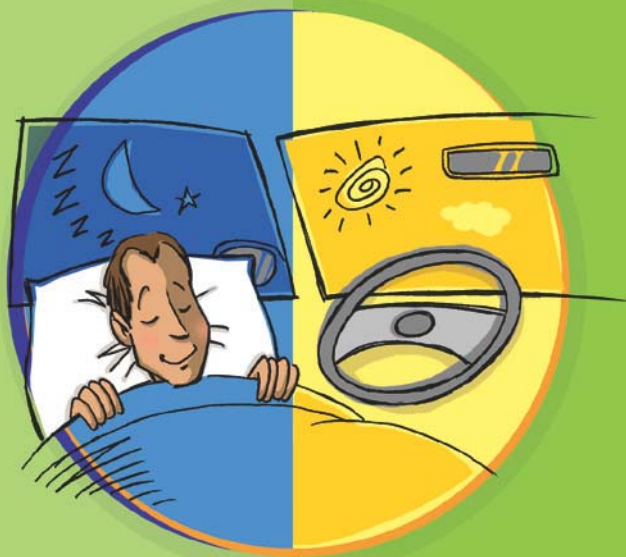


Driver Fatigue



Pull over to a safe place
as soon as you feel
the first signs of fatigue

Québec 

Fatigue-Impaired Driving

Driver fatigue is a key factor in 22.7 % of fatal accidents and 20.5 % of all road accidents involving bodily injuries on Québec roads.

With respect to professional drivers, studies have shown that approximately 15 % of road accidents involving a heavy vehicle are linked to accumulated fatigue. In addition, driver fatigue is a causal factor in 30 to 40 % of fatal accidents involving a heavy vehicle.

Like alcohol, sleep deprivation reduces a driver's concentration, judgment and reflexes and thus the ability to drive.

Individual and External Factors

Individual factors such as your health, age, sleep habits, diet and level of fitness significantly affect your ability to withstand fatigue. Other external factors, such as working conditions, road conditions, weather and boredom on the road can aggravate a situation of accumulated fatigue.

Risk Factors

To accurately determine your risk of fatigue, you need to take into account:

1. Number of continuous hours of being awake

In 40% of fatigue-related accidents, the driver had been awake for more than 17 hours. **After being awake 19 hours, your physical and mental performance is worse than if your blood-alcohol concentration was 50 mg/100 ml (0.05).** Your reaction time can be up to twice as slow, and your movements are less precise.

2. Time of the day

The risk of falling asleep at the wheel is greatest in the early afternoon, between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., and at night, between midnight and 6:00 a.m. Drowsiness episodes are eight times more likely at night than during the day. Why? Because a person's body follows a daily cycle that contains "lulls" during which the metabolism slows down, alertness decreases and fatigue sets in.

3. Sleep debt

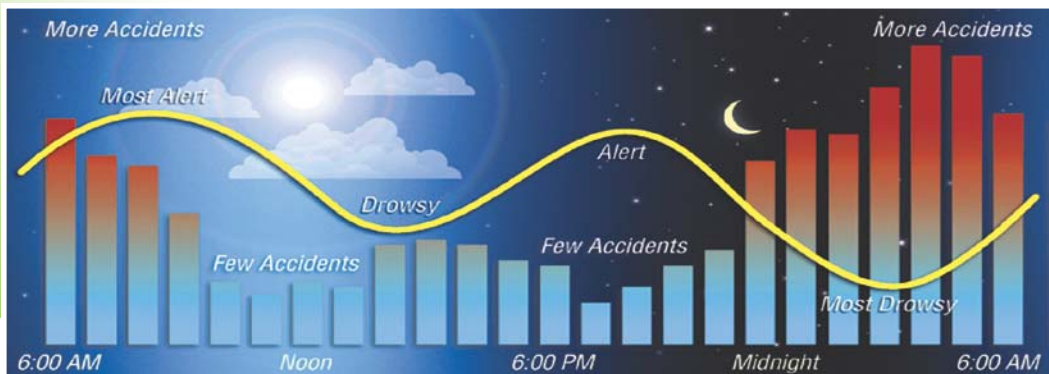
Half of the drivers involved in a fatigue-related accident had slept fewer than six hours the day before the accident. Regardless of your age, if you do not get enough sleep, you accumulate a "sleep debt." A "debt" of five hours has the same effect as consuming two or three glasses of wine, which is worse than having a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.05. If you have a sleep debt and drink alcohol, you are literally "drunk from fatigue." **The only way to combat a sleep debt is to get enough sleep.**

4. Sleep disorders

If you suffer from an untreated sleep disorder, your ability to drive is most certainly impaired. Consult a physician if you feel tired throughout the day or have difficulty sleeping at night.

5. Use of alcohol, medication or other drugs

The effects of fatigue are exacerbated by the use of even small amounts of alcohol, certain medications and other drugs.





Managing your Fatigue

AT HOME:

- ▶ Plan a rest period long enough to have a recuperative sleep;
- ▶ Exercise regularly; even 15 minutes a day is beneficial;
- ▶ Pay attention to what you eat: have light, low-fat meals that include a total of at least five to ten servings of fruits and vegetables per day, eat fewer sweets and less salt;
- ▶ Consult your physician for treatment of any sleep disorder.

ON THE ROAD:

- ▶ Leave well-rested;
- ▶ Plan breaks every two hours to move (walk or stretch);
- ▶ Take a nap when you begin to feel drowsy: 15 minutes are enough. Having a coffee or a snack, airing out the cab, readjusting your seat and changing positions or turning on the radio only have a temporary effect;
- ▶ Whenever possible, avoid driving at times you would normally sleep;
- ▶ Slow down: driving at high speed forces you to process a large amount of information quickly which, over time, brings on fatigue;
- ▶ Avoid visual fatigue when you drive: dim dashboard lighting, remove objects from the top of the dashboard to avoid reflections in the windshield, regularly clean the windshield and side mirrors;
- ▶ Eat light meals;
- ▶ Avoid alcohol.



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to rest as soon as
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signs of fatigue.**



Learn to recognize the signs of fatigue

Yes No

- Do you yawn often?
- Are your eyes tingling?
- Are you having trouble keeping your eyes open?
- Are you changing lanes without meaning to?
- Have you stopped checking the rearview and/or side mirrors?
- Are you experiencing periods of microsleep that last three to four seconds?
- Does your clothing feel tight?
- Are you feeling restless?
- Do your shoulders or neck feel stiff or cramped?
- Are you having problems concentrating, staying alert?
- Are you braking at the last minute?
- Are you having problems maintaining a steady speed and keeping the vehicle on a straight course in your lane?

Yes No

- Is your reaction time slowing down?
- Are you having trouble evaluating your speed and that of the other vehicles?
- Does the engine seem to sound louder now than when you left?
- Are you having memory lapses?
(e.g. you cannot remember the last few kilometres driven)
- Are you seeing things that are not there, particularly when there is fog or on monotonous stretches of highway?
(e.g. you think you see an animal on the road, or vehicles ahead or behind)





Have a safe trip!

For more information:

www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/accident_prevention/fatigue

C-4863-A (11-07)

**Société de l'assurance
automobile**

Québec



**Road
Safety**

*We are all responsible
for our conduct on the road*