



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Drowsy Driving

Sleepy or fatigued drivers cause 700 crashes annually in Maine. The effects from driving when tired are similar to the effects of driving under the influence. Just like drug and alcohol use, sleepiness can affect your ability to keep your vehicle under control, delay your reaction, and lead to a collision. The MaineDOT reminds you to watch for warning signs of fatigue:

- You can't remember the last few miles driven
- You tailgate
- You miss traffic signs
- You need to keep jerking your vehicle into the lane
- You blast music, keep a breeze on your face or rely on caffeine to try to stay awake while driving. (Rest is the only real cure for fatigue.)

Did you know that nationally, 1 out of 4 adults reported dozing off while driving? Sleepy drivers contribute to approximately 100,000 crashes and 1,500 fatalities each year.

You are at additional risk for driver fatigue when:

- you frequently drive the same route
- you often drive alone
- you drive long distances

To avoid sleepiness when driving, the MaineDOT recommends that you:

- Get plenty of sleep
- Pull over to a parking lot and take a quick nap if you get tired while driving
- Plan long trips with a companion (Passengers can spot signs of driver fatigue and be available to share the driving duty.)

Younger drivers may believe that they are less susceptible to fatigue and sleep related crashes, but young drivers beware. Drivers age 16 to 24 are involved in 35% of sleepy/tired related crashes and fatalities.



If you suffer from daytime sleepiness, difficulty sleeping during the night, or snore loudly every night, you may have a sleeping disorder. If this goes undiagnosed, you could be a threat to yourself and to others on the road.

Most sleeping disorders are not diagnosed. If you have a sleep disorder it could lead you into a serious car crash. Regardless of the cause of your sleepiness, the Maine DOT reminds you that being rested before driving is the number one defense against fatigue related vehicle crashes.

Remedies that are **NOT** effective in keeping you awake include:

- Turning up the volume of the radio
- Opening the window
- Using stimulants such as coffee, candy bars or other items containing caffeine

Be a Road Model: avoid driving when you are tired, know when fatigue is affecting you and always wear your seat belt.