

SAFETYFIRST

INFORMATION DEDICATED TO DRIVER SAFETY

AHEAD OF
THE CURVE

Safety Management
Services Company, 2012

An affiliate of
Cottingham & Butler

Be Safe Out There

The penalties for operating under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter medicines can be costly to your wallet, safety record, and potentially your life!



Cottingham & Butler
TRANSPORTATION GROUP

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs – Beware!

When drivers take medications during the cold and flu season, they often forget that these medications can have an adverse effect on their cognitive and motor abilities. It doesn't usually cross their minds that they are taking a drug and will potentially be impaired. Even if they read the medication's warning label, it's common to assume that it only applies to certain people and that "do not operate heavy machinery" means farm and construction equipment, forgetting that commercial motor vehicles should be included as well. Many drugs carry warnings about drowsiness or dizziness that people ignore. However, this is a serious problem that leads to thousands of accidents each year. The danger of getting behind the wheel when a driver is too tired to drive due to being under the influence of these medications can clearly create serious crash risks.

Drugs impair our bodies in a variety of ways. They may blur our vision, make us tired or too excited, alter depth perception, make us see or hear things that may not be there, raise or lower blood pressure, react too quickly, too slowly, or not at all. They can often cause problems with concentrating on the task at hand. These problems can result from taking prescription or over-the-counter medications the same way illegal drugs can affect the body.

Drugs such as cold and cough medicines, antihistamines, drugs to prevent nausea, pain relievers, decongestants, and many other prescription and/or over-the-counter medicines used during the cold/flu season can cause drowsiness or dizziness that can severely impair a driver's skills and reflexes.

To avoid harming yourself or others, partner with your physician and pharmacist to obtain information regarding a medication's side effects and what drugs are usually safe to use as a commercial driver behind the wheel. Never take more than the prescribed dose, or take anyone else's prescription medicine. Ask for non-sedating forms of your prescriptions or over-the-counter medicines which will not cause risk for your safety or that of the motoring public. Always allow your body time to adjust to new medications before you drive. Most importantly, each of us is responsible for knowing the signs and symptoms of being drug-impaired before we get behind the steering wheel of a commercial motor vehicle.

REMEMBER . . .

Don't let medicines do more harm than good this season!