



## HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVER FATIGUE REFORM Information Bulletin

July 2008

# Working Safer not Less

## - Fatigue Information for Owner-Drivers

### Quick Quiz

**Have you missed a rest break when you felt tired for any of the following reasons:**

- A. because you had a tight schedule;
- B. to finish a trip early so you can start your next trip;
- C. because you would be penalised if you were late; or
- D. so as not to delay getting home?

If you answered yes to any of these reasons you may not be managing driver fatigue effectively and it is time to start taking the issue seriously. A study conducted by AMR Interactive found that 12% of drivers had unrealistic schedules on 'most or all' of their trips. Owner-drivers share responsibility for taking reasonable steps to manage fatigue – and this includes pulling over when you cannot keep alert.



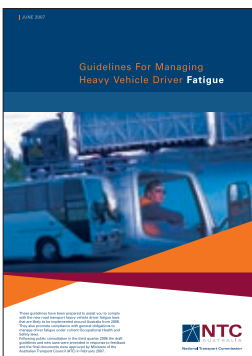
**Comply with fatigue management requirements by implementing measures that minimise fatigue including:**

- assessing fatigue risks of work you undertake;
- making sure you are trained and informed about fatigue;
- having basic safe work procedures to minimise fatigue; and
- complying with operating limits (e.g. minimum continuous break for sleep).

**Plan your workload by building in time to recover from fatigue by using measures such as:**

- planning trips to allow as much quality sleep at night as possible;
- building in time to adjust from a return from a break or changing from day to night driving;
- scheduling trips to allow for adequate rest breaks; and
- scheduling trips within working time limits and allowing for possible delays.

It's time to manage heavy vehicle driver fatigue. New national road transport Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue laws to commence on 29 September 2008, set revised work and rest limits for heavy vehicle drivers and require better management of driver fatigue. The reform makes all parties in the supply chain legally responsible for preventing driver fatigue.



The new laws are consistent with current obligations under Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) laws that also require employers and employees take all reasonably practicable steps to manage driver fatigue. To assist these parties in complying with the new laws the National Transport Commission has developed 'Guidelines for Managing Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue'. These Guidelines provide advice on

creating a systematic fatigue management system based on a risk management approach.

This information bulletin is part of a series and the following points provide an example of how owner-drivers may meet their new duties to manage heavy vehicle driver fatigue.

**Make sure drivers and equipment are well prepared (where appropriate) by:**

- keeping your medical assessments up-to-date;
- using a Fitness for Duty self assessment;
- keeping up-to-date with information about fatigue;
- maintaining vehicles to meet roadworthiness standards, fatigue related standards (e.g. Australian Design Rule 42 on sleeper berths and 42.18 on ventilation) and in good condition to reduce vibration and noise.

**Apply recognised methods of minimising fatigue on trips such as:**

- going to sleep in as dark, quiet and comfortable place as possible;
- minimising driving in low alertness periods (night and early afternoon);
- working within limits for continuous driving and taking short breaks and naps to reduce fatigue;
- working within working time limits designed to reduce fatigue; and
- understanding the limitations of temporary measures such as coffee, short breaks and naps.

**Manage schedule disruptions by taking action such as:**

- rescheduling pick-up and delivery times;
- adjusting the schedule to get to a good place for rest or sleep;
- balancing any extra working time with a longer break;
- balancing any reduction in normal sleep with a longer sleep opportunity in the next period; and
- finding a relief driver and complying with requirements for operators/employers when, for example, long delays extend your working time.

**Keep basic records for managing fatigue such as:**

- driver work diaries;
- records of required health assessments and any training undertaken; and
- records of any fatigue incidents and action taken as a result.

**Regularly review operations by:**

- using a simple self-assessment checklist on the points above;
- checking your working time and sleep time for the last month and see if it has allowed you adequate time to recover on a short and long-term basis; and
- looking at what similar operators are doing to manage fatigue.

**Further Information**

This bulletin cannot explain all of your obligations under the new laws. If you would like further information on how to meet specific duties please refer to the *'Guidelines for Managing Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue' (2007)* which provide detailed information suitable for all parties in the supply chain. Further information on fatigue and copies of the Guidelines are available from your local road agency or may be obtained from the NTC website

[www.ntc.gov.au](http://www.ntc.gov.au)

**Disclaimer**

This bulletin does not constitute legal advice. Details are subject to amendment. Check your local legislation or contact your local road agency if you want more information.

