

****For PSC Insiders Circle Members only****

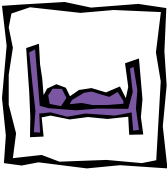
\$3.97 USD

Friday Safety Brief®

Sleep Apnea & Commercial Drivers

Do you snore? Do you feel sleepy during the day? Are you over 40 or overweight? If you answered yes to these questions, you may be at risk for obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea is a breathing-related sleep disorder that causes brief interruptions of breathing during sleep. These pauses in breathing can last at least 10 seconds or more and can occur up to 400 times a night. Sleep apnea is a serious, potentially life-threatening condition that often goes unrecognized and undiagnosed.



The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) says that as many 28 percent of commercial driver's license (CDL) holders have sleep apnea.

Signs of sleep apnea include daytime sleepiness, falling asleep at inappropriate times, loud snoring, depression, irritability, loss of sex drive, morning headaches, frequent nighttime urination, lack of concentration, and memory impairment. For commercial drivers, these symptoms are dangerous and potentially deadly. Research indicates that untreated sleep apnea puts drivers at increased risk for motor vehicle crashes. In fact, one study found that drivers with untreated sleep apnea did worse on performance tests than healthy alert subjects whose blood alcohol concentrations was above the federal limit for driving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).

The good news is that sleep apnea is a highly treatable disorder. A continuous positive airway pressure machine is the most effective therapy, requiring patients to wear a nasal mask during sleep. The mask, connected to a pump, gently forces compressed air into the nasal passages at pressures high enough to open the airway from the inside. In addition, people with sleep apnea can lose weight, avoid alcohol prior to bedtime, and avoid sleeping on their backs. Other treatments include the wearing of oral devices and surgery to remove enlarged tonsils, adenoids, nasal polyps, or other growths. Deviated nasal septums or unusually formed jaws or soft palates can also be corrected surgically.

Once you have received treatment for sleep apnea and comply with your treatment plan, you can do your job as safely as someone who doesn't have the disorder.✿

Are You At Risk for Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea occurs in all age groups and both sexes, but there are certain factors that put you at higher risk:

- *A family history of sleep apnea*
- *Being overweight*
- *A large neck size (17 inches or greater for men, 16 inches or greater for women)*
- *Being age 40 or older*
- *Having a small upper airway*
- *Having a recessed chin, small jaw or a large overbite*
- *Smoking and alcohol use*

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According to "American Trucking Trends 2011", a compilation of statistical information produced by American Trucking Associations:

- ⇒ The trucking industry employs nearly **7 million** people – including more than **3 million** drivers, **164,000** of whom are women.
- ⇒ Texas has the greatest number of people employed in the trucking industry, but on a percentage basis Nebraska ranks first.
- ⇒ Trucks consumed **33.9 billion** gallons of diesel fuel in 2010.
- ⇒ Class 8 trucks traveled more than **108 billion** miles.
- ⇒ Commercial trucks of all classes paid **\$34.3 billion** in federal and state highway-user taxes.

Happy Easter!

