



[What is Highway Hypnosis?](#)

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Highway Hypnosis is a dangerous and real driving hazard that occurs when someone has been driving a vehicle along a long stretch of roadway for an extended period of time. One state agency has described Highway Hypnosis as being caused by “the sameness of road and traffic.” The driver becomes unaware and unable to respond due to a semi-hypnotic mental state brought about by the monotony of a long drive.

Sometimes, victims fall asleep at the wheel. Sometimes, victims of Highway Hypnosis seem to be awake behind the wheel, but they’re not fully functional: they’ve zoned out, and aren’t alert or aware of what is going on around them.

Highway Hypnosis isn’t new. Back in 1957, engineers designed the Indiana Toll Road with curves every two miles or so, in an effort to combat the problem. Still, as long as drivers (including truckers) spend long stretches of time behind the wheel on America’s highways, highway hypnosis will be a problem.

Suggestions to avoid Highway Hypnosis include:

- don’t eat a big meal before starting out on a long drive;
- stop every couple of hours to stretch your legs;
- don’t drive during the hours that you’re normally sleeping;
- talk to your passengers; and
- open the window, get fresh air circulating through the car.

And before you think that Highway Hypnosis sounds silly – or that it’s something that just doesn’t happen all that often, think again.

It happens much more often than people realize: in fact, within 24 hours of these words being written, a teenager crashed his SUV into the back of an 18-wheeler in San Antonio, Texas — witnesses said he made no effort to stop. The boy’s lower body was wedged underneath the SUV’s dashboard, impaling him on the brake pedal. Police at the scene have already labelled the boy another victim of Highway Hypnosis.

Be careful out there.