

# Safety Minute for May 14

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# What is thought to be the underlying cause of...

- 100,000-150,000 motor vehicle crashes
- 4% of all fatal motor vehicle crashes
- As many as 100,000 accidents due to medical errors

# It's simply drowsiness due to lack of SLEEP!

- “Drivers who have not had enough sleep can have driving problems that are comparable to those experienced by people with modest blood alcohol levels. The loss of as little as three hours of usual sleep affects an ability to maintain a consistent speed and a stable road position.” [AORNL Journal, Oct. 2003]

# Sleep deprivation is thought to be a significant factor in major accidents

- **“60 Minutes checked. The Exxon Valdez spill happened after midnight with a man at the helm who'd slept only four hours the night before; Chernobyl and Three Mile Island also occurred late at night and involved human error. And the assistant captain who crashed the Staten Island ferry into a pier, killing 11, admitted that he felt exhausted before the accident.**

**Many people want something associated with morals or management or...alcohol," Dinges remarks. "Those are far more glamorous. But, in reality, many of these disasters involve poor judgments and slowed reactions at a time when people were basically tired and made not complicated mistakes. Simple ones. And that is the hallmark of sleep deprivation."**

# Some other facts from the “60 Minutes” presentation

- **“In fact, sleep is as essential as food** because they (test rats) will die just about as quick from food as from sleep depravation.
- **Sleep, we’ve been finding, actually can enhance your memories**, so that you’ll come back the next day even better than where you were the day before...
- It’s this odd notion that we all think in Western civilization that we have to stay awake to get more done. And I think that’s simply not true. In fact, I think if you have a good night of sleep, **what you’ll find is that you can get more done than if you simply stay awake.**
- **...the first finding, and it stunned us, was there’s a cumulative impairment** that develops in your ability to think fast, to react quickly, to remember things. And it starts right away.....each day adds an additional burden or deficit to your cognizant abilities
- **I would say that sleep deprivation may be a new risk factor for diabetes.”** (as well as heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke)

# For more information

- [http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/14/60minutes/main3939721.shtml?source=search\\_story](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/14/60minutes/main3939721.shtml?source=search_story) (the entire video is available here).
- [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/sleep/res\\_plan/section4/section4d.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/sleep/res_plan/section4/section4d.html) (Sleep and safety)
- [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0FSL/is\\_4\\_78/ai\\_108967596](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FSL/is_4_78/ai_108967596)