

03/05/2017

For the attention of

All Staff

Summary

One of our sub-contractors was driving home from working a 7 hour night shift and fell asleep at the wheel. He had been driving for around an hour travelling at a speed of approximately 30mph.

There were also 2 sleeping passengers in the van and fortunately there were no injuries. A pedestrian refuge beacon post was damaged and the van sustained a punctured tyre and damage to the front offside body work.

This was the last shift of 7 nights, each shift approx. 8hours with 1 ½ hour each way driving.

The driver was interviewed to better understand his sleeping patterns and any factors that may have affected his sleep.

- *The driver believed he had an effective routine, after dropping his 2 work mates off at their homes, he would stop to eat a breakfast and have a short sleep in the van. He would then drive home approx. 30mins. By this time the family home would be quite with the children being at school. He said he slept well usually for around 8 hours.*
- *On waking he would continue with his training session for the 3 Peaks Challenge (due that weekend) to do some long distance walking and have an evening meal prior to setting off for the next night shift.*
- *His wife was due to give birth to their 4th baby that week; he said he had a lot on his mind.*
- *The house was quiet during the day with no outside disturbances.*
- *The previous week the driving to/from site had been shared with a fellow worker, one driving to site and one driving home, however this week the 2 passengers were not drivers and could not share the riving.*
- *He felt he was getting sufficient sleep and he did not think he was too tired to drive.*



Actions / Key Messages

“At any given time, one in five people feels unusually tired, and one in 10 have prolonged fatigue. Studies have shown that drivers don’t fall asleep without warning. Drivers who fall asleep at the wheel have often tried to fight off drowsiness by opening a window, or by turning up the radio. This doesn’t work for long”

- Attitude** If you start to feel sleepy, find a safe place to stop - not the hard shoulder of a motorway. Drink two cups of coffee or a high-caffeine drink and have a rest for 10 to 15 minutes to allow time for the caffeine to kick in.
- Influence** The only real cure for sleepiness is proper sleep. A caffeine drink or a nap is a short-term solution that will only allow you to keep driving for a short time.
- Management** Ensure journeys are planned to include a 15-minute break every two hours. Try to avoid rostering long trips between midnight and 6am when drivers are likely to feel sleepy anyway.

[TBT R006 Road Vehicle Driver fatigue - Issue 1](#)