**See this online at** <https://www.herrmanandherrman.com/car-accident-lawyers/types-of-wrecks/drowsy-driving-accidents/>

**Texas Car Accidents Caused by Drowsy Drivers**

People who drive when they are sleepy or fatigued create a danger of car and truck accidents that is comparable to drunk driving. Sleepiness behind the wheel slows reaction time and fogs thinking and coordination, just as alcohol does. A drowsy driver who closes his eyes for just a few seconds at 60 mph can cover 100 yards blindly – if he doesn’t crash into someone or something first. State statistics show more than 9,700 crashes in Texas in 2017 caused by a driver who was fatigued or asleep at the wheel.

**What Is Drowsy Driving And Why Is It Dangerous?**

[The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety said](https://newsroom.aaa.com/2018/02/drowsy-driving-dont-asleep-wheel/) in 2018 that because it is difficult to detect a driver’s drowsiness after a car accident, drowsy driving is one of our country’s most underreported traffic safety issues. Its study put dash cams in cars of “everyday drivers” and found that the percentage of crashes involving drowsiness is nearly eight times higher than federal estimates indicate.

AAA Foundation researchers determined that 9.5 percent of all crashes and 10.8 percent of crashes resulting in significant property damage involved drowsiness. [Federal estimates](https://one.nhtsa.gov/Driving-Safety/Drowsy-Driving/scope%E2%80%93of%E2%80%93the%E2%80%93problem) indicate drowsiness is a factor in only 1 to 2 percent of crashes.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says](https://www.cdc.gov/features/dsdrowsydriving/index.html) driving while drowsy or fatigued usually happens when a driver has not slept enough, but it can also happen due to untreated sleep disorders, medications, drinking alcohol, or shift work.

No one knows the exact moment when they will fall asleep. The danger is that sleepiness builds slowly, and people tend to shrug off or fight the urge to sleep when they are doing something they want to finish, like driving from Point A to Point B.

But as the drowsy driver fights their body’s natural instinct to rest and recharge, he or she:

* Is less able to pay attention to the road
* Has less ability to make good decisions
* Will react slower if confronted with an unexpected situation.

**Who are Drowsy Drivers in Texas Car Accidents?**

The [Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) says](https://www.txdot.gov/government/enforcement/annual-summary.html) in 2017 being “fatigued or asleep” contributed to 9,704 motor vehicle crashes, of which 160 were fatalities (4.2 percent of all fatalities) and 1,712 were suspected of causing injury (police reports were not always complete).

The National Sleep Foundation says [70 million people are sleep deprived](http://drowsydriving.org/2015/10/facts-about-drowsy-driving/) or suffer from sleep disorders and has published [sleep recommendations for all age groups](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/press-release/national-sleep-foundation-recommends-new-sleep-times) developed by a panel of experts on sleep, anatomy, physiology, neurology, pediatrics, gynecology and gerontology. Among driving ages, the NSF says:

* Teenagers (14-17) need 8-10 hours of sleep every 24 hours
* Young adults (18-25) need 7-9 hours
* Adults (26-64) need 7-9 hours
* Older adults (65+) need 7-8 hours.

Are you getting enough sleep? Drivers who are more likely than others to be sleepy or fatigued include:

* Commercial drivers who operate vehicles such as tow trucks, tractor trailers and buses
* Shift workers working overnight or long shifts
* Drivers on lengthy trips
* Teenagers and young adults who work part-time in addition to school – and active social lives
* New parents, particularly those who also work outside of the home
* Drivers who are sleepy due to use of certain medications or alcohol (a depressant) or certain illicit drugs
* Drivers with untreated sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, which causes breathing to repeatedly stop and start.

**Drowsy Driving vs. Drunk Driving**

The [National Sleep Foundation says](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/drowsy-driving-vs-drunk-driving-how-similar-are-they) that after 18 hours without sleep – from 6 a.m. to midnight, for example –  a person drives as if they have a blood-alcohol concentration of .05 percent (a .08 BAC is the threshold for [drunk driving](https://www.herrmanandherrman.com/car-accident-lawyers/types-of-wrecks/drunk-driving/)). After 24 hours without sleep, you drive like you have a blood-alcohol level of .10.

Driving while drowsy is similar to driving under the influence of alcohol, in that:

* Drivers impaired by fatigue or alcohol may experience heavy eyelids, constant yawning, head bobbing, trouble focusing, inability to remember the stretch of road they just drove and drifting from their lane or crossing the centerline.
* Drivers’ reaction times, ability to sustain attention, recognize hazards or make decisions all become worse as drowsiness or drunkenness increase.
* Drowsy or drunk drivers may experience “micro-sleep,” a short, involuntary burst of inattention – i.e., nodding-off.
* Eventually, if impairment continues to increase, a fatigued driver falls asleep or a drunk driver passes out.

Unfortunately, while breath, urine or blood tests can identify a driver’s blood-alcohol concentration, a driver who is fatigued will experience a surge of adrenaline after a crash if not seriously injured and may appear to be alert for a significant period.

However, one tell-tale sign of a driver who was drowsy or asleep behind the wheel prior to a crash is that they fail to brake or swerve to avoid the collision. Drowsy driving crashes are also more likely after midnight or in mid-afternoon and on high-speed or rural roads, where long stretches of open highway have exacerbated the driver’s sleepiness. In many cases, the sleepy driver is alone. And because drowsy and fatigued driving accidents tend to happen at full speed, they are often serious crashes that cause catastrophic injury and death.

**How Our Drowsy Driving Accident Lawyers Can Help**

If you or a loved one of yours has been seriously injured in high-speed car accident or one that seems to have happened for no reason, the other driver may have been driving while drowsy or fatigued or actually asleep at the wheel at the time of the crash.

We can investigate the accident and obtain evidence, potentially including data from the other vehicle’s Event Data Recorder (EDR or “black box”). These devices record a variety of information just before the impact of a crash, including the use or lack of braking, steering trajectory, speed, acceleration, and much more. If the accident occurred in an urban area, there may be camera footage available from nearby security cameras that depicts the crash.

To obtain either of these potentially crucial pieces of evidence, it is important to act quickly to contact us. Black box data from a car that has been totaled can be lost quickly, and security camera footage is routinely overwritten. But if contacted promptly, Herrman & Herrman can move to identify the existence of such evidence and obtain it or issue a “spoliation letter,” which demands that the defense in an injury claim preserve evidence.

We would also obtain other evidence, such as the police report, witness statements, vehicle damage, etc. When an investigation points to the possibility of drowsy or fatigued driving, we look into the driver’s recent activities through such evidence as recent work or school attendance, debit or credit card receipts, and cellphone and social media activity, all of which may show a long stretch of being active – or “up” – and likely fatigued when the accident occurred.

In addition, our seasoned car accident lawyers will determine what the accident has cost you and your family and, armed with evidence of liability, engage with the insurance company to negotiate a proper settlement for you. If the insurance company fails to make a fair offer within a reasonable period of time, we can file a lawsuit on your behalf to demand proper compensation to you.

**Contact a Drowsy Driving Accident Lawyer Today**

If you have been injured in an accident that may have been caused by drowsy or fatigued driving, our firm can help. Let us review the facts of your case and handle the legal matters and insurance contact required to obtain compensation you deserve for your injuries and other losses. You can trust our firm to zealously protect your rights and interests.

We will investigate the accident, collect physical evidence, secure data from automotive and personal electronic devices, locate and interview any witnesses to the car crash, and do the other work necessary to build a solid claim or lawsuit on your behalf. We will calculate your costs and losses, including for medical expenses, lost income, car repair or replacement, and for your pain and suffering, and then demand and press for full payment to you.

Our experienced [Corpus Christi personal injury lawyers](https://www.herrmanandherrman.com/personal-injury-lawyer/) are dedicated to pursuing justice for our clients and the maximum compensation they are entitled to receive. We have more than 70 years of combined experience and a successful track record of recovering high-value settlements and verdicts for those we represent. Call our firm now for aggressive representation in your drowsy driving accident claim.