



**1.2 MILLION
WORKING DAYS ARE
LOST, THANKS TO
SLEEPY AMERICANS.**

The High Price of Sleep Deprivation

Not logging enough quality z's costs our country \$411 billion a year.

BY DIANA KELLY LEVEY

WANT TO HELP BEEF UP the U.S. economy? Then get to bed: An increase in sleep could add billions of dollars.

A recent study by Rand Europe found that the economic cost of insufficient sleep in the United States is \$411 billion, which is 2.2 percent of the gross domestic product.

The researchers said that if individuals who slept less than six hours started sleeping six to seven hours, this could add \$226.4 billion to the economy.

Whether your issue is insomnia, short sleep or a health issue like sleep apnea or snoring, fragmented and insufficient sleep is costing you, your employer and our society money.

The National Safety Council says that fatigued workers cost employers about \$1,200 to \$3,100 per employee in declining job performance each year, while sleepy workers are estimated to cost employers \$136 billion a

year in health-related lost productivity. Yikes!

While insomnia is a serious condition, short sleep is more common among American workers. It is described as “less than seven hours per day” and has been linked to negative health outcomes. These include cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, depression and anxiety as well as safety issues related to drowsy driving and injuries.

Lack of Slumber Is Dangerous for You and Others

When you've had a bad night's sleep, you're probably dragging at work the next day, have trouble concentrating, feel out of it and may have a slower reaction time to that car stopping in front of you while driving.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety released a research brief estimating that drowsy driving—one of the most underreported traffic safety issues—is involved in up to

9.5 percent of all motor vehicle crashes.

A small study published in the journal *Nature Medicine* in 2017 found that sleep deprivation causes dampened cell activity, which then causes the brain to respond to visual stimuli slower. So when a sleep-deprived driver sees a pedestrian stepping in front of their car, for example, it takes longer for their brain to register what they're seeing. Study author Itzhak Fried, M.D., Ph.D., summarized the findings in a released statement: “Severe fatigue exerts a similar influence on the brain to drinking too much. Yet no legal or medical standards exist for identifying overtired drivers on the road the same way we target drunk drivers.”

It comes as no surprise that night-shift workers complain of sleep issues, due to their biological clocks being challenged by working when it's dark and sleeping when it's light. The risk of safety incidents was

30 percent higher during night shifts compared to morning shifts.

Even if you don't work in a job where you're operating machinery or vehicles, remember that not getting enough sleep is hurting your productivity, concentration and health.

Having Trouble Staying Awake at Work?

Among 22 major occupation groups, the highest prevalence of short sleep duration were among the following occupations:

- Communications Equipment Operators
- Rail Transportation Workers
- Other Transportation Workers
- Production
- Healthcare Support
- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers
- Food Preparation and Serving-Related
- Protective Service