

Fact sheet

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Transport for NSW and the Point to Point Transport Commissioner are working together with industry to achieve safer point to point transport in NSW. Taxi and booking service providers and drivers need to play their role in keeping us all safe on the road. It is important that drivers do not feel a need to drive tired - for the safety of themselves, their passengers and others on the road.

This fact sheet, developed with the NSW Centre for Road Safety, covers key information regarding driver fatigue and tiredness that service providers and drivers should consider when managing their safety risks.

Under the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017 service providers are required to develop and maintain safety management systems that identify, record and manage risks associated with their services.

One important risk is driver fatigue, and service providers will need to implement a fatigue management policy and program that ensures drivers are fit to drive at all times they are undertaking passenger services. This may include implementing policies regarding scheduling, shift duration, night driving and rest breaks, for example.

Drivers must comply, so far as is reasonably practicable, with any reasonable instruction, safety policy or procedure of their service provider.

During safety audits on service providers, auditors will determine whether:

- driver fatigue is identified and considered, and steps are taken to manage risks associated with fatigue
- the service provider has a fatigue management program which is based on a risk assessment
- the service provider monitors or records any secondary employment of the driver and any impact on the driver
- any other factors considered relevant to the individual service provider.

The issue of driving tired

- Fatigue is the second biggest killer on NSW roads.
- Being awake for 17 hours can have a similar effect on your driving performance as a blood alcohol content of 0.05.
- Fatigue is not just extreme exhaustion but includes everyday mental or physical tiredness that affect a person's ability to function.
- Fatigue reduces attentiveness and alertness to dangers, slows reaction times and can lead to microsleeps.
- Tiredness can occur on any drive - no matter how long or short, or the time of day.
- Driving at night is when you are most at risk of tiredness, as well as after lunch and early in the morning.

Avoid driving tired

It's important to think about how tired you are before and while you are driving. There are a number of key strategies you can use to lower the risks of driving tired.

Before you drive:

- get a good night's sleep
- where possible, avoid driving between midnight and 6:00am, when your body naturally wants to sleep
- plan regular breaks
- know the early warning signs of fatigue - yawning, sore eyes, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, oversteering
- find out if any medicine you are taking may affect your driving.

While driving:

- take regular breaks
- if you start to feel tired, or experience any early warning signs, pull over somewhere safe and take a nap - 15-20 minutes works best.

The science of sleep

Microsleeps

A microsleep is a brief and unintended episode of sleep characterised by head snapping, nodding or closing your eyes. It can be deadly behind the wheel. During a four-second microsleep, a vehicle travelling at 60 km/h will travel 67 metres while completely out of the driver's control.

Circadian rhythms

We are programmed by our body's circadian rhythms to sleep at night and be awake during the day. Problems occur if we disrupt our natural sleep cycles, especially by staying awake during the night, not getting enough sleep, or suffering poor quality sleep.

Sleep debt

We all need about 8 hours of sleep a night to function effectively. When we reduce the amount we sleep at night, we start to accumulate a sleep debt - the hours of sleep needed but not had. Sleep debt can only be erased by having more sleep.

Sleep inertia

This is the feeling of grogginess you experience after waking and is most dangerous for people who drive in the early morning hours.

Sleep is the only way to overcome tiredness.

Further Education

Related resources are available from the [Learning centre](#) and the following links:

- [Service providers obligations for managing drivers](#)
- [Duty of care and Safety Management Systems fact sheet](#)
- [Fatigue Management Checklist](#)
- [Ensuring safe journeys for all on regional roads podcast](#)
- [Safety Management System video](#)
- [Safety and onboarding video](#)

If you have any questions or need further information, please visit the Point to Point Transport Commissioner's website pointtopoint.nsw.gov.au or call the Industry Contact Centre on 131 727.

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