

# Safety and health alert

## 01/09 Driver Fatigue

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### Incident

A commercial vehicle driver was fatally injured when the combination he was driving left the road and crashed into trees. The driver was on the first part of a trip when the commercial vehicle drifted to the right and into the median strip, hitting trees.

There was no evidence of brakes being applied after the combination left the road.

It was determined that the commercial vehicle driver had not had a break of at least seven continuous hours in more than 19 hours at the time of the crash. The driver had also been starting work at irregular times in the period leading up to the crash. It would appear that the trip records may not have reflected the actual hours of work.

### Factors to consider

- Not getting enough rest or sleep when driving for long periods.
- Irregular working hours.
- Not ensuring that accurate documentation and records are kept and checked by a responsible person at the workplace.

### Recommendations

1. All drivers should have a documented roster and schedule which includes start and finish times with working hours to be as regular as possible.
2. A system should be in place to ensure the accuracy of the trip records that the drivers are submitting by checking trip records against gate records/logs, fuel dockets, phone records, loading documentation, etc.
3. The Code of Practice for Commercial Vehicle Drivers should be used as a guide when implementing a Fatigue Management Plan.

### Further information

- Code of Practice for Fatigue Management for Commercial Vehicle Drivers
- *Occupational Safety & Health Regulations 1996* – Division 10
- *Staying Alert at the Wheel* – available from the WorkSafe Library and [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au).

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au) or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email [safety@commerce.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@commerce.wa.gov.au)

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