

Sleep while you work? Some employers say yes

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EXTRACT

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As a result of this, there's been a growing trend among employers wherein they provide their workers with 20- to 30-minute power naps. Several news organizations, such as NBC's "Today" show, have run feature stories about this, as some companies have purchased so-called "sleep pods" that enable their workers to catch some extra Zs. CBS News has also aired news pieces about this napping-at-work phenomenon.

"Sleep makes us more productive, more creative, less stressed and much healthier and happier," Huffington Post founder and president Arianna Huffington told NBC recently. The internet mogul was hospitalized several years ago after collapsing from exhaustion and suffering a broken cheekbone when she fell.

"Even a 20-minute nap in the middle of the day can make a huge difference. I grew up thinking that if you work around the clock, you are going to be more effective, and I realize that is not true," she said.

More than one in six Canadians admit they've fallen asleep at the wheel

Canadians have sleeping problems of their own. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, based on a 2008 academic study, roughly 60 percent of Canadian drivers admit that they've gotten behind the wheel to drive despite feeling drowsy, and 15 percent say they've fallen asleep while driving.

While there's no guarantee that employers will enable their workers to take occasional power naps, what is certain is that insufficient amounts of sleep is a major contributor to accidents involving car insurance claims. In a 2010 survey done by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, approximately one in every five fatal collisions involved driver fatigue.

Health experts say that there are a variety of behaviors to be on the lookout for that suggest a driver is fatigued. For example, blinking or yawning regularly, having disconnected thoughts, braking too late or drifting over the center line are all indications that a motorist may be suffering from sleep deprivation. To better manage it, people are encouraged to get at least seven to eight hours of sleep a night, pull over and sleep for a few minutes if driving long distances and allow a fellow passenger who's licensed to drive to take the wheel.

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