

## LOGGING/FORESTRY SAFETY SERIES

# OPERATING MACHINERY WHILE FATIGUED

*Photo credit: Cornelis F. de Hoop, PhD*

### Incident Summary:

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, Leo left his house at 4:00 a.m. to drive to report to work as a log truck driver at a logging site 45 minutes away. He had worked an average of 13 hours/day Monday-Friday for the past two weeks. Seasonal allergies had also left Leo congested and sleep-deprived. At 7:32 a.m., police and EMT personnel responded to an accident involving Leo's truck and an SUV. According to the police report, Leo fell asleep at the wheel and failed to stop at a traffic light. His loaded log truck hit an SUV carrying a woman and two children. The woman and one child died at the scene. The other child was life-flighted to Dallas Children's Hospital. Leo suffered a concussion, and multiple broken bones in his feet, legs and hips.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What contributed to Leo's fatigue?
2. What can a worker do to fight fatigue?
3. What are the lifelong consequences of this incident?

### Take Home Message:

Driving or operating machinery while fatigued can be deadly, for you and the people around you.



## **Tips for Fighting Fatigue at Work**

1. Take a brisk walk.
2. Refresh with cold water: splash your face with cold water, pour cold water over wrists or put a cool, damp cloth on your forehead.
3. Snack on nuts.
4. Avoid sugar. It may give you a temporary surge of energy, but will ultimately cause a sugar crash. It can also lead to weight gain which can contribute to fatigue.
5. Chew mint gum or packaged mints. The smell of mint can promote energy.

## **Tips for Preventing Fatigue**

1. Talk to your doctor about fatigue and/or trouble sleeping.
2. Drink plenty of water. Limit caffeine and energy drinks.
3. Get enough sleep.
4. Exercise to boost energy and help you sleep.
5. Maintain a healthy weight.
6. Don't skip meals.
7. Eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and whole grains.
8. Manage stress.

## **Resources**

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Fatigue\\_fighting\\_tips?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Fatigue_fighting_tips?open)

<http://www.everydayhealth.com/rheumatoid-arthritis-pictures/how-to-fight-fatigue-and-stop-feeling-tired.aspx>

<http://www.prevention.com/health/sleep-energy/9-energizing-tricks-fight-fatigue>

<http://www.drfranklipman.com/all-day-energy-10-fantastic-ways-to-fight-fatigue/>

