

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION SIX – FATIGUE

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Please don't drive when you are sleepy.

Be very aware of situations when you are driving tired, perhaps after or during work, the night out or on a family trip. Don't be foolish and push your luck. When you are even a little sleepy your ability to concentrate on all the parts of driving becomes overloaded. You don't see the danger that you usually see and you might do something that you would never do while you are alert, like drive through a red light.

Plan each trip with sufficient rest periods.

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FATIGUE IS A KILLER

Fatigue is a great killer, which is responsible for almost one-third of drivers killed on country roads.

Imagine a “Sleep-Bank” to which we make sleep deposits and withdrawals by being awake. We can’t cheat this bank; when we run out of reserves, we go to sleep in three stages.

- Firstly a micro-sleep, which is so fast that we may not be aware that we just had one. This is usually induced by a sudden movement of the eye, such as when we look left and right at an intersection.
- Second a mini-sleep, this may last one or two seconds. This is common when we become fatigued on long trips and often results in head jerks.
- Thirdly, we go to sleep.

You can’t stop yourself from going to sleep.

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POWER NAP THEORY

Ten to fifteen minute sleeps are called “power-naps”, because they have more value per minute than any other equivalent period of sleep.

In the first twenty minutes of being asleep we are paying back to our “Sleep-Bank” a greater value than the rest of our sleep time on a diminishing basis. The problem with longer than twenty-minute periods of sleep is that you go too deep into the ‘delta’ state and you may be too drowsy to drive safely.

Power nap is a powerful method of recharging your “Sleep-Bank”

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MINDS ON AUTO

Don't lose concentration when driving on long trips.

Have you ever not remembered driving through a town when you are on a long trip? Our subconscious mind is amazing at managing repetitious activities like driving; but it can't cope with an emergency. If you are not concentrating when you suddenly find an animal on the road, a dangerous traffic situation or road works, you are at a high risk of a crash.

Don't drive with your mind on 'auto'; take a break and become alert.