



## Louisiana Highway Safety Commission News Release November 7, 2023

### **Governor proclaims Drowsy Driving Prevention Week®**

**Baton Rouge** – Governor John Bel Edwards, in recognition of the National Sleep Foundation’s efforts, has proclaimed the week of November 5–11 Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® in Louisiana.

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® is a national campaign led by the National Sleep Foundation that found that six in 10 drivers have driven a car when they were so tired, they had a hard time keeping their eyes open. And although 95% of Americans think it’s a bad idea, most people who are too fatigued to drive do it anyway.

“This is a great opportunity to bring a less talked about behavioral driving issue to light,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. “The dangers of drowsy driving may seem like common sense, but most people do it anyway. That needs to stop to save lives.”

The Louisiana Highway Safety Commission is committed to raising awareness of drowsy driving and its inherent dangers for Louisiana road users. Thirty-two lives in Louisiana and 3,274 lives nationwide were lost in a crash involving a drowsy driver from 2017-21.

Drowsy driving occurs when a driver is behind the wheel while they are too fatigued to remain alert. The NSF reports that young drivers (16-25) and shift workers are at the greatest risk of falling asleep behind the wheel.

“Louisiana’s economy is driven by shift workers, whether that means healthcare, tourism, or plant work,” Freeman said, “not to mention our truck drivers. We want to remind all those people how important they are to their families and friends. Unfortunately, one bad driving decision can have a lasting impact on our loved ones.”

The NSF recommends that people sleep for an average of 7–9 hours at night. In fact, they say that if someone only slept for 3–5 hours the previous night, they are unfit to drive.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports an estimated 100,000 crashes occur each year from drowsy driving, resulting in more than 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 million in damages.

“It’s the ‘fourth D,’” Freeman said, “along with drunk, drugged, and distracted driving.”

**National Sleep Foundation Drowsy Driving Warning Signs to Watch for:**

1. Finding it hard to focus on the road, frequent blinking, or heavy eyelids
2. Starting to daydream, wandering eyes, and have disconnected thoughts
3. Having trouble remembering the last few miles driven
4. Missing an exit or ignoring traffic signs
5. Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes
6. Finding it hard to keep your head up or nodding off
7. Drifting from your lane, tailgating, or hitting a shoulder rumble strip
8. Feeling restless and irritable, or becoming aggravated with common annoyances such as sitting in traffic.

For more information on drowsy driving, please visit <https://www.thensf.org/drowsy-driving-prevention/>.

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