

*News on sleep apnea for the commercial trucking industry*

## Just say **NO** to distractions

Truckers who text when driving were 23 times more likely to be in a crash than non-distracted drivers.  
- FMCSA study

Texting while driving your commercial vehicle is not just deemed dangerous, it is illegal. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced at the beginning of this year a federal ban on texting for commercial truck drivers with vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds. Such offenses could slap drivers with civil or criminal penalties of up to \$2,750. In a study released last year, drivers of heavy vehicles and trucks who texted while driving were 23 times more likely to be in a crash than non-distracted drivers. In addition, texting took a driver's focus away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds – enough time to drive the length of a football field at 55 mph, according to research by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

FMCSA is currently working on additional federal regulatory measures to be announced in the coming months.

*Continued on Page 4*

- 2 Editor's Note
- 3 Study: OSA treatment benefits truck drivers
- 3 Schneider VP honored for leadership
- 4 Put It Away
- 5 Gray area: Sleep apnea could cause brain damage
- 5 Cover to cover: Read up on OSA
- 5 Feeling sleepy?

PPD: Protecting Professional Drivers is a production of Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics, specializing in premium news and analysis on sleep apnea for the commercial trucking industry, and is published 4 times a year.

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Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics (PPD), provides professional screening for drivers who are at risk for sleep apnea. This is a HIPPA-compliant, online tool customized to a company's requirements.

Once a driver has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, PPD will provide local diagnostic services with the ease of Webbased scheduling and quick, reliable turn-around — from diagnosis to treatment.

Drivers who require treatment will be fitted for and provided with a CPAP mask, flow generator, and heated humidifier for nightly use.

In order to ensure drivers are using their masks correctly, PPD has partnered with a leading manufacturer of CPAP equipment, masks, and the only provider of a patented wireless compliance monitoring system.

The wireless compliance monitoring system provides daily information of CPAP use, efficacy, and allows real-time troubleshooting of any problems your drivers may be experiencing. With this data, we can enhance your drivers' CPAP acceptance and long-term compliance. In short, our protocols can maximize your results and your return on investment.

Dear Readers,

PPD offers the most unique and effective sleep apnea detection and treatment program available for commercial truck drivers. A chief component of this program is to have the drivers that are being screened for risk of sleep apnea, tested in an accredited sleep lab. Most professional truck drivers that are scheduled for a sleep study are to some extent anxious and nervous about the procedure. Not only because they are to be tested for Obstructive Sleep Apnea, or OSA but also because of the fact that they will be sleeping in an unfamiliar sleep lab facility.

Most ask what a sleep lab is. A sleep lab is a medical facility designed for the purpose of testing, studying and accurately recording sleep disorders. There are a few thousand sleep labs around the country, so how does PPD go about choosing a lab to be part of its sleep lab network.

We research for Accreditation, Physician Specialties, including Sleep Medicine, Board registered technicians, convenient physical lab locations, lab comfort, and one very important element ... safe, secure parking for the drivers and their equipment. Network labs are independent medical facilities and are not in hospitals. Most drivers are uncomfortable with going into a hospital setting.

PPD does not own nor are we invested in any way with any network lab; but once a lab becomes part of PPD's network, we support and work very closely with it and its staff. We personally visit with each lab on a continuous basis. We have on-going communications with the labs and are aware of any changes within them. We utilize an on-line educational learning tool where technicians are always keep current with PPD policies and procedures; and at all times that the drivers are in the lab, technicians and the drivers themselves have direct access to the Director of Sleep Services at PPD.

All PPD network labs are required to perform Type I sleep studies, the gold standard, on all drivers and the results are then interpreted by Boarded Sleep Physicians. Not all drivers are diagnosed with sleep apnea; however, if a driver is diagnosed positive for sleep apnea, the driver will be educated and given CPAP equipment the morning after their sleep study.

Because PPD's program is designed for commercial drivers, lab technicians are specifically trained on the education needed to get the drivers set up with the CPAP equipment and back on the road as quickly and safely as possible. While mornings may be busy for drivers needing CPAP education and equipment, they are encouraged to ask questions; they are not rushed and may take as much time as needed to feel comfortable with their new equipment.

Drivers also have the opportunity to speak with a Sleep Physician at any time after their sleep study. Network labs are dedicated and committed to providing the premier quality of care to the drivers entrusted to them.

PPD has the expertise, knowledge, staffing and ability to grow its sleep lab network for the convenience of the trucking company community and their drivers and welcomes the opportunity to speak with anyone wanting to have an area covered or with a sleep lab wishing to possibly network with PPD.

Sweet Dreams,

*Judy Panian*

Director of Sleep Services

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# Study: OSA treatment benefits truck drivers

For commercial motor vehicle drivers with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), effective treatment lowers healthcare costs and disability rates, reports a study in the May Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, official publication of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).

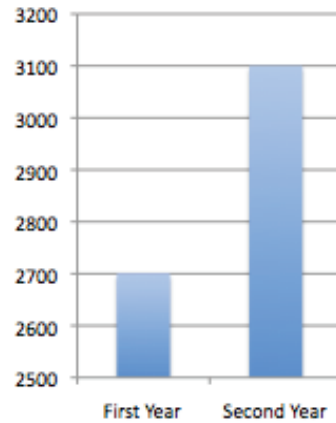
Treating OSA in truck drivers has economic as well as health and safety benefits, according to the new study, led by Dr. Benjamin Hoffman, Chief Medical Officer of Waste Management, Inc.

The researchers used insurance claims records to evaluate the effects of OSA treatment in commercial motor vehicle drivers. Costs were compared for 156 drivers who received continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) or other treatments for OSA and 92 drivers who were diagnosed with OSA but were not treated.

For treated drivers, health plan costs decreased by an average of \$2,700 in the first year and another \$3,100 in the second year, compared to no change for untreated drivers. The treated drivers also missed fewer work days (average 4.4 days in the first year) and had lower short-term disability costs (\$528 over two years).

On average, treatment for OSA led to "over \$6,000 in total health plan and disability cost savings per treated driver," the researchers write. Total

Health Plan Savings for Treated Drivers (in Dollars)



costs decreased by 41 percent in drivers treated for OSA (compared to an 8 percent decrease in untreated drivers).

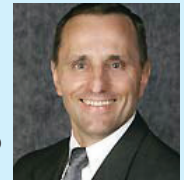
Sleep apnea is an important preventable cause of motor vehicle accidents, and studies have found that treatment for OSA can lower the accident rate. Screening and treatment for OSA has recently been recommended for commercial motor vehicle drivers.

The new study suggests that, in addition to lowering accident rates, treating OSA in commercial motor vehicle drivers can reduce health costs, work absences, and short-term disability. Dr. Hoffman and colleagues conclude, "Addressing OSA in the workplace offers the possibility of early identification and intervention for a chronic disease that is associated with increased health benefit utilization."

## Schneider VP honored for leadership

### Don Osterberg receives award at Sleep Apnea & Trucking Conference

The Truck Safety Coalition presented its first-ever, Distinguished Safety Leadership award to Don Osterberg, Vice President of Safety, Security & Driver



Osterberg

Training for Green Bay, WI-based Schneider National during the May 11th reception at the Sleep Apnea & Trucking Conference in Baltimore.

This recognition was particularly special as the Truck Safety Coalition is dedicated to reducing truck-related crashes, providing support to truck crash survivors and families of truck crash victims, and educating the public, policy-makers and media about truck safety issues. Other presenters at the reception included FMCSA Administrator Anne Ferro and NTSB Vice Chair Christopher Hart.

The Sleep Apnea & Trucking Conference was a sold out meeting, boasting more than 400 attendees with representatives from trucking, insurance/risk management, occupational health, and healthcare, including sleep medicine.

Those who were unable to attend can purchase the Resource Toolkit, a comprehensive manual with materials on sleep apnea and trucking, which is available at [www.satc2010.org](http://www.satc2010.org).

### Did You Know...

Actress and TV personality, Rosie O'Donnell suffers from sleep apnea and uses a CPAP machine for treatment. - *The View*

Continued from Page 1

To date, 25 states (including the District of Columbia) have passed their own laws to squash the trend and save lives.

### More than just texting

While texting is the latest in driving distractions, commercial drivers are also considered “distracted” when:

- Talking on a cell phone
- Eating or drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Changing the radio station, CD of .mp3 player

The DOT has launched a Web site dedicated to distracted driving, [distracted.gov](http://distracted.gov). On this site, visitors can take the Distracted Driving Challenge to learn state laws so they can avoid tickets and become a safe driver. The site also lists which states have no cell phone or texting laws in effect.

In April 2010, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood launched pilot programs in New York and Connecticut to study whether increased enforcement and public awareness could reduce distracted driving behavior. During one week in Hartford, Conn., police officers cited more than 2,000 drivers for talking on cell phones and an additional 200 more for texting while driving.

### Sleep apnea is distracting too

A driver suffering from sleep apnea can also be distracted while driving, and therefore in danger of a crash. Because OSA causes a person to stop breathing during sleep, these disturbances often lead to daytime fatigue, which delays cognitive ability and lags response time.

In fact, according to the FMCSA study, yawning is considered a driving distraction because your eyes are momentarily closed.

Pair fatigue with other distractions – like eating or reading a map – and risk

increases even more.

### Minimize your risk

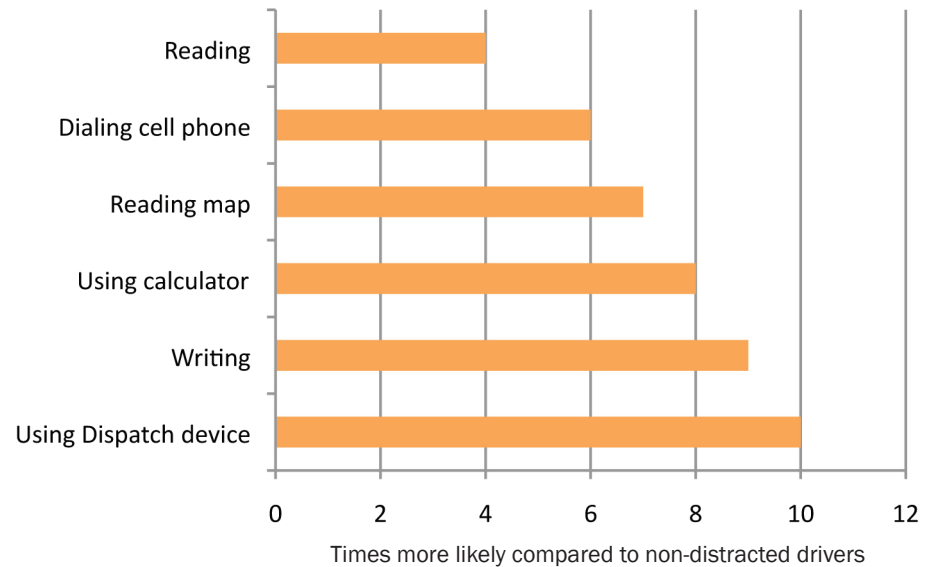
Ask yourself the following questions (courtesy of the American Sleep Apnea Association) to see if you suffer from sleep apnea:

1. Are you a loud or regular snorer?
2. Have you ever been observed to gasp or stop breathing during sleep?
3. Do you feel tired or groggy upon awakening, or do you awaken with a headache?
4. Are you often tired or fatigued during the wake time hours?
5. Do you fall asleep sitting, reading, watching TV or driving?
6. Do you often have problems with memory or concentration?

If you have one or more of these symptoms, you are at higher risk for having obstructive sleep apnea. Contact your company’s sleep program director or Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics at 713.520.5864.

Also, when driving, try not to focus on anything other than the road. If you have to make a call, read a map or eat, pull over. It could just save your life.

## Activities While Driving and Risk of Crash



Source: FMCSA study

## Put It Away

A texting ban has been enacted in:

- Alaska
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Guam
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wyoming

Source: DOT's [Distraction.gov](http://Distraction.gov)

# Gray area: Sleep apnea could cause brain damage

Gray matter concentration falls short in multiple brain areas of people with severe OSA, according to a study recently published in journal SLEEP. The study suggests the memory impairment, cardiovascular disturbances, executive dysfunctions, and dysregulation of autonomic and respiratory control frequently observed in OSA patients may be related to morphological changes in brain structure.

“Gray matter” refers to the cerebral cortex, where most information processing in the brain takes place.

Principal investigator Seung Bong Hong, MD, PhD, professor of neurology at the Samsung Medical Center in Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine in Seoul, South Korea, said the study em-

phasizes the importance of diagnosing and effectively treating severe OSA.

“Poor sleep quality and progressive brain damage induced by OSA could be responsible for poor memory, emotional

problems, decreased cognitive functioning and increased cardiovascular disturbances,” Hong said. “The use of continuous positive airway pressure - CPAP - therapy could stop further progression of brain damage in patients with severe OSA.”

The study involved 36 male OSA patients with an average age of 44.7 years and 31 healthy, male, age-matched controls. Sleep was evaluated by overnight polysomnography. On average, the OSA patients had partial or complete breathing pauses about 52.5 times per hour of sleep. Patients with OSA also had more awakenings from sleep and a more fragmented sleep structure than controls.

For more information, see “Reduced Brain Gray Matter Concentration in Patients with Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome” in journal SLEEP.



According to Amazon.com, these titles top the list of books on sleep apnea.

## Cover to cover: Read up on OSA

1. **Sleep Apnea-The Phantom of the Night: Overcome Sleep Apnea Syndrome and Win Your Hidden Struggle to Breathe, Sleep, and Live** by T. Scott Johnson, William A. Broughton, Jerry Halberstadt, and William Dement
2. **Questions & Answers About Sleep Apnea (100 Questions & Answers)** by Sudhansu Chokroverty
3. **Snoring and Sleep Apnea: Sleep Well, Feel Better** by Ralph A. Pascualy
4. **The Perils of Sleep Apnea – An Undiagnosed Epidemic: A Layman’s Perspective** by Burton Abrams
5. **SnorØ Terminator: Your Deadly Snoring/Sleep Apnea** by Walter Fong
6. **Restless Nights: Understanding Snoring and Sleep Apnea** by P. Lavie

## Feeling Sleepy?

The following warning signs indicate that it’s time to stop driving and find a safe place to pull over and address your condition:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking and/or heavy eyelids
- Difficulty keeping reveries or daydreams at bay
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Drifting from your lane, swerving, tailgating and/or hitting rumble strips
- Unable to clearly remember the last few miles driven
- Missing exits or traffic signs
- Yawning repeatedly
- Feeling restless, irritable, or aggressive

Source: National Sleep Foundation