs. 12%).
- Long, boring, highspeed highways.
- A study by researchers in Australia showed that being awake for 18 hours produced an impairment equal to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .05, and .10 after 24 hours; .08 is considered legally drunk.

Are You at Risk?

Before you drive, consider whether you are:

- Sleep-deprived or fatigued (6 hours of sleep or less triples your risk);
- Suffering from sleep loss (insomnia), poor quality sleep or a sleep debt;
- Driving long distances without proper rest breaks;
- Driving through the night, mid-afternoon or when you would normally be asleep;
- Taking sedating medications (antidepressants, antihistamines);
- Working more than 60 hours a week (40 % increased risk);
- Working more than one job;
- Drinking even small amounts of alcohol, and
- Driving alone or on a long, rural, dark or boring road.

Warning Signs

Your eyelids droop and your head starts to nod. Yawning becomes almost constant and your vision seems blurry. You blink hard, focus your eyes and suddenly realize that you've veered onto the shoulder or into oncoming traffic for a moment and quickly straighten the wheel. This time you were lucky; next time you could become the latest victim of the tragedy of drowsy driving.

According to the National Sleep Foundation's Sleep in America poll, 60% of Americans have driven while

feeling sleepy and 37% admit to actually having fallen asleep at the wheel in the past year. However, many people cannot tell if or when they are about to fall asleep. And if sleepiness occurs while driving, many say to themselves, "I can handle this, I'll be fine." Yet they're putting themselves and others in danger. What they really need is a nap or a good night's sleep.

Countermeasures

Before "hitting the road"

- Get adequate sleep — most adults need 7-9 hours to maintain proper alertness during the day.
- Schedule proper breaks — about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips.
- Arrange for a travel companion — someone to talk with and share the driving.
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medications — check your labels or ask your doctor.

Caffeine — does it help?

Caffeine promotes short-term alertness. It takes about 30 minutes for caffeine to begin working so the best thing to do is pull over for a coffee or other caffeinated beverage, take a short nap and then get back on the road. Keep in mind that caffeine won't have much of an effect on people who consume it regularly.

Facts and Stats

According to the National Sleep Foundation's poll, 60% of adult drivers — about 168 million people — say they have driven while feeling drowsy in the past year, and more than one-third have actually fallen asleep at the wheel! In fact, of those who have nodded off, 13% say they have done so at least once a month. Four percent admit they have had an accident or near accident because they dozed off or were too tired to drive.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year. This results in an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses. These figures may be the tip of the iceberg, since currently it is difficult to attribute crashes to sleepiness.

If you are tired and fighting sleep, you are likely to experience "micro-sleep". These episodes can last up to 10 seconds and can be experienced even when your eyes are open. During a micro-sleep of even four seconds, your car can travel 411 feet (more than the length of a football field) without you being in control of your vehicle.

Don't forget - Annual Meeting
November 19th, 5:00pm-7:00pm

Drowsy driving costs!

- Several drowsy-driving incidents have resulted in jail sentences for the driver.
- Multi-million dollar settlements have been awarded to families of crash victims as a result of lawsuits filed against individuals as well as businesses whose employees were involved in drowsy driving crashes.

National Sleep Foundation~www.sleepfoundation.org



2007 Board Meeting Dates

- ✓ January 25th
- ✓ February 15th
- ✓ March 22nd
- ✓ April 27th
- ✓ May 17th
- ✓ June 21st
- ✓ July 19th
- ✓ August 16th
- ✓ September 20th
- October 18th
- November 19th – Annual Meeting
- December 20th