

# SPECIAL EDITION: SLEEP AWARENESS IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY



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## The Costs of Drowsy Driving

By Jason Smith RPSGT

How much does it really cost us when we drive drowsy? A true dollar amount cannot be accounted for since there are so many indirect variables. There is statistical data associated with insurance premiums and liability, but what about those hidden costs that we don't think about or even notice? Health care utilization, workers compensation, decreased productivity and employee turnover are some major costs we don't always think of when a truck driver is involved in an accident.



The obvious question we need to ask ourselves is "why are we driving drowsy?" Is it lack of sleep? Is it that we are tired from driving for so many hours? A more likely answer lies in a sleep disorder called obstructive sleep apnea (OSA); a disorder that effects up to 60% of the estimated 10 million truck drivers operating in the U.S. today. Sleep apnea is a silent but deadly disease in which, during sleep, a person's airway

## Risk Management Strategies for the Trucking Industry

By Jason Smith, RPSGT

The top three disease related health care expenditures in the trucking industry are hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. A direct contributor to these diseases is obstructive sleep apnea. A standard of practice is beginning to develop in the trucking industry in regard to screening and treatment of truck drivers for sleep apnea.

In light of this emerging standard of care, it is incumbent on the trucking industry to develop and implement risk management strategies designed to reduce liabilities associated with commercial drivers.

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collapses causing a lack of oxygen to the lungs and frequent disturbance throughout sleep. These occurrences can happen hundreds of times during the course of the night, many times unnoticed.

Treatment for OSA is typically CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure). As awareness in the trucking industry continues to grow, studies have shown great benefit from adding sleep screening and CPAP treatment to their services. A national trucking company saw a 30% accident reduction and, on average, a \$500-\$700 per driver per month health care savings with the use of CPAP.

Such strategies for implementation would be educating drivers about sleep apnea, its causes and treatment and screening drivers for sleep apnea at the time of hire and periodically. Sleep questionnaires, assessments of risks factors such as obesity, age, neck size, hypertension, and diabetes are great tools in recognizing potential drivers that would benefit from screening.

Studies on health care utilization have shown tremendous reduction in claims and hospital stays after diagnosis and treatment as compared to prior year before. In 2005

Please see *Risk Management* on page 4

## Untreated Sleep Apnea: The Silent but Deadly Killer

By Jason Smith, RPSGT

“Sure I snore, doesn’t everybody?” That is a typical response I hear when asking someone about their sleep habits. In casual conversation you learn that their significant other gave them the ultimatum “Get that snoring fixed or start sleeping on the couch”. After a sleep study was performed; to their surprise the data reveals they quit breathing hundreds of times during the night. You can spend up to 1/3 of your life sleeping and potentially suffering from a disease you never knew you had.

Sleep apnea, simply put, is a disorder by which your airway collapses during sleep resulting in lack of oxygen to the lungs and brief, but frequent, awakenings. These awakenings are typically so short that you never noticed it happened and typically will cause bursts in your blood pressure and heart rate for each occurrence. This adverse effect is not confined to just sleep but will in fact increase daytime blood pressure and sustained reduction in heart rate variability.

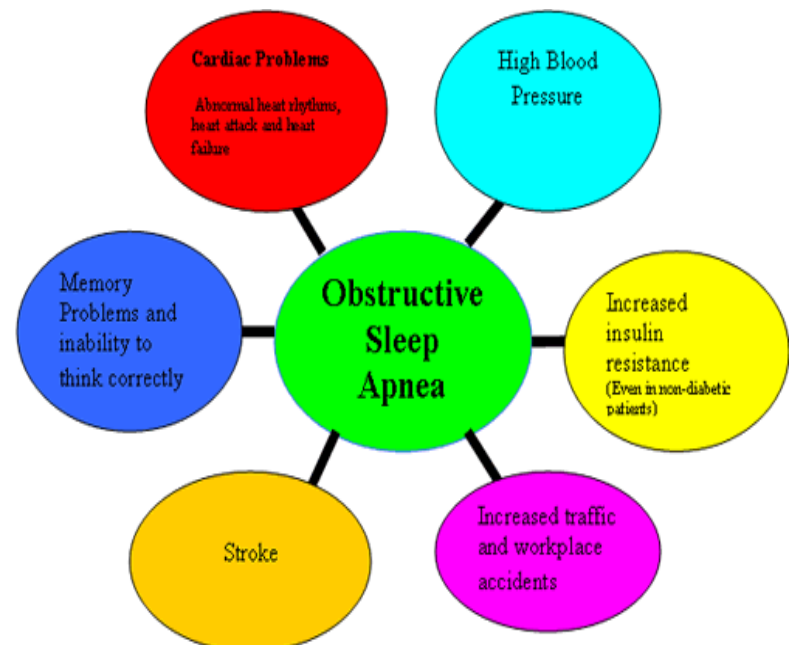
Up to 44 million adults in the United States suffer from sleep disordered breathing; 80–90 percent of those adults still remain undiagnosed. Untreated sleep apnea may lead to hypertension, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and diabetes.

Sleep apnea made national headlines as in 2004 and 2006 as contributing factors in the deaths of football great, Reggie White and baseball Hall of Famer, Kirby Puckett. This disease shows no boundaries and can affect anyone. Thankfully, with proper diagnosis and treatment, sleep apnea can be controlled and in most cases lead to a better quality of life.

*“You can spend up to 1/3 of your life sleeping and potentially suffering from a disease you never knew you had”.*

So what are the signs or symptoms that you may have sleep apnea? Warning signs and symptoms of sleep apnea include:

- ◆ Frequent cessation of breathing (apnea) during sleep. Your sleep partner may notice repeated silences from your side of the bed.
- ◆ Daytime sleepiness, including falling asleep at inappropriate times, such as during driving or at work
- ◆ Choking or gasping during sleep to get air into the lungs
- ◆ Loud snoring
- ◆ Sudden awakenings to restart breathing
- ◆ Waking up in a sweat during the night
- ◆ Feeling un refreshed in the morning after a night’s sleep
- ◆ Headaches, sore throat, or dry mouth in the mornings after waking up



## Sleepcare Diagnostics Occupational Wellness Program: A Benefit to Your Company and Your Employees

Sleepcare Diagnostics, the premier center for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders, would like to extend our *Occupational Wellness Program* to your organization. All of our sleep centers have gold standard recognition of accreditation by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Our physicians are all board certified in sleep medicine and our technologists are distinctly credentialed by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologist.

### Our Goal:

We would like to partner with your organization to provide a sleep wellness program to:

- ◆ Provide prompt accessibility for diagnostics screening and treatment of sleep apnea for you and your employees
- ◆ Provide education and awareness of the risks associated with undiagnosed and untreated sleep disordered breathing.
- ◆ Promote the benefits to you're your organization of the improved quality of life through successful treatment of sleep disorders.

### How our program works:

1. A medical professional from our organization provides routine visits to your company to provide screening of sleep disorders for your employees.
2. The screening tools consist of questionnaires that indicate severity of symptoms and a home monitoring test that monitors airflow, oxygen and respiratory effort.
3. Our medical staff instructs the employee of the use of the home sleep test and picks up the test during routine visits to your company.
4. The data from the home sleep test is reviewed by our professional medical staff.
5. A member of our medical staff reviews the results with the employee during a routine visit to your facility.
6. Based on the results of the home sleep test, our medical staff may recommend treatment for sleep



disordered breathing, in-lab evaluation should be preformed, or no need for further testing and your employee is educated on proper sleep hygiene.

### How Treatment Works:

1. Should your employee need treatment for sleep disordered breathing, a device referred to as AutoCPAP will be provided for a trial period to establish a CPAP pressure.
2. Our staff will custom fit your employee with the therapy mask best suited for that individual and provide operating instructions.
3. The AutoCPAP device automatically adjusts to the necessary therapy level based on its ability to stabilize the airway.
4. Your employee will return the AutoCPAP device; at which time we will educate and dispense their CPAP equipment and accessories. These CPAP devices will operate with an adapter to be used in their truck also!

### Our Support:

We offer follow up support to your employees to ensure therapeutic benefit by:

- ◆ Offering 24 hour on call support
- ◆ CPAP advocates that routinely make follow up calls
- ◆ Scheduled appointments during routine visits to your facility
- ◆ An automatic shipment of replacement supplies without the need of a visit or a call

**Interested in learning more? We can help.**  
Please feel free to contact Deborah Frost at (513) 459-7750 or email: [dfrost@snoremore.com](mailto:dfrost@snoremore.com)

**Risk Management from page 1**

large trucks were involved in nearly 5,000 fatal crashes and 82,000 injury crashes resulting in 5,200 deaths and nearly 115,000 injuries. If only 25% of these crashes are sleep related, approximately 1,250 large truck fatal crashes and over 20,000 large truck injuries may be attributed to sleep apnea. In 1994 NHTSA estimated the cost to be \$83,000 per fatality, a total of 12.5 billion and 85% of the cost from workplace loss and loss of productivity.

These are all very alarming statistics, so what are the conclusions of the cost effectiveness of sleep testing? Given the increased morbidity of not treating sleep disorders, it should be considered preventative medicine to offer diagnostic testing and treatment. One should also expect to see a decrease in cardiovascular complications and motor vehicle accident.

In addition to cost effectiveness, what are other benefits of adding a sleep wellness program to your organization?

- ◆ Reduce the risk of serious workers compensation, auto liability, and physical damage losses due to sleep related vehicle crashes
- ◆ Realize productivity gains from drivers who are more alert.
- ◆ Help your drivers enjoy a greater quality of life
- ◆ Employee retention

*“Reduce the risk of serious workers compensation, auto liability, and physical damage losses due to sleep related vehicle crashes.”*

**Test Your Daytime Sleepiness**

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale is used to determine the level of daytime sleepiness. A score of 10 or more is considered sleepy. A score of 18 or more is very sleepy. If you score 10 or more on this test, you should consider contacting our sleep physicians to discuss diagnosis and treatment.

Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation:

- 0 = would never doze or sleep.**  
**1 = slight chance of dozing or sleeping**  
**2 = moderate chance of dozing or sleeping**  
**3 = high chance of dozing or sleeping**

Situation	Chance of Dozing or Sleeping
Sitting and reading	_____
Watching TV	_____
Sitting inactive in a public place	_____
Being a passenger in a motor vehicle for an hour or more	_____
Lying down in the afternoon	_____
Sitting and talking to someone	_____
Sitting quietly after lunch (no alcohol)	_____
Stopped for a few minutes in traffic while driving	_____
<b>Total score (add the scores up)</b> (This is your Epworth score)	_____

If you score 10 or more on this test, please contact us at (513) 459-7750 or visit [www.snorenomore.com](http://www.snorenomore.com)

## Do You Have Employees Already On CPAP? Helpful Hints

### Q&A with Jason Crowe, Our “CPAP Expert”

*Q: What if I lose or gain weight or my old symptoms reappear?*

A: With any type of weight fluctuations, there may be a need for a pressure adjustment. I always recommend speaking with our sleep specialist to find out what symptoms you may have and what that may mean for your CPAP pressure.

*Q: How can I tell when my mask is worn out?*

A: Because masks are disposable, periodic replacement is needed when the mask shows signs of wear and tear. You should routinely inspect your mask and your tubing for cracks or tears. Based on how well you care for your mask, the life span is anywhere from 3–6 months

*Q: I feel gassy and bloated when I wake up in the morning?*

A: I would suggest sleeping with your head elevated and this may improve over time. It could also be an indicator that your pressure is too high and may need adjusted, so speaking with our sleep specialist is recommended.

*Q: I travel frequently. Should I use my CPAP when I travel?*

A: It is very important that you use your CPAP every night, even when traveling. Failure to continue use of your CPAP will result in your symptoms reappearing. There are accessories out there that make it easy and convenient to travel with your CPAP and it's a very common request.



## Does Your CPAP Mask Need Replaced? Let Us Help!

By Jason Crowe

In today's fast paced world we understand how difficult it is to find enough time in the day to get everything accomplished. The costs associated with time and travel surely makes us want to put off some things that we know are important but tell ourselves "It can wait until another day".

For this reason alone, Sleepcare Diagnostics developed *Rest Assured*, an automatic shipment program for CPAP replacement supplies and accessories. This will allow you to avoid the hassle of an office visit or a call to a medical equipment provider and

you will receive your replacement masks, filters, tubing, etc. on a regular schedule.

Think of it as prescriptions sent directly to your home, without the need of phoning them in. Your CPAP supplies are exactly like a prescription and let's face it, if you ran out of your medicine you wouldn't think twice about getting that refilled. This same philosophy should apply to your CPAP supplies.

It's fast and easy, simply contact us at (513) 770-7101 to sign up today.

*"Think of it as prescriptions sent directly to your home, without the need of phoning them in."*

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.snorenomore.com](http://www.snorenomore.com)

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 *The Tri- State's premier specialists for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders*

 *All centers accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine*

 *Internationally recognized board certified sleep physicians*

 *Nationally credentialed technologist*

 *State-of-the-art sleep centers*

 *Occupational Wellness Program fit for your company*

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