

Arrive Alive

The holiday hustle is upon us. Truth is, we have already experienced a great deal of hustle even before the holiday season arrived. Today's article looks at ways to manage our time and resources in a manner that facilitates enjoyment of the season and the celebrations included.

It's important to begin with planning. Take your Pipeline Performance Group calendar off the wall and write activities in the corresponding time blocks, beginning with your priorities. Work and sleep should be scheduled first. These priorities support fiscal spending and energy spending. A fatigued mind and body don't perform well on the job, the highway, or in relationships. Sleep is the only cure for fatigue, so make sleep a priority. Consider other calendar entries in order of their importance, after scheduling work and sleep.

Many of us anticipate the joy of the holiday season, but it is quite normal to also experience stress and anxiety. "Anxiety causes a hormonal rush that can leave



you feeling drained and tired. The crash is probably temporary, but the feeling of exhaustion lasts. Even after you've gotten some rest, you may be experiencing fatigue."¹ In some cases, when you are fatigued, your brain may even grab a nap without your permission. This phenomenon is called a microsleep, and is an involuntary episode of sleep that lasts just a few seconds. It could happen while sitting at the control room console, or even while driving!

When you plan well, you'll find you have budgeted time to drive to your destination without rushing. Proper preparation protects you as you attend to the rules of the road and use safe driving practices. This may not be the case for other drivers. Drivers tend to be rushed, fatigued, distracted, and under the influence of alcohol more frequently at this time of year. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports, "Generally, there are more motor vehicle traffic crash fatalities during holiday periods than during non-holiday periods due to increased travel time, more alcohol use and excessive driving speed".²

Caring for your mental and physical health are fundamental to all safe operations, including driving. If you're hoping to arrive alive, you must use caution while driving, especially in holiday traffic.

- Get proper rest before a big road trip, and prepare for sufficient stops to help mitigate fatigue
- Relieve stress behind the wheel - breathe deeply, exhale slowly
- Practice defensive driving - stay aware of your surroundings
- Keep both hands securely on the wheel
- Keep headlights on for greater visibility and be sure your windshield wipers are in good condition
- Keep cell phones and other distractions tucked away while driving

When you're driving alert, you can be more situationally aware and avoid mishaps. Stay alert and arrive alive! Happy holidays to all!

¹ Stanborough, R.J., 2022, "Can Having Anxiety Make You Feel Tired?", <https://www.healthline.com/health/anxiety/can-having-anxiety-make-you-feel-tired>

² NHTSA, 2019, "Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Fatalities for the Holiday Periods of 2019", <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812823>