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**Fatigue**

**The**

**Silent**

**Killer**

**TOOLBOX TALK**

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**Fatigue  
contributes**

**40%**

**of all heavy  
truck accidents\***

\*Source: [www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Pages/SS9502.aspx](http://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Pages/SS9502.aspx)

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**The trend is not improving.**  
**Our industry needs to change.**

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# Fatigue affects everyone

**FOR  
DRIVERS  
FATIGUE  
MEANS**

**1**

slower reaction times

**2**

reduced ability to  
assess situations

**Why do we still think it won't  
happen to us?**

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# Warning fatigue can sneak up on you

Most people often can't assess their own fatigue accurately or how their performance is downgrading.

*Studies show if you've been awake for 17 hours you have the same level of impairment as a drunk driver (blood alcohol concentration of 0.05)\**

\*Source: [www.nrspp.org.au/product/heavy-vehicle-toolbox-talks-shift-work](http://www.nrspp.org.au/product/heavy-vehicle-toolbox-talks-shift-work)

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# Truck driver fatigue Is often caused by...

- 1 Not enough or low quality sleep
- 2 Working too many hours
- 3 Dehydration and poor diet
- 4 Underlying health issues



*Studies show that up to 41% of professional drivers have treatable, but undiagnosed sleep apnoea\*.*

(Sleep disorder that reduces your quality of sleep)

\*Source: Sharwood LN; Elkington J; Stevenson M; Grunstein RR; Meuleners L; Ivers RQ; Haworth N; Norton R; Wong KK. Assessing sleepiness and sleep disorders in Australian long-distance commercial vehicle drivers: self-report versus an “at home” monitoring device. SLEEP 2012;35(4):469-475

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# SIGNS OF FATIGUE

Have you recently  
found yourself doing  
any of the following  
when driving...

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**Frequently yawning**

**Struggling to keep your eyes open**

**Head nodding**  
(head hitting your chest or backrest)

**Having difficulty maintaining speed**

**Drifting in and out of your lane**

**Making poor gear changes**

**Making more mistakes**  
(e.g. under turning, nicking curbs)

**Daydreaming**  
(e.g. no recollection of the last 10kms)

**Slower reaction time**

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# WHAT ORGANISATIONS CAN DO

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**Educate,  
inform, and train  
(leaders, dispatch,  
and drivers).**

**Organise shifts, rosters, etc to  
address contributing causes.  
Remember workers still have  
to drive home.**

**Create a culture that insists on  
proper fitness to drive checks,  
and taking breaks (scheduled  
and as needed).**

**Prioritise  
wellbeing e.g.  
breaks, health,  
sleep, diet, etc.**

# WHAT DRIVERS CAN DO

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**Get a good night's sleep**

**Maintain a healthy diet**

**Regular exercise**

**Take frequent breaks**

**Take a pre-drive/mid-drive nap**

> Than seven hours of sleep a night to function at their mental and physical best .

Shop for and choose healthier alternatives, e.g. bringing food from home. Eat smaller proportions throughout the day. Try snacks like almonds and apples.

Keeping a healthy weight, getting the blood flowing and keeping fit help you sleep well, and increase alertness and energy.

Use breaks to stretch, go for a short walk, get some fresh air, and/or get change of scenery.

If you didn't sleep enough or feel fatigued, make time for a short power nap. Nasa recommend 26 minute power naps, or even quietly resting your eyes can do the trick!

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## Limit Caffeine

Caffeine drinks can be helpful - in moderation. However, it can lead to a “caffeine crash” or becoming more tired than before consuming the caffeinated beverage. Use sparingly.

## Stay hydrated

Drowsiness and headaches can be a result of dehydration. Water has natural properties that will help you feel awake. So, drink water throughout your trip.

## Adjust your environment

Keep the temperature cool, listening to upbeat tunes or talk radio/audio books, placing the seat in a new position, keep fresh air flowing

## Get regular check-ups

More drivers than average people have weight, heart, cholesterol, diabetes, sleep disorders, or mental health issues. Regular check-ups will help you keep your body/mind in top shape.

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**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

**Sleeping 6 hours  
a day for 14 days**

**=**

**going without  
sleep for 24 hours**

Your body's performance deteriorates the same

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# TIPS TO SET UP FOR GOOD SLEEP

**Get daily  
exercise**

**Take a  
rest from  
devices**

**A relaxing  
pre-bed  
routine**  
(e.g. warm shower,  
read a book)

**Set up the  
room; dark,  
quiet, cool  
temperature**



# SUMMARY

**Fatigue affects everyone**

**The culture of our industry needs to change**

**Keep your body/mind running in top condition**

**Professional drivers recognise fatigue risk and proactively manage**

# QUESTIONS FOR GROUP

- 1 What do you think stops drivers taking breaks?
- 2 How many people have actually admitted being unfit to drive?
- 3 How could we better support (not punish) fatigued drivers?