



## Driving Tired

### Welcome to this week's discussion

*The focus this week is the danger of driving while tired.*

Most people don't see it as a big issue and do it without a second thought, yet driving while tired is a serious problem that results in thousands of motoring accidents every single year. According to the Department of Transport's THINK! campaign, nearly a fifth of accidents on major roads are sleep-related.

Crashes caused by drivers falling asleep typically involve vehicles running off the road or into the back of another vehicle. Crashes involving drivers falling asleep tend to be high-speed crashes, as drivers don't brake before crashing, resulting in a high risk of death or serious injury.

But it's not just falling asleep at the wheel that's a risk. Drowsy driving can be as dangerous as drink driving as motorists share many of the same impairments, such as difficulty focusing and slowed reaction time.

### Did you know?

The most common time to fall asleep behind the wheel is between 2:00am–6:00am

The body clock also dips between 2:00pm–4:00pm making you feel tired

A micro sleep of just six seconds could mean you travel 200 metres on the motorway; it's enough time to veer across three lanes of traffic or into the central reservation

Motorways and dual carriageways are the most common roads for sleep-related crashes, due to the monotonous road environment and lack of interruptions or driver stimulation.

There isn't a specific law that states that it is an offence to drive when you are tired, but the chances of a driver committing a driving offence while tired are increased. If you are found to have been asleep when an accident occurred, depending on the severity of the collision and any injuries sustained, you could find yourself charged with dangerous driving, the penalties for which can be severe.



## *Driving Tired*

### *How Can you Beat Driving Tired?*

To make sure you beat driver fatigue:

- Make sure you have plenty of rest before you set off, especially if you're driving early in the morning
- You should plan your journey before you set off to allow enough time to take breaks (of at least 15 minutes) every two hours, or as soon as you start to feel tired or lose concentration
- Find a safe place to stop if you start to feel tired on your drive. Research found having a 15-minute nap is more effective at reducing driver fatigue than getting out and stretching your legs
- If possible, share the driving on a long journey. This gives each driver time to relax and recoup after their driving stint
- Remember the time of day can increase your risk of driving tired as your body clock reaches a natural dip
- If you begin new medication you should ask your doctor or pharmacist if it can make you feel drowsy. If your doctor informs you that you cannot drive when taking your medication, you must heed this warning. Please also declare any medication to your line manager as per normal Network Rail process
- Modern vehicles are usually quiet and comfortable for the driver, meaning a more relaxed drive. This can lull drivers, particularly in vehicles fitted with comfort-enhancing features such as cruise control, into sleep

### *Discuss in your teams:*

- Have you ever experienced a microsleep whilst driving? What action did you take?
- Do you have a tried and tested way of beating fatigue when driving?
- As a passenger, have you ever considered staying awake to help the driver remain alert?
- Do you think of travelling times and methods when planning work activities?
- What can you do as a team to reduce your driving fatigue risk?