



## The Most Hazardous Part of Your Day

Did you know that your commute home could be your biggest safety risk? If you're sleep-deprived and you often drive during hours when the body craves sleep, you are especially at risk. **Learn to recognize these signs of drowsy driving:**



- Difficulty focusing
- Frequent blinking
- Daydreaming and wandering thoughts
- Missing exits or traffic signals
- Being unable to remember the last few miles driven
- Uncontrollable yawning
- Eye rubbing
- Drifting between lanes
- Hitting a rumble strip or the shoulder of the road
- Feeling restless or irritable

Don't underestimate the dangers of drowsy driving — studies have shown that driving tired is as dangerous as driving drunk. If you are too tired to drive, pull into a rest stop or safe area and nap for 15 minutes. A glass of fruit juice can briefly spike your energy and help you get home safely.

**More precautions:** Take scheduled breaks at work and use the time to rest, eat and refresh. If possible, nap briefly before leaving work so you aren't drowsy while driving home; those few moments can make all the difference — and may save your life.



## Test Your Shiftwork Safety Smarts

Check the steps you routinely take at work to stay attentive and safe:

- I keep my work area brightly lit to simulate daylight and help me stay awake.
- I walk, stretch or otherwise exercise on my breaks to increase oxygen flow and perk up.
- I eat right to boost energy and avoid drowsiness.
- I work at a safe pace and avoid rushing or taking shortcuts.
- I know the signs of sleepiness (yawning, lack of concentration, feeling as though I'm on "autopilot") and watch out for them.
- If I become sleepy, I take precautions.
- I never drink alcohol before or during work.
- I nap before driving home if I feel drowsy at the end of my shift.
- I speak up if I see a co-worker acting drowsy or skimping on safety precautions.
- I make sleep a priority and avoid too many personal commitments that interfere with my rest times.
- I take time to relax and enjoy myself.
- I am familiar with all important safety procedures and regularly review them.
- I never rush to finish my work.



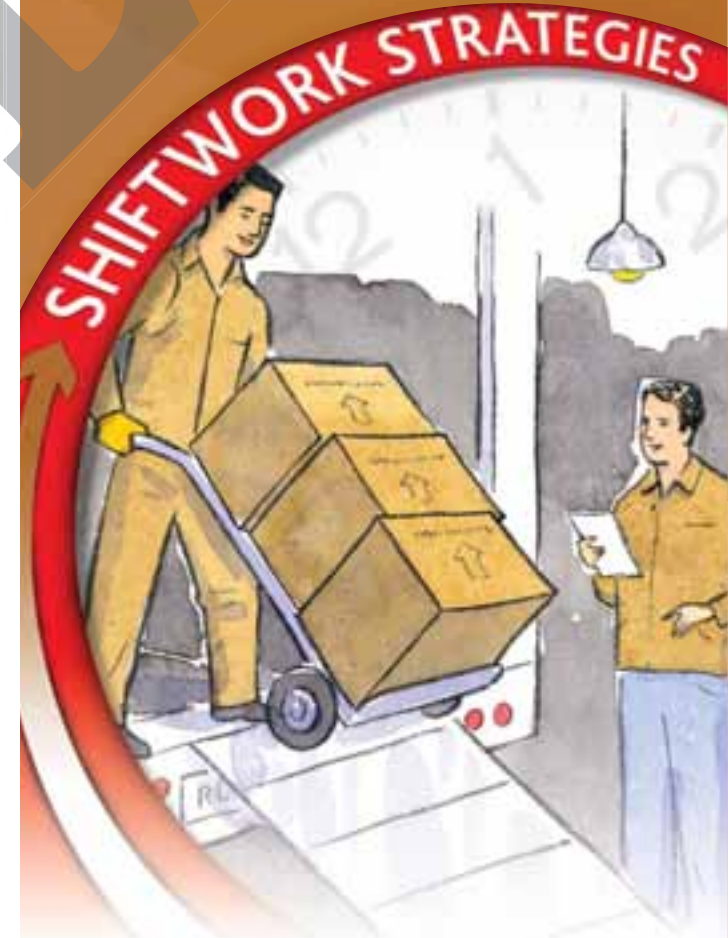
If you left a few items unchecked, don't worry. This is your opportunity to improve your habits and become even more successful at shiftwork — **by staying safe.**

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# Be Alert, Stay Safe

### Shiftworker Safety Tips



# Prevention Pays Off

The key to staying safe and injury-free at work is to take precautions *before* an incident occurs. Following safety regulations and taking care and pride in your work are important. What you do *off* the job affects your safety too; how much sleep you get, how you manage stress and how you balance work and family obligations can all affect your focus, safety and productivity.

**Take steps today toward safer shiftwork.**

## Where to Start: Get Enough Rest

You may be surprised to learn that being tired is one of the greatest risks to your safety.

### How sleep affects safety:

- Drowsy drivers experience the same effects as drunk drivers — slower reaction time, decreased awareness, impaired judgment — and are at an increased risk of crashing.
- Sleep deprivation can reduce attention, vigilance and decision-making ability by half.



### Signs of sleepiness:

- Heavy, tired eyes and blurred vision
- Yawning
- Slowed reactions
- Irritability
- Difficulty making decisions
- Inability to recall the past few minutes
- Lack of concentration
- Short-term memory failure
- Visual hallucinations (seeing something out of the corner of your eye that isn't there)

Your body will tell you when you need a rest — watch for the symptoms. And watch out for signs of sleepiness in your co-workers as well. People who experience these symptoms don't always *feel* tired. If you are too sleepy to be safe, take a break or a short nap, if possible.

## 4 Important Safety Risk Reminders

**1 Fatigue:** Lack of sleep leaves you more likely to make a mistake or become injured.

**Solution:** Protect your sleep time and keep a consistent sleep/wake schedule, even on days off. Some people find that “splitting” their sleep works best (sleeping a few hours before a work shift and a few hours after, supplementing with a nap) while others fare better with seven to eight straight hours of sleep. **Note:** Sleep medications can actually decrease the quality of sleep, and long-term use may increase fatigue and drowsiness.

**2 Shortcuts:** Procedures and systems are created for many reasons, including personal safety and injury prevention. Skipping steps and rushing can lead to inferior work and accidents.

**Solution:** Don't hurry to finish a job. Recognize when you or your co-workers are too tired to work safely. Know your company's safety precautions and regulations, and always follow them.

**3 Stress:** Chronic stress can make you nervous, unfocused and tired and can contribute to health problems such as headaches, back pain and stomachache. If you're stressed-out, you're not working safely.

**Solution:** Minimizing the distractions of stress can boost safety both on and off the job. Schedule fun, relaxation and social time. Communicate your sleep needs to those who care about you. There's room in everyone's life for rest and relaxation.

**4 Violence:** If you work alone, particularly at night, be especially aware of your personal safety.

**Solution:** Know your employer's policies on violent situations and what precautions to take. Be proactive regarding building security matters. Establish a plan that includes how to contact someone outside work in case of an emergency. If you work alone, be sure someone knows your whereabouts; create check-in times with a co-worker or family member to stay connected.



## Avoid Repetitive Strain Injuries

Repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) are caused by long-term repeated movements that irritate nerves, tendons, ligaments and muscles. RSIs commonly affect the hands, wrists, neck, back and shoulders.

### Prevention tips:

- Practice good posture while you work. Keep your spine centered over your hips, your shoulders and head level, and your feet flat on the floor.
- Use task-appropriate tools with ergonomic grips and low vibration.
- Type lightly on your computer keyboard.
- Alter your work space to reduce reaching, bending, twisting or straining.
- Stretch often to loosen muscles, particularly your back, shoulders, wrists and fingers.
- If you smoke, quit. Tobacco use raises RSI risk by damaging small blood vessels and reducing blood supply.

### TERM TO KNOW

**MICROSLEEP:** A period of unintended sleep lasting from a few seconds up to several minutes. During microsleep, the person may be unresponsive to events occurring nearby (such as a red light or an alarm bell). Often, a person's eyes remain open during microsleep, and he or she is unaware of being asleep on the job or road, creating a safety hazard. Microsleeps are most likely to occur in a person who is sleep-deprived during pre-dawn or mid-afternoon hours.