

# Forty-three Percent of Americans Too Tired to Function Safely at Work

According to a new National Safety Council survey-based report, 43 percent of Americans say they do not get enough sleep to mitigate critical risks that can jeopardize safety at work and on the roads, including the ability to think clearly, make informed decisions and be productive.

Eighty-one percent of the probability-based survey respondents have jobs that are at high risk for fatigue – positions that require sustained attention or are physically or cognitively demanding, such as driving a vehicle or working at a construction site, according to the report, *Fatigue in the Workplace: Causes & Consequences of Employee Fatigue.*

The survey found 97 percent of Americans say they have at least one of the leading nine risk factors for fatigue, which include working at night or in the early morning, working long shifts without regular breaks, working more than 50 hours each week and enduring long commutes. Seventy-six percent of Americans say they feel tired at work, 53 percent feel less productive, and 44 percent have trouble focusing. Fatigued employees are more likely to make safety critical errors that could lead to injury, such as crashing their vehicle.

"These findings are a literal wake-up call: When we're tired, we can put ourselves and others at risk," said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. "We hope Americans recognize that impairment stems not just from alcohol and drugs, but lack of restorative rest – fitness for duty starts with getting a good night's sleep."

Fatigue impacts most Americans and, in turn, every workforce – too often resulting in disaster. A person who loses two hours of sleep from a normal eight-hour sleep schedule may be as impaired as someone who has consumed up to three beers.[i] An estimated 13 percent of workplace injuries could be attributed to fatigue[ii], and 21 percent of all fatal car crashes – 6,400 deaths each year – are attributed to a drowsy driver.[iii]

The survey – the entirety of which will be released in three separate reports – also found:

- Forty-one percent work high-risk hours, at least occasionally.
- Thirty-nine percent have trouble remembering things at work because of fatigue.
- Thirty-one percent commute 30 minutes or more, which exacerbates the chances of falling asleep behind the wheel.
- Twenty-seven percent have trouble making decisions because of fatigue.
- Ten percent do not get regular rest breaks.
- There are geographical trends when it comes to the number of Americans with fatigue risk factors. This survey identified that the South has the highest mean number of risk factors at 3.21, while the Midwest has the lowest with 2.94 risk factors.

The complete report and more information about fatigue are available at [nsc.org/fatigue](https://nsc.org/fatigue)