

## Staying Awake while You Drive

The holiday's are upon us once again with the hustle and bustle to get everything done. A lot of us are traveling for the Holidays. Some will only be traveling a short distance others will be traveling great distances to be with their loved ones, for the number one holiday of the year.

We would like to remind you to drive safely as you travel this holiday. Allow plenty of time to reach your destination. During this time of year everyone is in a hurry to get their shopping done and get things ready before Christmas Day and Santa's arrival. We tend to be more hassled and tired. We don't pay enough attention to traffic and sometimes we may even be a little irritable with other drivers and shoppers.

Driving safely, for your sake, your loved ones' sake and innocent eventual victims is something that drivers should always keep in mind. A vigilant driver however, constantly does that. There are however, some things you should be aware of while you are driving, as danger can come unexpectedly and at any time. One thing is, falling asleep due to fatigue and is a constant danger especially on long distance trips. Driving when you are tired can lead to disastrous consequences. It was estimated that 300 people are killed each year in cases where the driver fell asleep at the wheel. Keep in mind that the risk of falling asleep while driving is the greatest between 2 and 4pm and midnight and 6am. Drugs and alcohol consumption are as well as certain medications can cause sleepiness making your body more tired. The worst part in such cases is that you don't even feel or realize that you are more tired than usual.

It seems that during the holidays there are more sleep deprived people out there on our highways. So if you are planning a road trip during the holidays keep these tips in mind.

1. Rest, take a break often and whenever you need one.
2. Prepare for you trip in such a way as to take into account that you need a 15 minute break every two hours of driving.
3. Drink coffee or some other high caffeine drink to keep you awake. This is an effective method of fighting fatigue.
4. If possible share the driving.
5. If you feel you are getting sleepy, it is best to find a safe place to stop as soon as possible. Once more I underline, a safe place is what you need, not the side of the highway. You don't want another sleepy driver to run you over. **Tiredness kills.**
6. Remember that being tired at the wheel represents a form of impairment because tiredness decreases your ability to operate your automobile securely.
7. Avoid "pressure driving" when you can. It is best to plan your trip early enough in order to drive safe. However when that is not possible don't try to make up the time by speeding. Keep cool and keep in mind that you can't afford any errors. An accident is what you need least of all at that time. You could lose much more than just time in a collision.

We wish you safe travel during this holiday season and we hope to see you all next year.

The Caribou County Sheriff's Office and Staff.