

Travel Planning

Fact Sheet 13.1 continued

Content Information

Preparing the Driver for a Trip

- **Prepare the driver** – the driver is the most important factor in having a safe road trip
 - **Get plenty of sleep** – get at least 7 or 8 hours of sleep
 - **Drive during waking hours** – this will prevent drowsy driving; avoid driving after dark when visibility is limited and particularly after 11 p.m. when you are more apt to fall asleep while driving
 - **Take breaks** – stop every 2 or 3 hours or every 100 miles with 10 – 15 minute breaks
 - **Be aware of “highway hypnosis”** – occurs particularly on a rural expressway with little traffic when traveling at high speeds for long periods of time, the driver may become hypnotized by constant staring ahead on the roadway, which may result in driving in a dulled, drowsy or trancelike condition, plan breaks and pull to a safe area if tired
 - **Do not drive for extended periods of time** – if one person will be doing all of the driving, 6 to 8 hours of driving in any one day should be considered the limit. If sharing the driving between two people, driving should not exceed 10 – 12 hours.
 - **Be aware of “down time”** – the period between one and five p.m. and plan to take a break during that period
 - **Be prepared for anything** – bring extra set of keys, insurance information, money, water to drink, high energy food and fruit, vehicle owner’s manual, and maps
 - **Make reservations in advance** – if camping or staying in hotels/motels make the reservations ahead of time
 - **Let others know where you are staying** – let a family member or trusted friend know where and how to reach you in an emergency
 - **Determine costs** – determine approximate costs of fuel, meals, lodging and entertainment and be prepared to pay any large repair bill in case of a vehicle breakdown

Travel Planning

Fact Sheet 13.1 continued

Content Information

Preparing for Any Trip

- **Load the vehicle** – do not overload the vehicle, which results in more fuel consumed, distribute weight evenly throughout the vehicle. Load the trunk area first and be sure to secure loose items.
 - Load capacity is basically 150 lbs. per belted seating position plus 125-175 lbs. for luggage. Check owners' manual.
 - Soft items only within passenger compartment, i.e. pillows and/or blankets.
 - Car-top carriers raise center of gravity and adversely affect braking and steering.
- **Pack emergency equipment** – be prepared for anything unexpected
 - Maps with routes marked
 - Flashlight, first-aid kit, screwdriver, pliers, adjustable end wrench and socket set
 - Jack, spare tire, lug wrench, wheel blocks and battery jumper cables
 - Tow line, gloves, blanket, radiator coolant/anti-freeze and windshield wiper fluid
 - Window scraper, chains and warm clothing

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The Causes and Effects of Fatigue

Fact Sheet 12.1 continued

Content Information

Preventing Drowsiness and Maintaining Alertness

Preventing drowsiness before a trip:

- Get adequate sleep – adults need 8 to 9 hours to maintain alertness
- Prepare route carefully to identify total distance, stopping points and other logistic considerations
- Drive with a passenger
- Avoid medications that cause drowsiness

Maintaining alertness while driving:

- Protect yourself from glare and eyestrain with sunglasses
- Avoid heavy foods
- Be aware of down time during the day
- Have another person ride with you, and take turns driving
- Take periodic breaks – about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips
- Stop driving and get some rest or take a nap
- Consume caffeine – can increase awareness for a few hours, but do not drink too much. It will eventually wear off. Do not rely on caffeine to prevent fatigue.

Ineffective actions:

- “Toughing it out”
- Playing the radio loudly
- Driving at a faster or slower speed
- Chewing gum
- Opening the windows

Rest is the key:

It is usually not a good idea to sleep in a vehicle at the side of the road, but there may be times when it is safer than continuing to drive. If you must stop along the side of the road:

- Find a populated, lighted area
- Stop where security is present or make sure you are as far off the highway as possible
- Open windows slightly, but not enough to allow entry from outside
- Lock all doors and turn off the engine
- Turn on parking lights and turn off other electrical equipment
- After you rest, if safe, get out of the vehicle and walk a few minutes before driving, sleeping for more than 20 minutes can make you groggy for at least 5 minutes after awakening

Unit 12 The Effects of Fatigue and Emotions on Driving

The Causes and Effects of Fatigue

Worksheet 12.1

How Sleepy Are You? Questionnaire

Name _____

Date _____

Use this questionnaire from the National Road Safety Foundation to measure your general level of daytime sleepiness. Answers are rated on a reliable scale called the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS). Each item describes a routine situation. Use the scale below to rate the likelihood that you would doze off or fall asleep during that activity.

0	1	2	3
Would never doze	Slight chance of dozing	Moderate chance of dozing	High chance of dozing

Sitting & reading



_____ chance of dozing

Watching television



_____ chance of dozing

Sitting inactive in a public place, for example, a theater or meeting



_____ chance of dozing

As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break



_____ chance of dozing

Lying down to rest in the afternoon



_____ chance of dozing

Sitting & talking to someone



_____ chance of dozing

In a car, while stopped in traffic



_____ chance of dozing

Sitting quietly after lunch (when you've had no alcohol)



_____ chance of dozing

If your total is 10 or higher, consider discussing these results with your physician or other health care provider. Keeping a sleep diary for two weeks or longer can help you identify behaviors that might contribute to your fatigue.

Source: The National Road Safety Foundation

