2019 Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® Key Messages

**National Sleep Foundation**

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) is dedicated to improving health and well-being through sleep education and advocacy. Established in 1990, NSF comprises many of the nation's foremost sleep, circadian-rhythm, medical and transportation-safety experts who share an interest in protecting the public's health, safety and well-being. These experts volunteer their services and help ensure the quality and accuracy of NSF's publications and programs.

NSF has been raising awareness about drowsy driving and fall-asleep crashes since its founding. NSF serves as a conduit between sleep experts and other industries such as transportation, healthcare, law enforcement and media. NSF is dedicated to changing cultural attitudes about fatigue and alertness. It values partnerships with corporate entities and federal agencies that support our drowsy driving prevention efforts. Individual volunteers can enroll to join the DDPW Advocate Team to promote DDPW messages via social media.

**Drowsy Driving Prevention Week® (November 3-10, 2019)**

- Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (DDPW) is a national public awareness campaign to educate the public about the dangers of drowsy driving and its prevention. The campaign aims to put drowsy driving in the headlights of all drivers, their passengers, employers and the media. #Alert2Drive

- Drowsy driving is a prevalent national public health and safety problem. Research has identified its principal causes, special at-risk populations, and effective countermeasures. It's time for broad collaborative action to reduce drowsy driving and its serious consequences. DDPW is the beginning of such an effort.

The work you are doing to raise awareness about drowsy driving can save lives. Thank you.

For more information about drowsy driving, please visit drowsydriving.org. For information on sleep and sleep disorders, please visit sleepfoundation.org.
**Key Messages/Talking Points**

**IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP** (memorable “sound bites” that discuss how a healthy lifestyle)

- Make sleep a priority!
- Be good to yourself and make time for sleep. NSF recommends 8-10 hours of sleep for teens and 7-9 hours for adults.
- When a person doesn’t get enough sleep, a “sleep debt” accumulates that must be repaid—often at unexpected times, such as behind the wheel of a car.
- Sleep is a biological necessity. Prioritizing your sleep should be the first planned activity of your daily schedule.
- Sleep affects every part of one’s life, including health, safety, mood, learning, appearance, relationships and productivity.
- Sleep represents a third of our lives but affects how we live, function, perform, and think during the rest of the time.
- Learn to recognize sleep problems. Problems sleeping or daytime sleepiness can signal a sleep disorder or another medical condition. Talk to your doctor.

**DROWSY DRIVING** (discusses the steps to avoid drowsy driving-related crashes as well as warning signs, risk issues, and prevention)

**Facts**

- Lack of sleep has serious consequences at home, in the workplace, at school, and on roadways. Tragically, drowsy driving claims many lives and injures thousands of Americans each year.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that at least 100,000 police-reported crashes each year are the direct result of driver fatigue.
- Each year drowsy driving crashes result in at least 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries and $12.5 billion in monetary losses.
- A microsleep can last 3 to 5 seconds. When that happens to a driver, a car at highway speed can travel the entire length of a football field with no one in control of the car.
- 55% of all crashes in which the driver fell asleep involved drivers 25 year and younger.
- Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people, who tend to stay up late, sleep too little, and drive at night.
- Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death of young people in the U.S, taking the lives of at least 5,600 teens each year. Simply put, traffic crashes are the number one killer of U.S. teens.
- Many people do not realize how sleepy they are. Driving requires a set of skills which are significantly affected when one is sleep deprived. Drowsiness can cause:
  - slower reaction time;
  - impaired judgment and vision;
  - decline in attention to road signs and the actions of other vehicles;
- decreased alertness, preventing you from seeing an obstacle and avoiding a crash;
- increased moodiness and aggressive behavior;
- problems with processing information and short-term memory; and
- microsleeps—brief 2 to 3 second sleep episodes.

- Driving while sleep deprived is like driving under the influence of alcohol. Sleep loss impairs driving skills such as hand-eye coordination, reaction time, vision, awareness of surroundings, decision-making, judgment, and inhibition.
- Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% – the U.S. legal limit.
- Fatigue and alcohol:
  - 17 hours of sustained wakefulness produces performance impairment equal to 0.05% (BAC); after 24 hours, impairment is equal to 0.10% BAC. A BAC of 0.08% is considered legally drunk in every state.
  - People with mild to moderate untreated sleep apnea performed worse than those with a 0.06% BAC.
  - Just like drinking on an empty stomach, there is an interaction between sleep deprivation and alcohol and sedating medications. On 4 hours of sleep, one beer can have the impact of a six-pack.

Characteristics of Drowsy Driving Crashes
- Most drowsy driving crashes happen between midnight and 6:00 a.m. when the body’s need for sleep is greatest and in the mid-afternoon during the biological circadian dip.
- The driver is alone and more likely to be male. Drivers are at higher risk if they drive alone or have no one to help them watch for the signs of fatigue.
- Sleep-related crashes tend to involve a single vehicle running at high speed off the road in either direction. Often a single vehicle drifts off the road and hits a stationary object.
- Sleep-related crashes typically leaves no evidence of the driver braking, such as tire marks on the road, or making evasive maneuvers.
- Many drowsy driving crashes involve serious injuries and/or fatalities.

Warning Signs of Sleepiness or Fatigue
- Turning up the radio or rolling down the window
- Impaired reaction time and judgment
- Decreased performance, vigilance and motivation
- Trouble focusing, keeping your eyes open or your head up
- Daydreaming and wandering thoughts
- Yawning or rubbing your eyes repeatedly
- Drifting from your lane, tailgating and missing signs or exits
- Feeling restless, irritable or aggressive
Are You at Risk for Drowsy Driving?

Special at-risk groups for drowsy driving include young people, shift workers, commercial drivers, people with undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorders, and business travelers. However, any driver can experience fatigue at one time or another.

Your risk for drowsy driving increases if you are:

- Sleep deprived or fatigued
- Driving long distances without proper rest breaks
- Driving through the night or mid-afternoon
- Working more than 60 hours per week
- Working more than one job and your main job involves shift work
- Drinking even small amounts of alcohol
- Driving alone or on a long, rural, dark or boring road
- Taking sedating medications such as cold tablets, antihistamines or antidepressants
- Experiencing jet lag or reduced sleep as a result of traveling across many time zones

Drowsy Driving Prevention Tips for All Drivers

Getting the sleep you need every day is the best defense against the risks of drowsy driving.

- Before a trip, do the following to reduce your risk:
  - Get enough sleep—most adults need 7-9 hours, and most teens need 8 - 10 hours, to maintain proper alertness during the day.
  - Schedule proper breaks, about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips.
  - Arrange for a travel companion—someone to talk with and share the driving.
  - Avoid alcohol and sedating medications—check your labels or ask your doctor. If your medication has sedating side effects, use public transportation when possible.

- Avoid driving during the peak sleepiness periods (ie, midnight – 6 a.m. and late afternoon). If you drive during these time periods, stay alert for warning signs of sleepiness, such as driving over a rumble strip or crossing over roadway lines.

- Countermeasures to prevent a fall-asleep crash while driving
  - Watch for the warning signs of fatigue.
  - Stop driving. Pull off at the next exit or rest area, or find a place to sleep for the night.
  - Take a nap. Find a safe place to nap for 15-20 minutes (more than 20 minutes can make you groggy for 15 minutes or more after waking).
  - Consume caffeine. Two cups of coffee can increase alertness for several hours, and caffeine usually takes about 30 minutes to enter the bloodstream. Caffeine is available in various forms (coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy drinks, chewing gum, tablets), and in various amounts. For example, the amount of caffeine in one cup of coffee (about 135 mg) is about the same as 2-3 cups of tea or 3-4 cans of regular or diet cola.
Try consuming caffeine before taking a short nap to get the benefits of both.
Ask or let a passenger take over the driving.

Safety is not an accident - you can take specific actions to be a safer driver and passenger.

**College Students and Young Adults** (covers sleep habits and challenges of this group)
- College students get an average of 42 hours of sleep a week (less than 6 hours a night).
- College students who are chronically sleep deprived are more likely to report excessive drowsiness, tension and nervousness.
- Sleep in college students is generally inadequate, irregular and of poor quality. As sleep quality and quantity decrease, academic performance worsens. Students who pull all-nighters tend to have a lower GPA than students who make time for sleep.
- Among college students, those reporting poorer sleep quality perform worse on academic tests than those reporting better quality sleep.
- Sleep deprivation impairs young adults’ ability to recognize and correct errors.
- During adolescence, a person’s circadian rhythm—or internal clock—tends to shift, causing young people to naturally feel more alert late at night and wake up later in the morning. Since these sleep patterns can last into young adulthood, many college students experience this phase delay, which can make it difficult to fall asleep before 11 pm.
- College students may need more sleep than they think—young adults typically need 7 – 9 hours of sleep each night to function at their best. It is also important to maintain a consistent sleep schedule across the entire week, including weekends.
- Starting off the day without enough sleep is like going to classes without breakfast or lunch. Sleep serves a restorative function for the body and brain. During sleep, the brain processes all of the information learned that day.
- Many college students are juggling classes, after-school activities and social lives while they are chronically sleep deprived. This pervasive sleepiness affects their health, safety, productivity and learning abilities.

**Teens’ Sleep Patterns** (focuses on the unique sleep needs of high school students)
- As children reach adolescence, their circadian rhythms—or internal clocks—tend to shift, causing teens to naturally feel more alert late at night and wake up later in the morning. This phase delay can make it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 pm.
- Sending students to school without enough sleep is like sending them to school without breakfast. Sleep serves a restorative function for the body and brain. During sleep, the brain processes all of the information learned that day.
- Adolescents need 8 - 10 hours of sleep each night to function at their best. It is also important for teens to maintain a consistent sleep schedule across the entire week, including weekends.
- Many teenagers are juggling classes, after-school activities and social lives while they are chronically sleep deprived. This pervasive sleepiness is affecting their health, safety, productivity and learning abilities.