



**Road Traffic**  
Management Corporation



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# DRIVER FATIGUE



## Driver fatigue

Many people think fatigue is only a problem for long-distance drivers; however it is just as relevant for short-distance drivers. People generally don't become fatigued from driving; usually they are already tired when they get behind the wheel from long hours, shift work, lack of sleep, sleep apnea or physically demanding roles.



## Causes of fatigue

a lack of quality sleep;

- driving when you would normally be sleeping;
- sleep disorders such as sleep apnea (a sleeping condition that causes tiredness throughout the day).

## Symptoms of fatigue

Fatigue is easy to detect, with symptoms including:

- yawning;
- sore or heavy eyes;
- slower reaction times;
- driving speed creeps up or down;
- impatience;
- impaired driving performance such as poor gear changes;
- stiffness and cramps;
- loss of motivation.



## Driving while tired or fatigued can result in:

- Lower reaction times;
- Lack of concentration - errors in calculating speed and distance are common;
- Reduced vigilance and poor judgement;
- Nodding off - even for a few seconds can result in dire consequences.

## How to beat driver fatigue!

Make a choice not to drive when tired or follow these guidelines to prevent fatigue:

- Get a good night's sleep before heading-off on a long trip;
- Share the driving wherever possible;
- Don't drink alcohol before your trip, even a small amount can significantly contribute to driver fatigue;
- Take a 15 minute power-nap if you feel yourself becoming drowsy;
- Stop at least once every two hours or after every 200 km - it will help to combat fatigue and will give you a chance to restore your ability to concentrate.

## Tips on how to reduce driver fatigue before your trip:

- Plan your journey well in advance, making provision for safety breaks.
- A heavy meal before you embark on a trip can increase fatigue and weaken your concentration.
- Before embarking on a long journey make sure your exhaust system is in good order. Leaking exhaust fumes may cause drowsiness and even death if the vehicle is not properly ventilated.