

National Sleep Foundation Expert Consensus Panel Concludes that Missing a Night of Sleep Renders Drivers Unfit to Operate a Motor Vehicle

WASHINGTON, DC (May 10, 2016)--[The National Sleep Foundation](#) (NSF) today published the conclusions of its Drowsy Driving Consensus Panel in the June 2016 online edition of its award-winning journal [Sleep Health](#). The publication marks the first scientific expert consensus determination that it is unsafe to operate a motor vehicle when sleep deprived. The panel concluded: *Individuals who have slept less than 2 hours in the prior 24 hours are too sleep deprived to get behind the wheel of a vehicle.* Members of the NSF-convened expert panel further agreed that most healthy drivers would likely be impaired with only three to five hours of sleep during the prior 24 hours.

“The National Sleep Foundation Drowsy Driving Consensus Statement gives public policy makers a clear direction on when vehicle operators should be considered too sleep deprived to drive, and are therefore impaired,” said David Cloud, CEO of the National Sleep Foundation. “We believe this simple definition for drowsy driving will serve as a powerful tool to help policy makers create safer roads and drivers to make sound decisions.”

The publication and definition are the result of a systematic literature review by a panel of experts from sleep, transportation and medicine, followed by consensus building and voting. The consensus statement has been endorsed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the American College of Chest Physicians, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms.

“Sleep-deprived drivers cause more than 6,400 deaths and 50,000 debilitating injuries on American roadways each year. This study represents the first expert consensus determination available to guide those attempting to reduce the risk of these preventable tragedies through legislation and public policies,” said Charles A. Czeisler, PhD, MD, Chair of the Consensus Panel and Chief of the Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

The Drowsy Driving Consensus Statement will be featured in the June 2016 print edition of NSF’s *Sleep Health* Journal and is now available online at www.sleephealthjournal.org. The Drowsy Driving Definition was first announced during Drowsy Driving Prevention Week 2015, NSF’s annual campaign to educate the public about the under-reported risks of drowsy driving and to improve safety on the road.

For more information about the Drowsy Driving Consensus Statement or to schedule an interview, please contact Tom Clifford: nfmedia@sleepfoundation.org.

About the National Sleep Foundation

The National Sleep Foundation is dedicated to improving health and well-being through sleep education and advocacy. Founded in 1990 by the leaders in sleep medicine, NSF is the trusted resource for sleep science, healthy sleep habits, and sleep disorders to medical professionals, patients and the public.

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