



accidents don't have to happen

Safer Journey Planner



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Falling Asleep at the Wheel

Drivers who become drowsy or fall asleep at the wheel cause thousands of crashes each year. They often cause serious injuries because they tend to happen on high speed roads and a sleeping driver cannot brake or swerve to avoid or reduce the impact. They are most likely to happen:

- on long journeys on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- between 2am and 6am
- between 2pm and 4pm (especially after eating, or taking even one alcoholic drink)
- after having less sleep than normal
- after drinking alcohol
- if taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- after long working hours or on journeys home after long shifts, especially night shifts



Tiredness reduces your reaction time, alertness and decision-making, all crucial driving skills.

Plan Your Journey

Use safer alternatives

If possible, avoid long car journeys. Where possible, travel by train, bus, coach or plane, which is far safer and more environmentally-friendly. If driving is unavoidable, maximise vehicle sharing to reduce the number of journeys, and to reduce the length of time drivers spend at the wheel.

Avoid high risk times

Avoid driving in the early hours of the morning, when you have had less sleep than normal, or in mid afternoon after eating a large meal - these are peak times for sleep-related accidents. Avoid starting a long journey after a full day's (or shift's) work.

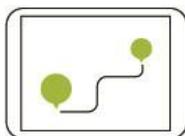
Plan Your Route

Estimate how long the journey will take, including rest breaks and unexpected delays, and plan where to stop for regular rest breaks (about every two hours for at least 15 to 20 minutes).

Live traffic information on motorways and trunk roads provided on www.trafficengland.com , www.traffic-wales.com and www.trafficscotland.org is useful to help establish route options, distances and journey times.



If using a Sat Nav, input the destination before setting off, and if you need to change it during the journey, stop in a safe place to do so.



Consider the type of road (accident rates are lowest on motorways and dual carriageways), congestion (avoid peak traffic hours) and high-risk features, such as schools or busy shopping centres. If possible, plan alternative routes to avoid any major delays.

Overnight Stop

Consider breaking your journey with an overnight stop. If you are catching an early flight or returning from abroad - make it part of your holiday.

Second Driver

If possible, share the driving with a second driver.

Sleep

Try not to stay up late or reduce your normal sleep before a long journey.

Alcohol

Alcohol stays in the body for several hours and will make you more sleepy, so avoid having even one drink.

Medicines

If you are taking any medication, check whether it causes drowsiness. If it does, ask your doctor or pharmacist for an alternative that does not cause drowsiness.

Check Your Vehicle

Make sure everything is working properly, especially the tyres, lights, windscreen wipers, and all fluid levels

Avoid driving in very poor weather

Avoid driving in very poor weather, particularly fog, heavy rainfall, very high winds, ice, snow or flooding or where there is a danger of being stranded.

Be ready to postpone your journey or change your route if the police and travel organisations advise against road travel due to weather conditions.

Consider what emergency equipment to carry in the vehicle in case you get stranded.



If you begin to feel sleepy

If you start to feel sleepy while driving, you are more likely to crash.

Many drivers try to stay awake by turning up the air conditioning, winding down the window, listening to the radio, talking or singing. These will only work for a few minutes, to give you time to find somewhere safe to stop.

They Will Not Stop You Falling Asleep!

If you begin to feel sleepy:

- Do not try to complete the journey (you might never arrive)
- Find somewhere safe to stop (not the hard shoulder)
- Drink one or two cups of strong coffee or other high caffeine drinks
- Nap for about 15 minutes
- But remember, sleep is the only real cure for tiredness. So, if necessary, find somewhere safe to stay overnight.



Further Information and Support

[RoSPA Road Safety](#)

[Highways England](#)

[Road Safety GB](#)

[The Highway Code](#)

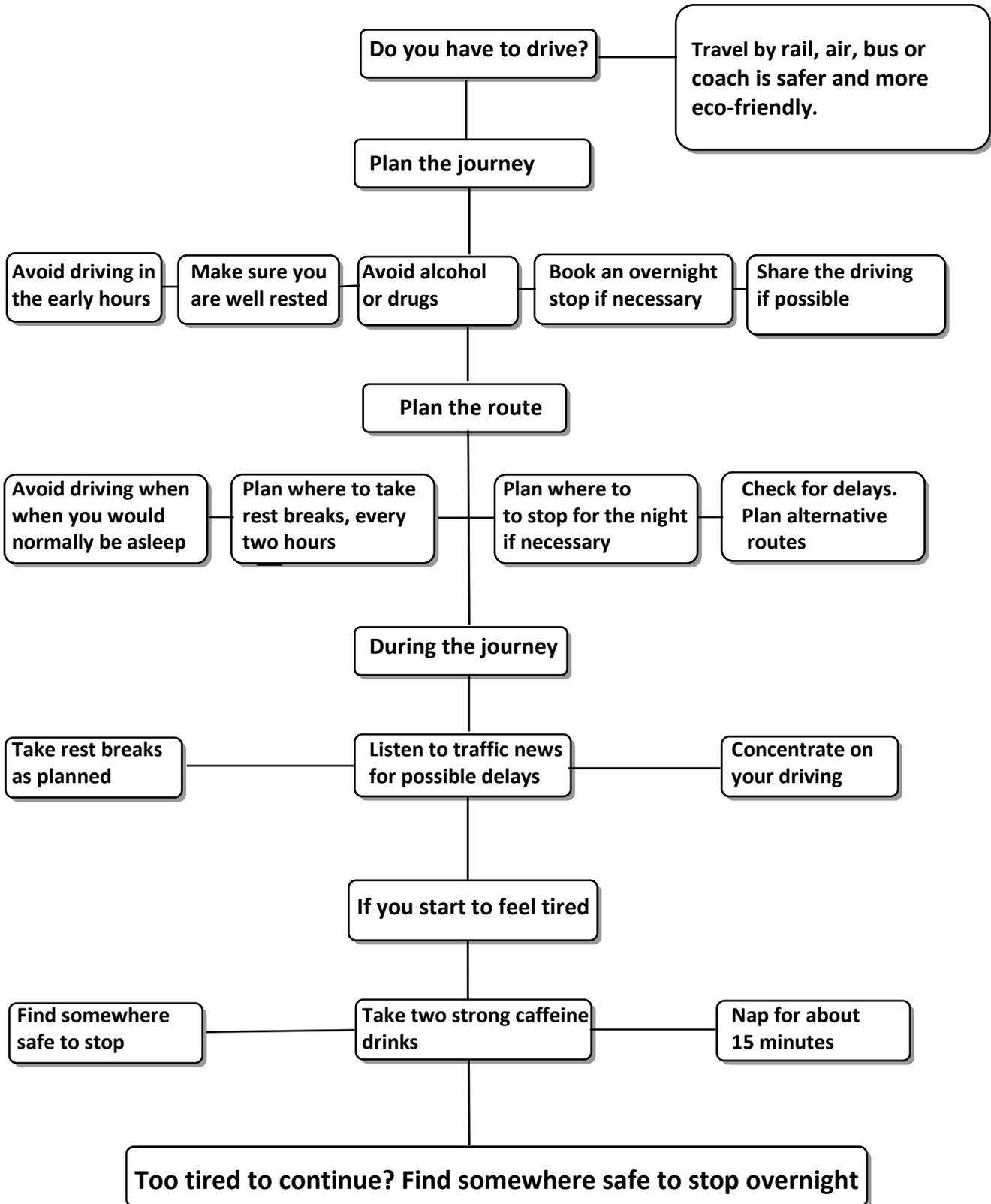
[Think! Road Safety](#)

[Road Safety Scotland](#)

[Road Safety Wales](#)

[RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders](#)

Journey Planner





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