Wake Up to Teen Drowsy Driving: NTSB Investigations and Lessons Learned

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Overview of NTSB

- Independent Federal Agency
- Headquartered in Washington, DC
- About 400 staff nationwide
- Mission: Independently Advance Transportation Safety
Multi Modal
- Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight
- Ensure the Safe Shipment of Hazardous Materials
- Increase Implementation of Collision Avoidance Technologies
- Strengthen Occupant Protection
- Prevent Loss of Control in Flight in General Aviation
- Eliminate Distractions
- Require Medical Fitness
- Expand Recorder Use to Enhance Safety
- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- End Alcohol and Other Drug Impairment in Transportation
Fatigue and Drowsy Driving

- Reaction time slows, lapses occur
- Increased risk of crashes
- Negative mood, impulsivity
- Increased likelihood of smoking and alcohol use
- Metabolism changes, weight gain
Young Drowsy Drivers and Crash Risk

• 1 in 5 fatal crashes involve a drowsy driver
• Drivers aged 16-24 are at greatest risk for drowsy driving crashes
• High schoolers who sleep <7 hours
  • Text while driving more
  • Drink and drive more
  • Wear seat belts less
Annapolis, MD, August 10, 2008
Camaro Driver

- “I had been up late the past few days.”
- “By the time we got to the tolls at the Bay Bridge I felt extremely tired but didn’t have anywhere to pull over.”
- “I dozed off for a moment and the crash occurred.”
Robstown, TX, March 20, 2016
Robstown Factual Evidence

• Spring break trip
• No evidence of distraction or substance impairment
• Short window for sleep during morning hours
• Shallow angle of departure
Drowsiness and Performance

- Impaired decision making
- “Cognitive tunneling”
- Overlooking or skipping tasks
- Unresponsiveness or delayed responses
- Microsleeps
Microsleeps and Driving

• Q: How well can you predict whether you will experience a micro-sleep during the next 2 minutes?
  • A: Not very well

• Q: How far can a car traveling 60 mph go during a 3-second micro-sleep?
  • A: About 264 feet, or 15 car lengths
Why Do People Drive Drowsy?

It Won’t Happen to ME!
Fatigue and Drowsy Driving

• You need sleep
• How much?
  ▪ 7-9 hours
t    general guidance
  ▪ 8.5-9.25 hours
    for adolescents
• Sleep at night
• Don’t fragment sleep

Get a FULL charge!

Drowsy driving can be as dangerous as distracted and impaired driving.

High School students need 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night.

7 hours or less = degraded driving performance.
What Can You Do?

• Make sleep a priority
  ▪ 7-9 hours – adults
  ▪ 8.5-9.25 – adolescents

- Sleep at night
- Don’t fragment sleep
- Avoid drugs that affect sleep or wakefulness
- Avoid driving when sleep normally occurs
- Parents and schools – set a good example
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