Photo by © Thinkstock

Do you have a sleep disorder?

Sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea and insomnia are more common than most people realize. See your doctor if you spend 7–9 hours in bed but:

- You consistently take more than 30 minutes to fall asleep.
- You consistently awaken several times during sleep or for long periods.
- You take frequent naps.
- You often feel sleepy, especially at inappropriate times.

Having a sleep disorder doesn't have to mean going out of service. Simple changes may lessen symptoms. Learn more at, http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Truck drivers and trucking companies wanting more information and strategies on how to sleep better and to reduce the risks associated with fatigue, visit

http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/workschedules/

http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/sectors/twu/

http://www.nafmp.com/en/

OTHER RESOURCES

- http://www.cdc.gov/sleep
- http://www.sleepfoundation.org/
- http://drowsydriving.org/
- http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/resources/sleep/

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To obtain information about other occupational safety and health topics, contact NIOSH at

Telephone: **1–800–CDC–INFO** (1–800–232–4636)
TTY: 1–888–232–6348 ▪ E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

or visit the NIOSH website at **http://www.cdc.gov/niosh**

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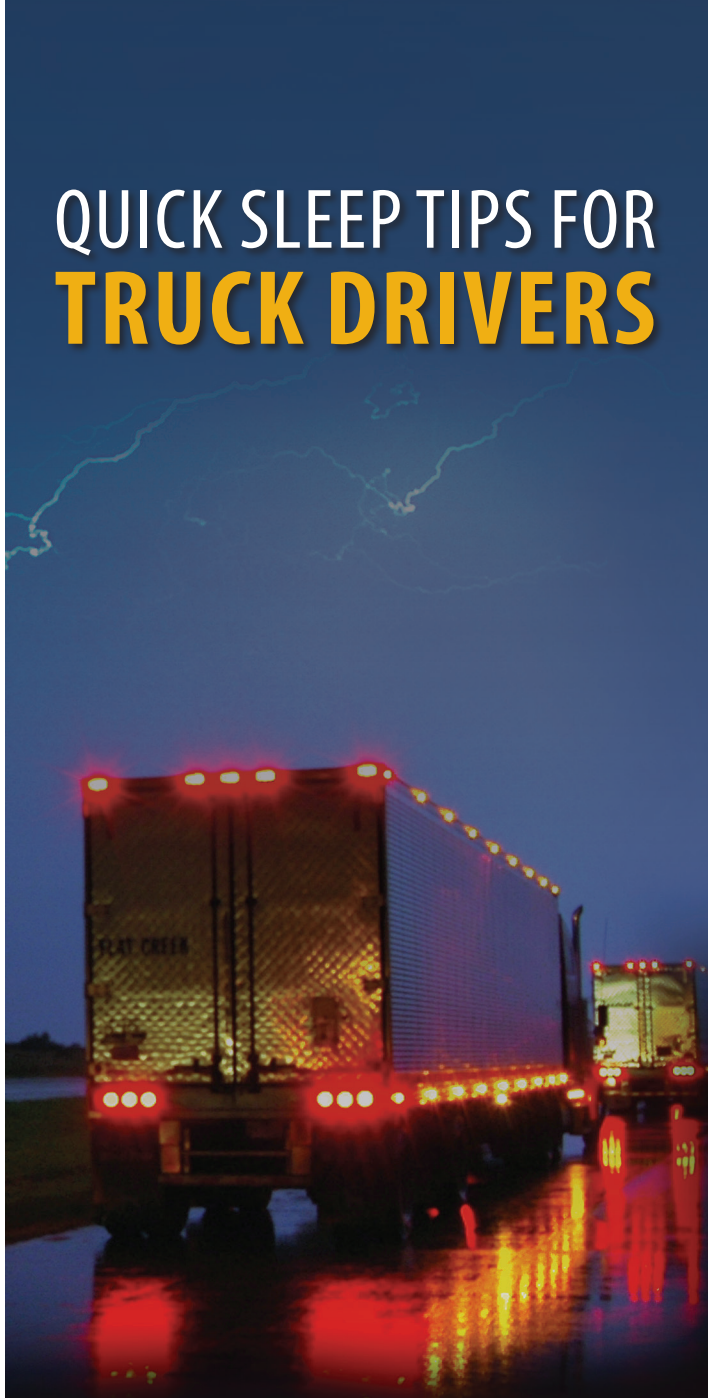
QUICK SLEEP TIPS FOR TRUCK DRIVERS



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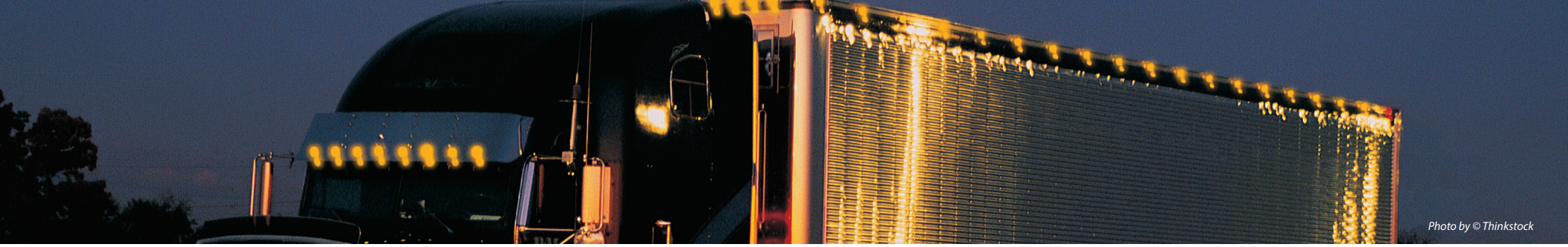

THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR TRUCK DRIVERS

FOR YOUR HEALTH

Good sleep is as important as proper nutrition and exercise. Your body is busy during sleep, repairing wear and tear and getting you in shape for a new day. Without enough sleep, you might experience:

- Slower reactions, a cloudy mind, or a bad mood
- Weakening of body defenses, increasing your risk for infections, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Increased appetite, over eating, and obesity

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Driving a truck is a very demanding job. Lack of sleep makes it more difficult to meet the demands of the job and increases your risk for drowsy driving and vehicle crashes. This could mean the difference between stopping with a vehicle just in front of your bumper, or with it in your seat.

Because your 24/7 job keeps you on the road for long periods and at night, it can affect your sleep quality. Creating a relaxing bedtime routine along with a good sleep environment can improve your sleep.

Most drowsy driving crashes or near misses occur during:

4:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.

Midnight – 2:00 a.m.

2:00 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Use *CAUTION* when driving at these times.

WHERE YOU SLEEP MATTERS

A good sleep environment improves sleep quality. Your sleep environment may depend on your schedule, but you can improve your sleep environment on the road or at home.

- **Keep safety in mind.** Park with a balance of quiet and safety in mind.
- **Block out all light.** Close all curtains and truck shades, or use an eye mask.
- **Block out noise.** Use ear plugs or a "white noise" machine like a fan to block out noises. Silence phones and assign an audible ringtone to important contacts to minimize distractions.
- **Keep your cab or bedroom temperature cool.** People's temperature preferences vary, so keep your room temperature comfortable for you.
- **Get comfortable.** You spend one third of your life in bed, so use a comfortable mattress and pillow. Consider upgrading or replacing the mattress in your sleeper if it is old or uncomfortable.

PREPARE FOR BETTER SLEEP

Try to get 7–9 hours of sleep each day; most people need this amount. Be aware of your body's natural feelings of sleepiness. When you are driving, try to plan your stops and sleep breaks to match your natural sleep times. Sleeping at about the same times every day helps improve sleep. Getting sufficient and regular sleep actually will help you fall asleep faster and sleep better in the future. Better sleep will lead to better health and increased alertness. Remember, any exercise during the day that does not take away from sleep time improves sleep.

Avoid before bedtime:

- Heavy or spicy meals (2–3 hours before bed)
- Liquids (to avoid getting up to use the bathroom), especially alcohol, which causes sleep disturbances
- Caffeine (according to your own sensitivity)—this stimulant can help you stay awake while driving, but remember it can affect your body for five hours or more so plan your intake so that it does not prevent you from getting good sleep
- Nicotine and other stimulants
- Exposure to light from television and electronics (tablets, computers, etc.)—studies show that light from these devices can disturb your sleep

Do before bedtime:

- Explain to family, friends, and dispatchers the importance of your sleep, when you will be sleeping, and ask them not to disturb you when you are sleeping to minimize disruptions.
- Driving a truck is a stressful, demanding job. Follow a relaxing routine within an hour or more of bedtime. This will signal to your brain that it is time to sleep. Brushing your teeth, washing your face, and getting undressed for bed will help you relax and fall asleep.