

Drowsy Driving

Research shows that fatigue is a significant factor in motor vehicle, commercial trucking and rail collisions.

- The Governors Highway Safety Association issued a [report](#) [1] in August 2016 concluding that the estimated annual societal cost of fatigue-related fatal and injury crashes was \$109 billion. This figure does not include property damage.
- A 2014 AAA Traffic Safety Foundation [study](#) [2] found that 37 percent of drivers report having fallen asleep behind the wheel at some point in their lives. An estimated 21 percent of fatal crashes, 13 percent of crashes resulting in severe injury and 6 percent of all crashes, involve a drowsy driver.
- According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [research](#) [3], in 2014 there were 846 fatalities (2.6 percent of all fatalities) that were drowsy-driving-related.
- These reported fatalities (and drowsy-driving crashes overall) have remained largely consistent across the past decade. Between 2005 and 2009 there was an estimated average of 83,000 crashes each year related to drowsy driving. This annual average includes almost 886 fatal crashes (2.5 percent of all fatal crashes), an estimated 37,000 injury crashes, and an estimated 45,000 property damage only crashes.
- A 2013 [study](#) [4] by the Federal Rail Administration found that fatigue greatly increases the chances of an accident in which human factors play a role, with the risk of such an accident rising from 11 percent to 65 percent.
- Although sleepiness can affect all types of crashes during the entire day and night, drowsy-driving crashes most frequently occur between midnight and 6 a.m., or in the late-afternoon, according to [NHTSA](#) [5].
- The NHTSA found that many drowsy-driving crashes involve a single vehicle, with no passengers besides the driver, running off the road at a high rate of speed with no evidence of braking.
- In 2014, drowsiness or sleepiness was a factor for 2.9 percent of drivers and motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes, as shown in the chart below.
- A December 2016 [study](#) [6] by the AAA Foundation for Traffic and Safety found that drivers who usually sleep for less than 5 hours daily, drivers who have slept for less than 7 hours in the past 24 hours, and drivers who have slept for 1 or more hours less than their usual amount of sleep in the past 24 hours have significantly elevated crash rates. The estimated rate ratio for crash involvement associated with driving after only 4-5 hours of sleep compared with 7 hours or more is similar to the U.S. government's estimates of the risk associated with driving with a blood alcohol concentration equal to or slightly above the legal limit for alcohol in the U.S.
- The beginning of daylight savings is linked to an increase in auto accidents, according to an analysis by the [University of British Columbia](#) [7] and a [study](#) [8] by researchers at John Hopkins and Stanford University.

Driving Behaviors Reported For Drivers And Motorcycle

Operators Involved In Fatal Crashes, 2015

Behavior

Driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted speed limit or racing

Under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication

Failure to yield right of way

Failure to keep in proper lane or running off road

Distracted (phone, talking, eating, etc.)

Operating vehicle in a careless manner

Failure to obey traffic signs, signals or officer

Overcorrecting/oversteering

Operating vehicle in erratic, reckless, or negligent manner

Vision obscured (rain, snow, glare, lights, buildings, trees, etc.)

Swerving or avoiding due to wind, slippery surface, other vehicle, object, nonmotorist in roadway, etc.

Drowsy, asleep, fatigued, ill, or blacked out

Driving wrong way in one-way traffic or on wrong side of road

Making improper turn

Other factors

None reported

Unknown

Total drivers (1)

(1) The sum of percentages is greater than total drivers as more than one factor may be present for the same driver.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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Source URL: <http://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/drowsy-driving>

Links:

[1] <http://www.ghsa.org/html/media/pressreleases/2016/20160808sfdrowsy.html>

- [2] <https://www.aaafoundation.org/drowsy-driving>
- [3] <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving>
- [4] <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L04320>
- [5] <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving%20Safety/Drowsy%20Driving/crashes-and-fatalities>
- [6] <http://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/drowsy-driving>
- [7] <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199604043341416>
- [8] <http://www.sleep-journal.com/article/S1389-9457%2800%2900032-0/abstract>
- [9] <http://www.iii.org/table-archive/21313>