

Oil and Gas Employers:

How to Prevent Fatigued Driving at Work



Motor vehicle crashes cause over 40% of work-related deaths in the oil and gas extraction industry.¹ Driver fatigue, which may be a result of insufficient sleep, long distances traveled to well sites, and long work shifts, is a factor in some of these crashes. In addition to the loss of life, the average on-the-job fatal crash is estimated to cost employers \$671,000.² Legal settlements can be even more costly.

Oil and gas employers are responsible for the health and safety of their employees. **This fact sheet recommends strategies for employers to manage fatigued driving among their workers.**

What factors put workers at risk for fatigued driving?

Time of day

Natural body clocks (circadian rhythms) give strong signals that it's time to sleep at night and early morning hours. Many people also experience a dip in alertness in the afternoon.



Monotonous tasks

Driving for extended periods of time with few changes in routine can increase workers' risk of fatigued or inattentive driving.



Length of time awake

The more hours awake, the more likely people are to be fatigued. Fatigue can impair driving and other tasks, similar to alcohol impairment. Small sleep deficits accumulated over time can also result in impairment.



Medications and health conditions

Illnesses, diseases, and some medications may interfere with workers' alertness, increasing the risk of fatigued driving.



The Reality of Fatigued Driving

An oil and gas worker was driving on a rural two-lane highway in a single unit truck in the afternoon. The driver was either fatigued or fell asleep, causing the truck to drift off the road into a ditch. The truck overturned, ejecting the driver, who was not wearing a seat belt. He later died at the hospital.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

¹Data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries query system (<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv?fw>).

²Data from 2013: NETS, [Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers – 2015](#)

What can employers do to prevent fatigued driving?



Oil and gas employers:

- Implement a fatigue management policy and program, and integrate it into your existing health and safety management system.**
 - Include workers in development and implementation.
 - Audit your policy in the field to ensure it's practical for employees and contractors.
 - Use journey management strategies to reduce fatigued driving.
 - Describe how to ensure road safety when delays occur on the well site.
 - Require front seat passengers to stay awake during trips to ensure driver alertness.

- Limit the number of hours employees may work and drive per day or trip segment.**
 - Require workers to plan for and take rest breaks during extended drives.
 - Restrict night driving, particularly when alertness levels are low.
 - Ensure compliance with regulations (such as hours-of-service) for all commercial drivers.

- Provide a rested driver to transport workers from remote sites after extended shifts.**

- Practice open communication, and check in regularly with drivers to create a culture of caring.**
 - Approach fatigue-related incidents and near misses as opportunities to learn.
 - Ensure workers/contractors are not penalized for using stop work authority to avoid fatigued driving.

- Make sure workers have an opportunity for sufficient sleep.**
 - Provide enough off-duty time for workers' commute, basic needs such as eating, and 7 to 9 hours of sleep.
 - Provide quiet, dark, and comfortable places to sleep on-site for night or extended shift workers. Pick-up trucks do not meet this criteria. Allow workers to take up to 30-minute naps during extended work shifts.
 - Give incentive (such as a bonus) for workers to sleep before extended drives home at the end of hitches.
 - Encourage workers to seek places to sleep if they become too tired to drive safely and a rested driver is unavailable. Reimburse them for expenses.

- Educate workers about how alcohol and drugs impair driving, and the possible side effects of prescription and over-the-counter medications.**
 - Encourage drivers to notify their employers if they are taking medications that may affect their ability to drive safely so that a safe solution can be determined.

- Consider using technologies to detect fatigue before driving (such as actigraphs that monitor rest/activity cycles) and while driving (such as lane departure warning systems).**
 - Identify trends in risk to improve fatigue management programs.
 - Use data as a tool to coach drivers, using positive reinforcement.

Resources & Tools for oil and gas employers:

NIOSH Motor Vehicle Safety at Work

www.cdc.gov/niosh/motorvehicle

CDC Drowsy Driving

www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/drowsy_driving.html

Medications and Driving

www.aaafoundation.org/resources/resources

My Car Does What

<https://mycardoeswhat.org>

Managing Fatigue in the Workplace

www.ipieca.org/resources/good-practice/managing-fatigue-in-the-workplace

North American Fatigue Management Program

www.nafmp.org/index.php?lang=en



@NIOSH_MVSAFETY

@NIOSHOilandGas