

Tools and Resources for Employees - Fatigue

What Can An Employee Do?

Recognize the Signs and Self-Assess

You are in the best position to evaluate your tiredness – at the start of the day, and throughout the journey. Once you know what to look for, all that's required is to conscientiously assess yourself for those signs, and have the discipline to take the right steps to address your fatigue. The common symptoms of fatigue include:

- Sleepiness, drowsiness, feeling exhausted
- Persistent yawning
- Sore, tired eyes
- Slower-than-normal reflexes
- Feeling impatient, irritable
- Aching or sore muscles
- Daydreaming, decreased ability to focus or concentrate

If you experience less well-known symptoms such as lack of motivation, dizziness, hallucinations, impaired hand-to-eye coordination, headaches, or loss of appetite, check with your doctor for suggestions.



Get a Good Night's Rest

Preparing yourself and your environment will help you get the sleep you require. Try the following.

- Make sleep a priority by keeping a consistent bedtime and waking schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine – enjoy a warm bath, settle in with a good book, listen to soothing music.
- Have a dark, quiet, comfortable and cool room.
- Keep work materials, computers and televisions out of the bedroom.
- Exercise regularly, but finish your workout at least two hours before bedtime.
- It's best to avoid eating right before bed. But if you need to snack, some foods are more soothing than others. According to Health magazine, you should consider cherries, milk, cereal or bananas.



Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Minimize your susceptibility to fatigue by optimizing your health, wellness and energy. The recipe is well known: take regular exercise, eat healthy food, stay hydrated...and get a good night's rest.

Have Realistic Expectations

In any role that involves a little or a lot of driving, recognize when you are getting fatigued and understand your limitations. Work with your supervisor to develop expectations and schedules that work well for both of you, and minimize your risk of becoming fatigued.

Build a Functional Workplace on Wheels

Any drive – short or long – can result in a sore and tired driver. Go online to learn more about how to properly outfit and set-up an ergonomically correct seating configuration. Check out the information at

- Ergonomics for Truckers
- CCOHS Driving and Ergonomics
- About.com Ergonomics



Take Regular Breaks

Every two hours, stop the vehicle at a rest stop, a park or out of the way along a quiet lane, get out, stretch your limbs, have a drink of water, and take a 5 or 10-minute stroll.

Take a Nap

When you are feeling a little ragged, a 15 to 30 minute nap is a great way to shed increasing mental fatigue. Here are a few tips for an effective nap.

- Only 15 to 30 minutes – any more and you will likely be drifting into REM sleep; awakening then will probably leave you feeling more tired than before the nap.
- You may be a little groggy when you awake, so take a few minutes to fully wake up.
- Some drivers have a cup of coffee just before they nap, and when they awaken 15 to 30 minutes later the caffeine is activated and they are ready to continue their journey.
- You have a sense of when your alertness and concentration fall off at about the same time each day. Schedule breaks or naps that recognize and accommodate your personal biorhythms.

Self Manage

You know when you are feeling tired and probably should not be driving. Make the decision to avoid driving when you are feeling fatigued. Make the choice to ensure your own safety, and protect the safety of other motorists on the road.

Factors in Your Workplace on Wheels

The table next describes driving conditions that tend to increase fatigue and the actions that you can take to address them.

Conditions That Contribute to Driving Fatigue	Counter-Measures You Can Take
 <p>Limited visual acuity (i.e. due to weather such as fog, snow, rain, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey planning – daytime travel during favorable visibility conditions. • Have a competent set of headlights, a clean windshield, and good wipers. • Have and use quality eyewear. • Take breaks to rest your eyes.
 <p>High temperatures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set climate control to cool but comfortable (18 to 20 °C).
 <p>High noise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your vehicle is noisy, wear ear protection that does not impair your ability to hear driving-related cues. • Keep music at reasonable levels.
 <p>High comfort</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish ergonomically correct seat adjustment. • Use firm back supports. • Shift seating position (legs, feet, arm rests) during the drive.
 <p>Long, repetitive, and monotonous journeys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take regular breaks. • Pull over, get out and take a quick walk. • Actively scan your entire driving environment so your “view” is not monotonous.