



# SAFETY ALERT

## A driver's life: sleep disorders and bad health

Sydney Morning Herald

MORE than 40 per cent of commercial truck drivers have obstructive sleep apnoea, a sleeping disorder which roughly doubles the risk of crashing, an Australian study has found.

Sixteen per cent of the 41 per cent are categorised as being severe cases, the study, published in the American journal *Sleep*, says.

The study also shows that half of the truck drivers in the research were obese, half were smokers, and about 20 per cent had hypertension.

Drivers are failing to report symptoms, such as snoring and sleepiness, as required during exams to obtain their licence, the reports says.

"Our study shows licence requirements don't identify drivers with sleep disorders. The system is inadequate," said Ron Grunstein, professor of sleep medicine at the University of Sydney.

The study involved 517 truck drivers who travelled at least 200 kilometres from their base and drove trucks greater than 12 tonnes tare weight, such as semi-trailers and road trains.

The full article written by Professor Grunstein can be viewed at:

<http://www.journalsleep.org/ViewAbstract.aspx?pid=28461>



### **Legislative Requirements:**

Pursuant to the *Occupational Safety and Health Act*, employers must provide a safe place of work which includes ensuring that drivers are medically fit to undertake their duties and sufficiently rested to complete their tasks.

For more information see:

National Transport Commission – Assessing Fitness to Drive (2012)

Worksafe WA – Code of Practice: Fatigue Management for Commercial Drivers

Worksafe WA – Commercial Vehicle Driver, Medical Assessment Form

### **Barbaro Group:**

Barbaro Group is a subject matter expert in all aspects of land transport, vehicle management and road safety.

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