



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Fatigue and Sleep Deprivation

"I thought I could drive 10 hours after getting only two hours of sleep. When I woke up just before my car hit an oak tree, I realized I was wrong."

– GM2(SW) Amber Owens, USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)

With summer travel soon approaching, it is important that Sailors and their families are [aware of fatigue](#) and have the essential tools for trip planning.

What is Fatigue?

Fatigue is a physiological state of diminished mental capacity caused by inadequate or insufficient sleep. It's commonly seen in those experiencing chronic sleep deprivation, shift-work, time zone travel and impaired sleep efficiency.

- Fatigue produces broad declines in multiple measures of performance including mood and motivation; high-level cognition, decision making, multi-tasking and situational awareness; basic reaction times and vigilance.
- Fatigue is under-recognized as a mishap causal factor, since there are no measurement tools. Navy work ethic and culture is often averse to recognition. Fatigue often masquerades as complacency, inattention, distraction, task-fixation, boredom, etc. Also, fatigued individuals are impaired in their own recognition of fatigue and its impact on performance.

Mishap Prevention

In driving, fatigue exceeds speeding, alcohol, and lack of protective equipment as causes of injury and death. Before a long road trip, Sailors should utilize risk management tools and build a pre-trip checklist. Planning can save lives.

- Managing and controlling fatigue requires a command climate and policies conducive to obtaining adequate sleep.
- Learn how fatigue affects the body by visiting <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/Fatigue/index.asp>. Use the Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS) to determine reasonable driving distances and plan 15 minute rest breaks every two to three hours. TRiPS is located on Navy Knowledge Online at www.nko.navy.mil.
- Supervisors must learn to recognize the symptoms of fatigue so they can limit risk in fatigued individuals
- DoD and DoN instructions state that Sailors should drive no more than 10 hours in any given 24-hour period. Long distance travel for two or more drivers should not exceed 16 hours in a 24-hour period.
- Hear one Sailor's story on the importance of fatigue awareness: Click on *Driving Tired Testimonial* at <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/Fatigue/index.asp>.

Key Messages

- Sailors should utilize risk management tools such as [TRiPS](#) and build a pre-trip checklist prior to any major travel.
- Sleep isn't optional – it's as necessary for survival as air, water, and nutrition.
- Sleep deficits produce declines in performance in a variety of conditions, and increase the risk of mishaps.

Facts & Figures

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that drowsy driving causes more than 100,000 crashes a year, 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths.
- 21-22 hours awake reduces performance on simple vigilance tasks to that seen in people who are legally drunk (BAC of 0.08%).
- Napping is the best strategy when adequate sleep isn't available. Any nap helps, and the longer the nap, the better.