



BIE SAFETY ADVISOR



The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) announces November 5-11 as Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® for 2023.

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® is a time to reflect on how dangerously common, but preventable drowsy driving truly is. Drowsy driving can be avoided. The most important preventative measure to stop drowsy driving is a well-rested driver.

Operating a motor vehicle when sleepy is known as drowsy driving, and it can affect anyone who gets behind the wheel. Drowsy driving significantly increases the risk of accidents, leading to a troubling number of injuries and deaths every year.

How Common Is Drowsy Driving?

While there is no exact measure of drowsy driving, research indicates that it is disturbingly common. Survey data from the CDC indicated that [one in every 25 adults](#) had fallen asleep behind the wheel in the past month.

Drowsy Driving is more likely to cause a crash.

Just like drunk, drugged, and distracted driving, drowsy driving is a real public health issue, causing thousands of car crashes each year and killing an estimated [6,400](#) people in the U.S. alone according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports an estimated [100,000 crashes](#) each year are caused primarily by drowsy driving, resulting in more than [71,000 injuries](#) and \$12.5 million in damages.

This data likely underestimates the impact of drowsy driving because it's often impossible to definitively determine whether drowsy driving caused an accident, especially after fatal crashes.

Why Is Drowsy Driving Dangerous?

Drowsy driving significantly increases the risk of car accidents. Microsleeps are when a person [dozes off for just a few seconds](#), and when they occur while driving, it's easy for the car to run off the road or collide with another vehicle.

When you drive without adequate sleep, your motor skills are seriously impaired. In fact, we'll go as far as saying that drivers who've only slept [3 to 5 hours](#) in the [last 24 hours](#) are [unfit to drive](#). Most people understand it's risky, but they don't think about the consequences.

Too Drowsy to Drive?

The following are signs and symptoms of drowsy driving, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine:

- Frequent yawning or difficulty keeping your eyes open
- "Nodding off" or having trouble keeping your head up
- Inability to remember driving the last few miles
- Missing road signs or turns
- Difficulty maintaining your speed
- Drifting out of your lane

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) recommends these steps to promote healthy sleep:

During Daytime hours:

1. **Light** Spend time in bright light during the day, natural light or equivalent brightness.
2. **Exercise** Exercise regularly for a deeper sleep. Aim for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
3. **Mealtimes** Eat your meals at consistent times day after day.

During Nighttime hours:

4. **Avoid...** Avoid heavy meals, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
5. **Wind-down** Use a consistent routine with a relaxing wind-down to help get the sleep you need each night (7–9 hours for most adults, with same sleep and wake times.)
6. **Environment** Put your devices away an hour before bed and sleep in a quiet, cool, and dark environment.



Monthly Toolbox Talk

10 Tips to Prevent Deer and Other Wildlife Vehicle Collisions

Studies show that [car accidents](#) resulting from [wildlife-vehicle collisions \(WVCs\)](#) with large animals, such as deer, result in over \$8 billion in damages, up to 200 human deaths, and over 26,000 injuries annually. During the breeding season or rut, which runs from October to December [WVC](#) rates increase, making these 10 [car safety](#) tips extremely important.

1. Slow down below the speed limit, especially in areas with road signs indicating wildlife activity.
2. Stay alert near rural areas with animal populations. Frequently scan the roadsides and ditches for deer.
3. Use high beams at night whenever possible for increased vision. Flicking them on and off can scare animals away, even at dawn and dusk.
4. Start controlled braking as soon as you see an animal on the side of the road. [If a collision with a deer is imminent](#), brake hard and keep your wheels straight.
5. Don't swerve off the road. If possible, you should go around the animal in a controlled manner but stay on the road. It's better to collide with the animal if you can't safely turn or stop to avoid it.
6. So-called deer horns or whistles are unreliable for clearing animals from the roadway. While sometimes, they can scare animals away, others won't run or will freeze in their tracks at the strange sound.
7. Keep track of seasonal animal migration and mating times. [Deer and elk in mountain states migrate](#) seasonally in search of food and to avoid deep snow and mate in the fall or early winter across their range in North America. These activities cause increased movement and often erratic behavior.
8. Keep track of preferred feeding times. Deer activity often increases just before sunset and again at sunrise. Outside the mating season, deer usually spend daylight hours napping and digesting the food they ate the night before.
9. Deer and elk are social animals and often travel in groups. They are also creatures of habit, so watch out for nearby animals, especially in areas with warning signs or where you've seen animals previously.
10. Along with driving at the speed limit, always have all passengers wear seat belts. Reducing the impact is the goal if you can't avoid a WVC.

