

Driver Fatigue

Professionals in the road haulage industry are well aware of the pressure from ACC and LTSA to drastically improve health and fatigue levels.

The statistics (both here and overseas) speak for themselves. Truck drivers have the highest on-the-job death and accident levels of any industry. Contrary to popular belief, **driver fatigue** is the cause of more accidents than speed, alcohol or drugs.

But it's not all bad news. The **solutions are out there**. There are a number of companies who have put in place initiatives that are really making a difference: Healthy and alert drivers have less accidents resulting in:

- Lower ACC & insurance costs.
- Reduced payments of insurance excesses.
- Reduced equipment downtime.
- Reduced driver downtime due to injury.

It all comes down to **giving the human body what it needs and avoid what it doesn't appreciate**.

When you've got deadlines to meet and all you can find on route is junk food, it isn't easy to constantly make good lifestyle decisions. So it comes down to planning ahead and even getting family on board to help with the practicalities.

- **Sleep** - we all need 8 hours sleep. This is the only way for the body to replenish and repair overnight. If you've got sleep issues, work on getting them resolved. In the USA sleep deprivation is viewed seriously so if a driver has sleep apnea they can lose their license. It is expected that this legislation will eventually reach NZ.
- **Exercise** - When you've got a deadline to meet this is the last thing on your mind, plus you're tired when you get home. Has anyone seen the driver on the side using his exercycle? Stunning! Even just doing some jogging or stretching on the spot whilst taking **each** break can make a big difference when it becomes a habit. Humans are made to be on the move. Wwe need it to stay alert and limber. Also sitting all day is the reason that male drivers have a higher than normal incidence of prostate problems.
- **Water** - What is the first liquid that you reach for when on the road? The steaming fragrant coffee? An energy drink? These last 2 items are not good options. Yes, the caffeine from coffee beans does give us quick energy hit but it also results in a dangerous slump approx 2 hours later. The adrenal response also leads to storing of fat. If you want sustained energy get drinking water as your first choice. There are also healthy energy drink alternatives out there - you just have to know where to go. **Make water your first choice**.
- **Low GI Foods** - these make you feel full for longer. High GI foods give a quick shot of energy then you slump - ie white breads, white rice, potatoes, sugary treats. Think colours - brown bread, brown rice, pumpkin, kumara, salads, fruit, nuts.

For a copy of my seminar notes, case studies, or the products I've discovered in my research contact me on:

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