

Too tired to drive?

A road safety initiative of RACV, Rural Ambulance Victoria and Metropolitan Ambulance Service

Driver Fatigue Checklist

Before you drive, answer these questions to make sure you are not too tired to drive.

Have you been getting full nights of restful sleep over the past week?

When you don't get enough sleep you acquire sleep debt. The only way to repay the debt is by sleeping.

Are you setting off on a trip after a good night's sleep, rather than after a full day at work?

Being awake for 17 hours has the same effect on driving as having a BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) of .05, doubling your risk of crashing. After 24 hours the BAC equivalent is 0.1, equating to a 7 times greater risk of crashing than someone who is well rested.

Are you planning to start your trip after 6am, rather than starting out earlier when you would normally be asleep?

Your body naturally wants to sleep between about 1am and 6am greatly increasing your risk of crashing, at those times.

Have you allowed time in your trip to stop and rest if you feel tired?

Regular breaks every 2 hours will help maintain vigilance, however, the only way to combat fatigue is to sleep.

Do you stop and have a Powernap if you feel tired while driving?

Stopping for a 15 to 30 minute sleep or Powernap when you are tired is effective in alleviating the short-term effects of fatigue, but ensure you allow time to recover from your sleep before commencing to drive.

Are you sure that you do not suffer from a sleeping disorder, such as sleep apnoea?

2% of people suffer from the most common sleep disorder, sleep apnoea. Men over 50, particularly those overweight, are most at risk.

| Yes | No |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you have answered “no” to any of these questions you may be at risk of fatigue.



Too tired to drive?

What is fatigue?

Driver fatigue contributes to more than 25 per cent of all road crashes in Victoria.

Two main causes:

- lack of quality sleep
- driving at times when you would normally be asleep.

Protect yourself from having a fatigue-related crash by:

- making sure you regularly get enough sleep
- being aware of the fatigue high crash risk times when driving between 1am-6am
- not starting a long trip after a long day's work
- planning your trip so you can take regular breaks
- seeking medical advice if you often feel sleepy
- being aware of the effects of any medication taken.

Once you're on the road:

- regular rest breaks to help keep you alert, but if you feel tired, the only way to keep safe is to stop and sleep
- eat proper and well-balanced meals, preferably at your normal meal times.

If you feel tired when driving, take a Powernap (sleep for 15 to 30 minutes), but allow time to recover from your sleep before commencing to drive.

Don't be fooled by myths about fatigue! The following common beliefs about fatigue are untrue:

myth – Coffee is the best way to combat fatigue.

Coffee only provides short-term benefits; once its effects wear off, you suffer from sleep rebound, which is a major cause of crashes.

myth – Playing music will help keep me alert.

This is only a short-term benefit.

myth – Plenty of fresh air through the window will help keep me alert.

This is only a short-term benefit.

myth – Young people need less sleep.

In fact, drivers under 25 years of age are over-represented in fatigue crashes.

myth – I know when I am tired, or when I am having "sleep attacks".

The danger is that you only find out how tired you are when it's too late.

The only cure for fatigue is sleep