

## What You Can Do

- **Take a nap**-between 20-35 minutes in length prior to the start of a shift but be careful, a nap that is between 35-90 minutes long could actually make you sleepier.
- **Make exercise a priority**- 30 minutes/5 days a week at a minimum but try not to engage in a strenuous workout within 2 hours of trying to sleep.
- **Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool**-Try not to have a lot of distractions in the bedroom, such as a television, etc. If you sleep in a noisy environment, try using a white-noise machine to mask some of the noise.
- **Maintain a bedtime routine**-Go through a similar routine right before going to bed every time (brush your teeth, stretch, play a game of solitaire, etc.). Your body will learn to associate the routine with being sleepy.
- **Cut out caffeine**-Stop your caffeine intake at least 6 hours before trying to go to sleep.
- **If you can't get to sleep**-Get out of bed if you cannot get to sleep within about 15 minutes of lying down. Engage in a somewhat boring activity and try again when you do feel sleepy.

## Nicoletti-Flater Associates

### Sleep Disorders



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## Officer Specific Statistics

Sleep disorders are especially common in shift workers, including police officers. Studies have found that nearly 40% of police officers suffer from some form of sleep disorder.

According to a survey by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, among officers in the US and Canada:

- 53% get less than 6.5 hours of sleep daily (compared to 30% of the general population)
- 91% report feeling fatigued "routinely"
- 14% are tired when they start their work shift
- 85% drive while "drowsy"
- 39% have fallen asleep at the wheel

**NOTE:** Experts recommend that adults get between seven and eight hours of sleep per 24 hours to maintain good health and optimum performance.

## What Happens When You Don't Get Enough Sleep

- The ability to maintain speed and road position on a driving simulator is significantly reduced when the normal awake period is prolonged by just 3 hours.
- As people try to fight through periods of fatigue, the body goes into "microsleeps" where you literally fall asleep anywhere from 2 to 10 seconds at a time-no matter what else is going on.
- As little as 2 hours of sleep loss on just one occasion can result in degraded reaction time, cognitive functioning, memory, mood, and alertness.
- Fatigue is 4 times more likely to cause workplace impairment than alcohol and other drugs.



*Be sure to consult with your physician if you are struggling with an ongoing sleep disorder to ensure there is not a medical reason for the disturbance.*

*Resource: Tired Cops: The Importance of Managing Police Fatigue by Bryan Vila*

*Dr. Bryan Vila is a former 17-year veteran street cop in Los Angeles and now directs the Simulated Hazardous Operational Tasks laboratory in Washing State University's Sleep & Performance*