

April 24, 2017

### **Sleep Awareness Week, April 23-29: Raising Awareness to Transit Operator Fatigue Issues**

Transit operator fatigue is a critical safety issue that can impact transit workers and riders alike. In fact, it's a concern that's prevalent across the transportation industry—"Reduction of fatigue-related accidents" appears yet again on this year's National Transportation Safety Board's 10 Most Wanted list. Sleep apnea in particular, is believed to contribute to many fatigue-related accidents. This disorder according to the American Sleep Apnea Association, may affect as many as 22 million Americans and approximately 80% of those individuals are undiagnosed.

Being fatigued significantly increases the risk of a crash. It makes us less aware of what is happening on the road and impairs our ability to respond quickly and safely if a dangerous situation arises. Driver fatigue is believed to contribute to more than 30% of road crashes.

#### **Symptoms of driver fatigue**

- Trouble focusing, or narrowing of attention
- Head nodding, or inability to keep the eyes open
- Not remembering the last few minutes
- Poor judgement, slower reaction time
- "Zoning out," daydreaming, or wandering thoughts
- Constant yawning or rubbing your eyes
- Drifting in the lane

#### **Causes of driver fatigue**

There are two main causes of driver fatigue:

- Lack of quality/quantity of sleep
- Driving at times of the day when you would normally be sleeping.

The end result is not getting enough sleep, which can lead to a build-up of a "[sleep debt](#)" – this is essentially the sleep that you 'owe' yourself. The only way to repay this debt is by sleeping.

**Without the proper amount of sleep, you have a greater risk of creating a fatigue-related accident!**