

Managing Driver Fatigue

What do we know about driver fatigue?

- As many as one in five fatal crashes involve driver fatigue
- An estimated 6,400 people died annually in crashes involving drowsy driving, according to the National Sleep Foundation
- About 1 in 25 adult drivers report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days
- After 17 consecutive hours awake, impairment is equivalent to having a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .05. After 24 hours awake, impairment is equivalent to a BAC of .10
- The driver of the striper showing in the picture to the right fell asleep at the wheel and would not be alive today if he wasn't wearing a seatbelt.



Strategies for staying alert on the job and when you drive:

- Beware of the warning signs of drowsy driving such as yawning or blinking frequently, difficulty remembering the past few miles driven, missing your exit, drifting from your lane, or hitting the rumble strips.
- Plan your off-duty activities to allow enough time for adequate sleep. Although everyone's sleep requirements are different, on average, 7 – 8 hours of sleep for every 24 hours is about what is needed.
- When you begin to feel drowsy pull over and take a break. Walk around, get fresh air, stretch. If necessary, take a nap. On longer drives, take breaks at least every two hours.
- Share driving responsibilities whenever possible. When two people are riding in the same cab the passenger must stay awake and assist with monitoring fatigue symptoms and determining when it is time to pull over, refresh and take a break.
- Keep steady airflow in the vehicle while driving.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and stay hydrated. Be cautious with nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol consumption. Nicotine and caffeine are stimulants that can affect sleep. Although alcohol may make you feel sleepy, it can affect the quality of restorative sleep. Also, use caution with over-the-counter medications as they can make you drowsy.
- Remember to always **Buckle Up!**

