

What is Driver Fatigue?

Worksheet

Driver fatigue is exhaustion that reduces alertness and reaction time, leading to slower decision-making and increased crash risk. A fatigued driver is as impaired as a moderately intoxicated one.

Questions

1. A driver has been on the road for 5 hours without stopping. Alertness is approximately:
A) 90%
B) 75%
C) 50%
D) 20%
2. Nodding off at the wheel is:
A) a normal driving experience
B) a sign of mild tiredness
C) a critical warning sign requiring immediate stop
D) acceptable if traffic is light
3. The most reliable way to combat driver fatigue is:
A) turning up the radio volume
B) drinking strong coffee
C) taking a 20-minute nap
D) opening the window
4. You feel drowsy after driving 3 hours. Legal options include:
A) speed up to reach destination faster
B) take a 20 min nap at a rest area
C) drink energy drinks and continue
D) switch drivers immediately
5. You have been driving for 4 hours without a break. What happens to your alertness and reaction time?
6. You feel your head nodding and eyelids drooping at 80 km/h on a highway. What is the safest response?
7. You are scheduled for an 8-hour drive tomorrow. How many stops should you plan?
8. Define: What is driver fatigue?
9. Define: How does fatigue compare to alcohol impairment?
10. Define: After how many hours does alertness drop significantly?

Answer Key

1. C) 50% — After 5 hours, alertness drops to roughly 50% due to accumulated mental fatigue.
2. C) a critical warning sign requiring immediate stop — Head nodding = micro-sleep episodes. Stop immediately; crash risk is extreme.
3. C) taking a 20-minute nap — A nap resets the brain's alertness. Stimulation (music, cold air) is temporary; caffeine has a 20–30 min delay.
4. B) take a 20 min nap at a rest area — All are reasonable, but a nap is the MOST reliable. Switching drivers is ideal if available.
5. After 4 hours, alertness drops to approximately 60–65%. Reaction time increases by 20–30% (e.g., 1.5 s → 1.8–2 s). Decision-making ability declines; peripheral vision narrows. Crash risk increases 4–5 times compared to well-rested driving.
6. STOP immediately at the next safe location (service station, rest area). Never try to 'push through' fatigue—brain becomes uncontrollable. 20 min nap or 2 hours rest is minimum recovery. If alone, call for alternative transport; do not continue driving.
7. Plan stops every 2 hours maximum. For 8 hours: 4 planned stops, each 15–30 minutes long. Include one longer break (1–2 hours) halfway through. Ensure sleep before the drive: 7–8 hours minimum; fatigue compounds.
8. A state of exhaustion reducing alertness, slowing reaction time and impairing decision-making while driving.
9. A fatigued driver is as impaired as someone with moderate blood alcohol (0.05–0.08%).
10. After 2 hours of continuous driving, alertness begins declining rapidly.

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