

**Have You Heard**  
t h e **Rumbling**



a b o u t  
**Drowsy Drivers?**



# Have You Heard DROWSY



Imagine *y o u r s e l f* in your car, **driving along**, when slowly but surely you find it's getting *harder* and *harder* to **concentrate...the radio is on**, but **your mind** is starting to *wander*, and **you missed** the traffic report again...*your eyelids* are **drooping**, and *your eyes* finally **do close**—and you **jump** suddenly **awake**, filled with a **jolt of fear!** *Your eyes actually closed!* You were driving along, with your *eyes closed!* Thank goodness the car kept going straight! Now **you're awake**—no more snoozing after that **frightening moment!**



But it only lasts for a little while, and then the fatigue builds up again...your mind wanders, your eyes close again, but this time your shoulders slump, and your hands pull the wheel to the right, the car wanders toward the shoulder—until you're suddenly jolted awake by a roaring sound and a jarring vibration filling the car and running right through you! The rumble strips along the road are trying to tell you something -wake up and listen! This safety feature is telling you that it's time to stop trying to "drive through" your fatigue just like you'd drive through a rainstorm -it's time to stop and address your body's need for rest!

*You were  
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closed!*



# Drivers!

The rumbling sound and rattling vibration are caused when your vehicle's tires run over the rumble strips placed along the roadway edge. These rumble strips are there to give a driver this jarring warning that the vehicle is about to leave the roadway! There are many things that can happen to a vehicle that leaves the roadway at speed, and for many unfortunate drivers, their vehicle's trip off the roadway may end up in a collision or a rollover incident—often with catastrophic results.

## Why are road agencies using Rumble Strips?

Shoulder rumble strips have proven to be very effective for warning drivers that they are about to drive off the road. This type of event, called "run-off-road," occurs when a car or truck leaves the roadway and then turns over or hits a fixed object. Nationwide, run-off-road events account for more than one-third of all traffic fatalities. Several states have already installed rumble strips, and their experience has shown that rumble strips can reduce the rate of run-off-road crashes between 20 and 50 percent.

It's important to realize that driving while drowsy can be as serious as driving while intoxicated. In both cases, a driver's ability to control the vehicle and react to traffic and signals is greatly reduced. As with alcohol or drugs, the most important point is not to get behind the wheel when you haven't had enough sleep—the body's need for rest is real, and experience has shown that it won't just go away if you roll down the windows or play the radio loudly.

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# Safety Tip:

*Remember to always wear your seat belt and properly secure children in the back seat, even on short trips. If your vehicle drifts onto the shoulder rumble strip, take your foot off the gas and steer safely back into the travel lane—don't suddenly apply the brakes while trying to steer back into the lane, as this can cause the car to go into a skid.*

**To help avoid drowsy driving, the National Sleep Foundation recommends the following:**

- Start any trip by getting plenty of sleep the night before.
- Plan to drive during times of the day when you are normally awake, and be willing in advance to stay overnight rather than traveling straight through.
- Schedule a break every two hours or every 100 miles. Stop sooner if you show any danger signs of sleepiness: your eyes close by themselves, you have trouble paying attention, you yawn a lot, or find that you can't stay in your lane.

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- Talk with your passenger if you have someone else in the car. A passenger can also let you know when you are showing signs of sleepiness. If your passenger thinks you are getting sleepy, it's probably time to trade off the driving chores for a while.
- If you are driving alone and begin to feel sleepy, you may want to pull over and stop in a safe, well-lit place and take a nap—even 20 minutes will help. When you wake up, get some exercise—run, walk, and wave your arms. For some people, it helps to consume some caffeine.

For more information on sleep and sleep disorders, visit the National Sleep Foundation web site: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org> or write to National Sleep Foundation, 729 Fifteenth Street, NW, Fourth Floor, Washington, DC 20005. For more safe driving tips and information on rumble strips, visit the Federal Highway Administration web site: <http://mchs.fhwa.dot.gov>.



Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration