

MEDIA RELEASE

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation recommends that drivers prepare for the switch to daylight saving time

Burnaby, B.C. / March 1, 2010 -- Time springs ahead one hour on March 14th, but will you? Time changes reflect a change in social clocks not biological ones and studies show that our circadian rhythms (body clocks) don't adjust to these changes naturally.

Drivers, pedestrians and cyclists that have to be on time for work on Monday morning will be immediately affected by the time change, but there are other drivers out there that should take care as well.

Evidence has shown that a majority of adolescents do not get enough sleep in a 24-hour period for optimal functioning during the day. Combine this with the effects of a time change and other conditions that already put teen drivers at risk behind the wheel, and the chances of a teenager being involved in a car crash increases.

There is also evidence that as we age our ability to fall into and maintain a deep, restorative sleep decreases. Like teen drivers this lack of sound sleep combined with the time change adjustment increases the risk for mature drivers to be involved in a crash as well.

Regardless of age, fatigue impairs the brain functions as much as alcohol, reducing the mind and body's ability to respond quickly and accurately.

Sleep related collisions are very common and range from hitting a pedestrian in an intersection or rear-ending the vehicle in front of you, to veering off of the road and hitting a parked car or a telephone pole.

According to the most recent B.C. traffic crash data available, 4.3 per cent of all fatal collisions were caused by the driver falling asleep at the wheel.

Sleep is what your body really needs to be able to function properly.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation recommends changing your sleeping patterns three to five days prior to the time change taking effect to allow your body to adjust. Also avoid caffeine or other substances to "wake you up" because once it wears off you may feel even more fatigued.

The foundation also recommends that if you take daily doses of any medication you should consult your physician about when to take them during and after the switch to daylight saving time because side effects such as drowsiness could impact your driving.

For more information about road safety visit www.bcaatsf.ca.

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About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit www.BCAATSF.ca or call 604-298-5107.

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URL for this media release is: <http://www.tsfbcaa.com/content/custompages/news.aspx>

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