

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2014

Risk management has a role in everything we do, both on and off duty. It continues to be the job of the safety professionals to provide guidance to all Airmen about the dangers of the season. Airmen use sound risk management every day on duty and, while the main focus of the Critical Days of Summer campaign is off duty activities, Airmen must use the same risk management techniques in all circumstances.

Chapter 11
August 1, 2014



101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER



Chapter 11: The Big Sleep

Topic: Fatigue

If you sometimes think you're not too tired for an activity, you probably are. In the summertime, fatigue can really sneak up on you due to longer daylight hours. There's plenty of time after work to participate in a sport, workout or just stay up late. "Summer fatigue" can also be caused by the heat (and in many locations, humidity). It can cause you to feel worn-out and sluggish through your day.

Adults, as well as children, have increasingly hectic schedules at work and after work. These demands can leave you with significant effects caused by fatigue. Mental and physical fatigue are very closely intertwined and may be considered one and the same. The negative impact of mental fatigue can be seen in things like decision-making, perception, critical thinking, judgment and problem solving—all risk management functions. Physical effects of fatigue can lead to decreased immunity, and vulnerability to a number of ailments including colds and flu, headaches, muscle weakness, low motivation and irritability.

Don't find out how exhausted you really are did the Airman in this example. He fell asleep at the wheel because he was that tired. He had a hectic work schedule the week of the accident which was contributed to his exhaustion. He was on a highway, veered off the road and struck a utility pole. The force of the impact forced his head into the roof knocking him unconscious. He had to be extricated from the car and was airlifted to a local trauma unit where he was diagnosed with a fractured vertebra in the neck. He had to remain in the trauma unit for a week, and spent two and a half months on convalescent leave.

According to an article from www.examiner.com, some of the other fatigue triggers include: chlorine, air conditioning and extreme heat. The article also reports that, "occupational safety experts say the effect of spending long hours awake is analogous to the effect of alcohol. Here are some of the numbers safety authorities typically toss out: 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05. To put that in perspective, more than 100 countries have adopted a blood alcohol content limit for drivers of 0.05—the same standard recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board.

For more information:

<http://www.examiner.com/article/tips-to-ease-summer-fatigue>

<http://federaldaily.com/articles/2013/08/13/hf-summer-work-fatigue.aspx>

<http://www.scott.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123151704>

<http://fatiguescience.com/>

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/outreach/education/driverTips/Driver-fatigue.htm>

<http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/fatigue.html>