California Schools JPA℠

SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE END OF DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME? DON'T FORGET TO FALL BACK ON NOVEMBER 3rd!

OBJECTIVE We have reached the end of Daylight Saving Time 2024, which marks when we turn our clocks back an hour. Daylight Saving Time will end on Sunday, November 3, 2024. Clocks will fall back an hour at 2 a.m., offering an extra hour of sleep this weekend. The negative? The days will feel shorter with sunset an hour earlier. As the days continue, the evenings will continue to be darker. Below are tips to help you prepare.

Nearly everyone looks forward to "falling back" and claiming that extra hour of sleep in the fall, but taking advantage of that extra rest and keeping the benefit can be tough. Time changes inevitably alter people's schedules, and it can take the body up to a week to adjust. Until then, falling asleep and waking up can be harder.

If you are getting seven to eight hours of sound sleep, you may wake up feeling refreshed. If you are sleep-deprived already, you're probably in a bit of trouble when the time changes, especially if you consume alcohol or caffeine close to bedtime. In this situation, you may experience a decrease in performance, concentration, and memory, as well as daytime sleepiness. It's just an hour, but it requires those sleep deprived individuals to alter their circadian clock.

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In some cases, the time shift can even be dangerous. If your sleep cycle is disrupted, driving can be dangerous. One study showed fatal traffic accidents increase the Monday following both time changes.

Why is the change of one hour so hard? In the fall, when you've gained an hour of sleep, you might not feel tired, but you may get cranky when you have to wait an extra hour before your lunch break or when it feels like work should have ended an hour ago. It may be harder to stay up an hour later and wake up an hour later when your body and internal clock is used to a different schedule. This can negatively affect your quality of sleep.

For your health and safety, here are some tips for dealing with the time change:

1. Make gradual shifts

In the week/days before "falling back", go to bed and wake up 10 to 15 minutes later each day. This helps your body slowly adjust.

2. Keep your schedule

Try to manage your schedule accordingly. In the fall, keep things as close to normal as possible. If you usually wake at 8 a.m., do it the morning of November 4, if you can (although the clock says 9 a.m.). Be consistent with eating, social, bed, and exercise times, too. Raising your body's core temperature can make it harder to fall asleep, so avoid heavy workouts within four hours of bedtime.

DID YOU KNOW?

The benefits of keeping the clocks forward span from economic to safety, lawmakers say.

- A 2015 study by the Brookings Institution suggests that keeping the clock forward—allowing for more daylight in the evenings—could reduce robberies by 27%.
- A study by the American Journal of Public Health and the Journal of Safety Research suggests it could also reduce the number of car crashes by better aligning daylight hours to standard work hours and increasing visibility for commuters.

3. Have a nighttime ritual

Bedtime routines aren't just for kids. You don't need to do things in a certain order, but you should make a habit of slowing your body down. Dim your lights; take a warm — not hot — shower; put your phone, computer, or tablet away; turn off the television and pick up a non- suspenseful book. Try to always avoid screen time close to bedtime. Electronics' high-intensity light hinders melatonin, a hormone that triggers sleepiness, and stimulates our brain making sleep difficult in the same way sunlight does.

4. No long naps

Shutting your eyes mid-day is tempting, especially if you're feeling sluggish. But it could backfire! Longer daytime naps could make it harder for you to get a full night's sleep.

Remember, the closer you stick to your normal routine, the faster your body will adjust to the clock.

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SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

With the end of daylight saving time comes an increase in darkness around the time of rush hour, when traffic is at a peak and many are making their way home from work. Drivers aren't used to the decreased visibility — nor are pedestrians, who might take chances crossing roads when they shouldn't. Pedestrians walking around at dusk are nearly three times more likely to be struck and killed by cars in the days following the end of daylight saving time than just before the time change. A seven-year study of nationwide traffic fatalities was conducted at Carnegie Mellon University, calculating the risk per mile walked by pedestrians. The study found that the per-mile risk jumps 186 percent from October to November.

The National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) has done studies proving that auto accidents increase after the clocks fall back an hour. Besides the need for more visibility, the NRSF notes that commuting in the dark can also make drivers drowsier than usual. According to some health studies, changes in waking time coupled with the earlier onset of darkness throws off our internal clocks. This increases driving risks, primarily because in our 24/7 society, we have a fundamental problem of already being sleep-deprived.

This is also a good time to:

Check and replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.

Ensure they are working properly and replace the batteries. As the cold sets in and many start up their gas-fired furnaces, fireplaces, portable unit heaters and the like for the first time, carbon monoxide poisoning risks increase dramatically during this time of year. Replace any smoke alarm unit that is older than 10 years. Replace any CO alarm unit that is older than 5 years.

Prepare a winter emergency kit for your automobile.

Such kits can be a lifesaver if you are stuck out in bad weather while driving. They should include items such as: warm clothes, blanket, flashlight, batteries, water, nonperishable snacks, shovel, flares, reflective hazard triangle, jumper cables, cat litter or sand for traction, ski hat and gloves.

Check to see if your fire extinguishers need recharging.

Check the small gauge at the top of the extinguisher. If the needle in that gauge is in the green, chances are, the extinguisher is okay. If it is in the red, you need to have the extinguisher recharged.

REFERENCES

- What Sleep Docs Want You to Know About Turning the Clocks Back and Shorter Winter Days
- Five Tips from Farmers' Almanac to Help with the Time Change

RESOURCES

- Adjusting to Daylight Saving Time
- End of Daylight Saving Time Can Be Deadly

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.