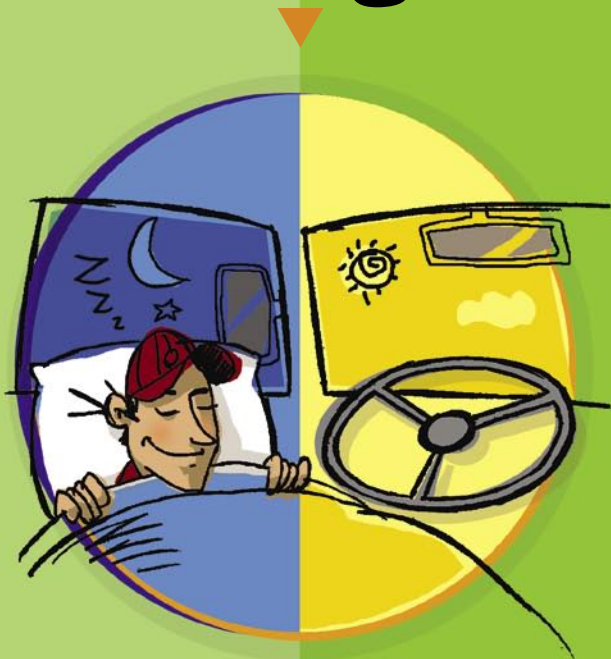


Driver Fatigue



As soon as
you start feeling drowsy,
stop to rest at a safe place

Québec 

Driver fatigue, specifically that of drivers of heavy vehicles, is a major preoccupation for the transportation industry, lawmakers and the drivers themselves. Application of regulations alone is not enough to control the threat that driver fatigue can pose to the safety of all road users.

Why be concerned about fatigue?

Recent studies have shown that approximately 15% of road accidents involving a heavy vehicle are linked to accumulated fatigue. Of this percentage, it is believed that 30% to 40% of the fatal accidents can be attributed to driver fatigue.

External and personal factors

Your resistance to fatigue is influenced by various external factors tied to road conditions, the road itself, weather, etc. These factors are compounded by personal factors, such as your state of health, your age or your being more of a “morning person” than a “night person,” or vice versa.

For more informations:

www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/documents/pdf/prevention/fatigue_alertness.html

Risk factors

To accurately determine your level of exposure to fatigue, you need to take the following sleep-related elements into account:

1. The time of the day

The risk of falling asleep at the wheel is greatest in the early afternoon, between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., and at night, between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Drowsiness episodes are eight times more likely at night than during the day. Why?

Because a person's body follows a daily cycle that contains "lulls" during which the metabolism slows down, vigilance decreases and fatigue sets in.



2. The number of continuous hours of being awake

In 40% of fatigue-related accidents, the driver had been awake for more than 17 hours. **After being awake 17 hours, your physical and mental performance drops considerably and all the more so if your blood alcohol concentration is 0.05 mg/dl.** Your reaction time can be up to twice as slow and your movements less precise.

3. Sleep debt

Half of the drivers involved in a fatigue-related accident had slept fewer than six hours the day before the accident. Regardless of your age, if you do not get enough sleep, you accumulate a "sleep debt." A debt of five hours has the same effect as consuming two or three glasses of wine, which is worse than having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 mg/dl. If you have a sleep debt *and* drink alcohol, you are literally "drunk from fatigue." **The only way to combat a sleep debt is to get enough sleep.**



Managing your fatigue

AT HOME:

ask your family members for their cooperation

- ▶ Plan a rest period long enough to have a good recuperating sleep;
- ▶ Ask your family members to not disturb you while you are sleeping;
- ▶ Exercise regularly; even 15 minutes a day is beneficial;
- ▶ Pay attention to what you eat: have light, low-fat meals that include a total of at least five to ten servings of fruits and vegetables per day, eat fewer sweets and less salt;
- ▶ Consult your physician for treatment of any sleep disorder.

ON THE ROAD:

prevent fatigue, drowsiness and falling asleep

- ▶ Start the work day rested;
- ▶ Plan the trip in a way that lets you maximize periods of sleep and rest;
- ▶ Ideally, plan breaks every two hours and nap when you begin to feel drowsy;
- ▶ Plan on stopping, have a coffee or a snack, air out the cab, readjust your seat and change positions, turn on the radio... all of these tactics will give you a quick lift, though the effects last only a short time;
- ▶ Avoid driving at night between 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., and during the day between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.;
- ▶ Respect the speed limits; driving over a given speed limit forces you to process a large amount of information quickly and requires additional visual acuity which, over time, brings on fatigue;
- ▶ Assess your level of fatigue and notify your dispatcher;
- ▶ Avoid visual fatigue when you drive: dim dashboard lighting, remove objects from the top of the dashboard to avoid reflections in the windshield, regularly clean the windshield and side mirrors.



**Pull over in a safe place
as soon as you feel the
first signs of fatigue.**

Have a safe trip!

Learn to recognize the warning signs of fatigue

Yes No

- Do you yawn often?
- Are your eyes tingling?
- Are you having trouble keeping your eyes open?
- Are you changing lanes without meaning to?
- Have you stopped checking the rearview and/or side mirrors?
- Are you experiencing periods of microsleep that last three to four seconds?
- Does your clothing feel tight?
- Are you feeling restless?
- Do your neck or shoulders feel stiff or cramped?
- Are you having problems concentrating, remaining vigilant?
- Are you braking at the last minute?
- Are you having problems maintaining a steady speed and keeping the vehicle on a straight course in your lane?
- Is your reaction time slowing down?
- Are you having trouble evaluating your speed and that of the other vehicles?
- Does the engine seem to sound louder now than when you left?
- Are you having memory losses?
(e.g. you can't remember the last few kilometres driven)
- Are you seeing things that are not there, particularly when there is fog or on monotonous stretches of highway?
(e.g. you think you see an animal on the road, or vehicles ahead or behind)



**In Canada,
one out of ten drivers
admits to having been
drowsy or fallen asleep
at the wheel at least once
in the past 12 months¹**



**A number of warning signs of fatigue
appear at the same time.**

Do something!

**Pull over as soon as possible
in a safe place, rest a bit,
stretch your legs, take a nap...**

for your own safety and that of others.



Have a safe trip!

C-4381-A (05-05)

**Société de l'assurance
automobile**

Québec

