Early Drowsiness Alert

What to Look For and Do

AutoSense DRIVING SAFETY

GEN 3

Alerts the driver with a chirp and a half-closed eye icon displayed until alertness is restored.

GEN 2

Alerts the driver with a gentle pulsing light bar until alertness is restored.

FEEL

How do you feel right now?

- Heavy or sluggish?
- Foggy or struggling to focus?
- Fighting to stay awake?

Why it matters: Feeling this way often means your brain is already slowing down, even if your eyes are open.

DO

What are you doing physically?

- Yawning plus another sign (e.g., rubbing your face or nodding off)
- Rubbing your face, eyes, or back of your head
- Shifting in your seat a lot
- Head nodding or drooping

Why it matters: These are your body's ways of trying to wake itself up. They usually happen before a microsleep.

MIND

Where is your attention?

- Daydreaming or zoning out?
- Can't remember the last few minutes or kilometres?
- Missing signs or simple details?

Why it matters: If your mind is wandering, your reaction time is already slower, and you're missing hazards.

ROAD

What's the environment like?

- Long, straight, quiet road?
- Light traffic, little to react to?
- Very familiar route where you're on autopilot?

Why it matters: Monotony makes fatigue worse because your brain gets less stimulation.

ACT

If two or more are true from FEEL, DO, MIND or ROAD

This is a Guardian red flag: you are showing early fatigue. Take a short-term alertness-boosting action now, then pull over at the next safe spot, and plan for a proper rest:

- Take a short 10min break, hydrate, eat a green apple and use caffeine if allowed
- Move around: stretch, fresh air, light activity
- Watch for risk zone ahead - like boring stretches of road, late-night driving, and or a lot of travel time left.
- If further alerts occur, or you're still tired after a break, follow company fatigue policy: take a controlled rest and call your manager.

Remember: Boosts only mask tiredness for a short time. The only real fix for fatigue is sleep

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Short-Term Alertness Boost Strategies

Strategy	Tips	Boost Duration	Why it matters
Alert Surprise	When your system alerts you, use that moment to act—don't ignore it.	~10–30 minutes	A fright triggers adrenaline, making you feel awake—but it fades fast and doesn't fix fatigue.
Novelty & Variety	Try something new—change your playlist, take a different route, or spot new landmarks.	~10–20 minutes	New things wake up your brain by triggering curiosity and motivation.
Music	Play your favorite songs or save a great playlist for tough stretches.	~5–20 minutes -the length of the engaging music	Music you love can lift your mood and sharpen focus briefly.
Social	Call a friend or check in with dispatch for a quick chat.	~10–30 minutes based on happiness or fun	Positive contact boosts alertness and helps you feel connected.
Physical	Stretch, walk, or do a few squats during breaks.	~20–60 minutes	Moving gets your blood flowing and helps shake off drowsiness.
Small Wins	Break your trip into mini-goals and reward yourself when you hit them.	Minutes to ~30 minutes	Achieving small goals motivates and sharpens attention.
Sensory	Chew peppermint gum, or use citrus scents.	~5–15 minutes	Pleasant smells or textures can perk you up briefly.

WARNING: Boosts don't rest your brain—they just hide tiredness for a short time. When they wear off, you'll feel tired again, and if you haven't taken a real break, your focus and reaction time can drop. You might even feel more exhausted than before. The only real fix for fatigue is sleep.

Supporting Research (for Managers and curious readers)

- **Dopamine & reward:** Novelty, music, and goals boost motivation and short-term alertness (Kakade & Dayan, 2002; Wittmann et al., 2008; Salimpoor et al., 2011).
- **Fatigue & alertness:** Validated measures such as the Karolinska Sleepiness Scale show strong links between fatigue and impaired driving performance (Kaida et al., 2006; Dinges & Grace, 1998).
- **Sensory stimulation:** Enhances alertness and attention (Padilla & Domina, 2016; Engelmann & Pessoa, 2007).
- **Social connection:** Rewarding and alertness-enhancing (Krach et al., 2010).
- **Physical activity:** Increases dopamine and alertness ("runner's high") (Boecker et al., 2008).
- **Goal setting:** Keeps the brain motivated and engaged (Locke & Latham, 2002).

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