

National Sleep Awareness Week



March 5-11 is National Sleep Awareness Week in Canada and the US. This particular week was chosen because we turn our clocks forward an hour this Saturday night, thus losing an hour of sleep.

Why should safety coordinators care about sleep? Because fatigue in general can lead to safety incidents and injuries. And there's a specific connection between the spring time change and workplace safety.

According to two Michigan State University researchers, workplace incidents spike after daylight saving time changes every March. In two separate studies, they found that the March switch to daylight saving time resulted in:

- 40 minutes less sleep for American workers
- A 5.7% increase in workplace injuries
- Nearly 68% more work days lost to injuries.

But they didn't find a significant increase in workplace incidents or sleep loss when the clocks are set back an hour in November.

In addition, a University of British Columbia study, using data from the Canadian Ministry of Transport, found that when Canada went into daylight saving time, there was an 8% increase in risk of traffic accidents on the Monday after the changeover.

For a safety talk for workers on how fatigue can be fatal, go to our sister site, SafetySmart.com.

Fatigue can also impact the company financially. Click [here](#) for an article about a study showing how worker fatigue costs the bottom line.

Sleep Tips

The National Sleep Foundation in the US has the following tips for healthy sleeping:

- Go to sleep and wake at the same time every day, and avoid spending more time in bed than needed.
- Use bright light to help manage your "body clock." Avoid bright light in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning.

- Use your bedroom only for sleep to strengthen the association between your bed and sleep. It may help to remove work materials, computers and televisions from your bedroom.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime ritual, like a warm bath or listening to calming music.
- Create an environment that's conducive to sleep. It should be quiet, dark and cool with a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- Save your worries for the daytime. If concerns come to mind, write them down so you can address those issues the next day.
- If you can't sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.
- Exercise regularly, but avoid vigorous workouts close to bedtime.
- If you're experiencing excessive daytime sleepiness, snoring or "stop breathing" episodes in your sleep, contact your health care professional for a sleep apnea screening.