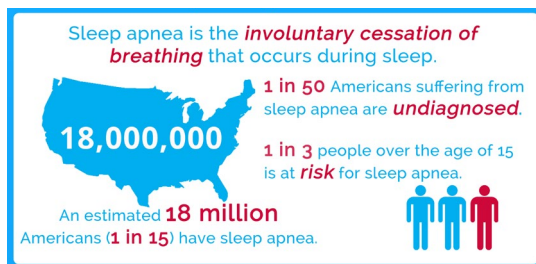


NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

March 2016

SLEEP APNEA AND DROWSY DRIVING

More than 18 million American adults have sleep apnea—a disorder that repeatedly pauses breathing during sleep. Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when the muscles in the back of the throat fail to keep the airway open, despite efforts to breathe. Central sleep apnea causes the brain to improperly control breathing during sleep.



Sleep apnea can cause fragmented sleep and low blood oxygen levels. The combination of disturbed sleep and oxygen starvation may lead to hypertension, heart disease and mood and memory problems.

Sleep Disorder Symptom Quiz

Do you have a sleep disorder? If you answer “yes” to two or more of the following questions, you may want to consult your physician.

- Do you snore loudly?
- Do you gasp and/or choke in your sleep?
- Do you spend eight or more hours in bed but still feel as though you have not had enough sleep?
- Do you take frequent naps?
- Do you fall asleep at inappropriate times, such as during meetings, or at the movies?
- Do you have trouble getting to sleep, or do you wake up for a few hours during the night?
- Has anyone ever told you they notice you have trouble breathing when you’re asleep?

Drowsy Driving

In addition to health risks, sleep deprivation also increases the risk of drowsy driving, which can be just as fatal as drunk driving. Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness,

impairs judgment and increases your risk of crashing. Prevent accidents—both on-and-off the job—by taking proactive steps to ensure better sleep.

Tips for Better Sleep

- Make time for sleep. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours to function properly.
- Don’t eat within a few hours of going to bed.
- Turn off your mobile devices before you head to bed. Light from screens can disrupt your circadian rhythm and affect your ability to sleep.
- Make your bedroom all about sleep. A comfortable mattress, pillow, and bedding will help you get a good night’s sleep. Keep your room dark and use cool paint colors for the walls.
- Create a bedtime ritual. Make deep breathing, stretches and other relaxing exercises part of your pre-slumber ritual, to wind down and help get your mind ready for sleep.
- Put your troubles aside—keep a piece of paper next to your bed and write down any worries before lying down.



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Keep a copy of this bulletin in your Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) binder and be sure employees receive a copy.