

Dangerous Driving — When We Shouldn't be Behind the Wheel



A survey from [CarInsurance.com](https://www.carinsurance.com) takes a different spin on dangerous driving. The website asked 2,000 drivers about times they drove when they really shouldn't have been driving.

Driving while sleepy was the number-one answer and 68% said they have driven a vehicle while drowsy.

When pushed 60% of those surveyed said driving while sleepy ought to be illegal. By the way, it is in two states: New Jersey and Arkansas.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety said one in eight fatal crashes involves someone driving while sleepy. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration agrees. Its statistics show drowsy driving is involved in 100,000 crashes each year. In those accidents 71,000 people are injured and 1,500 are dead.

We all know we shouldn't drive while sleepy but we do anyway. Education efforts are now happening in a bunch of states on driving drowsy but David Harkey — who heads up the University of North Carolina Highway Research Center — says that's not enough.

“Education alone is not the solution. We have seen too many safety issues where such a solution does not work. Campaigns that include both a public education component combined with high-visibility enforcement have been shown to produce results, for example ‘Click It or Ticket,’” he said.

Most scary is learning the majority of those surveyed drove sleepy anyway. Here are the other top reasons:

- 53% said it was when they had a bad headache
- 35% said they were sick enough to be in bed but drove anyway
- 23% drove when they were less drunk than a friend
- 16% when they needed glasses or contacts and weren't wearing them
- 15% drove under the influence of narcotic pain meds
- 6% had their arm in a cast

Driving when you shouldn't also includes being behind a wheel in horrible weather conditions or when a vehicle isn't safe to drive. Of those same 2,000 people:

- 61% said they drove with the check engine light on
- 32% said they drove when they couldn't see because of ice or snow on the windshield
- 26% have driven without windshield wipers
- 21% drove vehicles with a speedometer that doesn't work
- 19% drove with a horn that didn't work
- 18% have been behind the wheel of a vehicle whose headlights didn't work
- 17% drove with a flat tire
- 10% drove a vehicle whose door had to be held closed
- 7% drove with their children or a child not in a car seat
- 6% drove a car filled with exhaust fumes
- 5% drove with no driver's seat or on a driver's seat that was broken

And how many times in the last 12-months did they drive when they shouldn't have been driving or who drove vehicles that should not be driven?

- 46% said once or twice
- 11% said three or more times
- 3% more than 10 times

Looking at driving when they shouldn't drive in more detail, 79% said they did not drive when others suggested they give up their keys. Just 21% ignored that advice and that 21% gave their reasons why:

- 21% had to go to work
- 13% had to go home
- 4% had to go to the doctor
- 3% had to pick up their children