



Managing CMV Driver Fatigue Risks Best Practices

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Driver Fatigue Management: A Practical Plan

- As an employer, Don't Hire Your Fatigue Problem
- As an employer, Don't Be Part Of The Problem
- As an employer, Do Be Part of The Prevention Solution

Driver Fatigue: Don't Hire Your Problem

- The best indicator any of us have of a driver's future performance is their past performance.
- Make sure the **Minimum Driver Qualification Standard** you have in place in your organization sufficiently screens out applicants who's record indicates the pattern for a **willingness to accept risk**. The sign says "wet paint" and these are the type of folks that just have to touch it to see if it's really wet. They are not Risk Rejecters, but instead they are Risk Acceptors.
- Our affiliates hire @ 3% of the drivers that apply with us. Be selective. To help us all improve in the fatigue-related crash arena, it starts with who we hire so let's not hire our fatigue problem.

Driver Fatigue: Don't Be Part Of The Problem

- With driver recruiting now being such an increasing challenge, many motor carriers have opened up their “hiring radius”. This is the distance away from the terminal which the applicant could live within. In the past many motor carriers would limit that distance to 25 miles or possibly 50 miles. But now 75 miles and even 100 miles is not unheard of. Depending on the locale, this expansion of the hiring radius from say 50 to 75 miles could add an additional 1-2 hours of behind-the-wheel time to the driver’s day. This is not conducive to fatigue prevention so look at your hiring radius allowance around your terminals and communicate this risk internally.
- We already have an excellent tool to help us fight fatigue.....it’s the Hours-of-Service rules.
- Make sure the drivers are trained (1) initially, (2) recurrently and also (3) remedially on HOS; it’s not “once-and-done” with HOS training.
- Don’t train just the drivers in HOS; ensure the driver support personnel (dispatchers, supervisors, etc.) are all trained in HOS as well. I can’t stress this point enough.
- If not already in place, consider a Compliance Improvement Process that contains progressive discipline for your HOS program to help the drivers be as compliant as they can be, to minimize the risk of violation or crash, and to minimize fatigue.

Driver Fatigue: Be Part Of The Solution

- If not already in place, consider a monthly Driver Report Card or something similar that provides feedback to the driver, not only on their deviations from expected performance in the month, but also to praise the driver for being professional and compliant. It's inexpensive and it works.
- When we do an post-crash review, it's been my experience that one of the traits that a driver involved in a fatigue-related crash **DOES NOT** have is that he's a Trip Planner. Drivers that are in the habit of planning their trips (when they will stop, for how long they will stop, where they will stop, etc.) are typically NOT the driver that's involved in a fatigue-related accident so stress Trip Planning. It's being undervalued and largely overlooked in our industry.
- While the regulations allow a motor carrier to accept a valid physical the individual might bring with them to your company, a best practice recommendation is that on every new hire, require that a new physical be done at your company sanctioned clinic. This can prevent hiring a driver with undiagnosed sleep apnea or OSA which clearly can contribute to fatigue.

Driver Fatigue: Be Part Of The Solution

- **Use the telematics data your vehicles provide** to prevent fatigue and fatigue-related crashes. Most commercial vehicles today produce telematics data indicating panic braking, speeding, roll stability control, etc. We have trucking affiliates that use the telematics data each morning, and they haven't had a single rollover in a curve or exit ramp in over 7 years now.
- Large meals on the road.....it's been my experience, now with slightly over 40 years in this business, that if a driver is going to fall asleep, it will be within 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes after eating a large meal on the road. Some of the most successful million mile safe drivers were always in the habit of eating small meals when "on the road" and not eating that large banquet-type meal. This is information that we're not sharing in our industry but we need to in order to prevent fatigue
- If you haven't done so already, we can fight fatigue-related crashes by giving our drivers a tool or system to deal with all the stresses that driving on today's highway brings and specifically, I'm referring to a Protective Driving System like Smith System and there are others. But this tool allows a driver a method to process with less stress and fatigue, the various challenges coming into his life mile after mile.

Driver Fatigue: Be Part Of The Solution

- Awareness: the driver fatigue issue is really broken down into two (2) elements, isn't it? What the driver did with his time while at work (which we can reasonably account for), and what he did in the other half of his day which we have very little information on and even less control over. But what that driver does in that off time is critically important in the driver fatigue discussion. So we must raise the communication with our driver force about the absolute need for recuperative rest and help them understand what happens when they don't get it so it's an awareness issue.
- What's new on the technology front that can further help us prevent fatigue-related crashes? It may well be artificial intelligence. The latest in-cab camera offerings draw in effect, an imaginary box around the head of the driver to detect fixed stares, drowsiness, nodding, etc. This tool can offer great assistance in our efforts to manage driver fatigue.

Driver Fatigue: Be Part Of The Solution

- Hiring area.....with many motor carriers struggling to hire drivers, it has been common that hiring radius's have been expanded in which an applicant can live. Expanding that hiring area from 25 miles away from a terminal to say 75 miles, can add 100 miles of daily driving burden on the driver and could add, depending on location, 2-3 hours of additional behind the wheel time each day and that is not insignificant. Can it contribute to driver fatigue, you bet it can.
- Consider providing your drivers with a monthly regimen of assigned risk management video training modules, preferably custom-content or off the shelf material. Our affiliates prescribe @ 1 hour per month per driver and those training modules include fatigue prevention.