

Chapter 26 Lesson 4: Safety on the Road

Introduction:

People talk a lot about the risks of driving a car while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. What they don't always mention, however, is that "driving drowsy" can be just as dangerous as driving drunk. Aside from the obvious risk of falling asleep at the wheel, being sleepy slows down your reaction time and impairs your judgment. The Web site below has more information about the risks of drowsy driving and how to reduce your risk.

Links to Explore:

Report on Injuries in America

http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/drowsy_driving.htm

Directions:

- Click on the link and read the fact sheet on drowsy driving.
 - After reading the page, answer the following questions:
1. How much higher is the risk of being in a fatal auto accident at night as opposed to during the daytime?
 2. What percentage of all drivers have fallen asleep at the wheel at least once?
 3. Identify three warning signs of driver fatigue.
 4. What should you do if you begin to feel sleepy while driving?
 5. During long car trips, how often should you stop the car and walk around to combat fatigue?

Answers:

1. 2.3 times higher
2. 37 percent
3. Any three of the following:
 - Eyes closing or going out of focus
 - Persistent yawning
 - Irritability, restlessness, and impatience
 - Wandering or disconnected thoughts
 - Inability to remember driving the last few miles
 - Drifting between lanes or onto shoulder
 - Abnormal speed, tailgating, or failure to obey traffic signs
 - Back tension, burning eyes, shallow breathing or inattentiveness
4. Pull off the road in a well-lit area and take a short nap.
5. Every 100 miles or every 2 hours

Additional Links to Explore:

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

Drowsy Driving and Automobile Crashes

http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/drowsy_driving1/Drowsy.html

Smart Drivers Just Drive

<http://www.distracteddriving.org/>