



## **Air Partner consultancy Clockwork Research reveals the unknown and potentially fatal dangers of microsleeps and how to avoid them**

*Clockwork Research, leading fatigue risk management consultancy and part of the Air Partner group, discusses the dangers of microsleep to mark World Sleep Day*

**London, UK, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018** – To mark World Sleep Day, an event recognised across the world today, Air Partner's fatigue risk management consultancy Clockwork Research has released a white paper detailing the dangers of microsleeps for workers in safety critical industries, such as aviation and medicine, and how best to avoid them.

Microsleeps are involuntary lapses in perception of the outside world that occur when an individual is tired. They last for 0.5 to 15 seconds, and are preceded by behavioural signs of sleepiness, such as yawning. When someone experiences microsleeps they are not fully aware of what is going on around them, which can lead to catastrophic consequences.

However, it is not only at work that microsleeps can pose a danger: it is often the drive home that can be the riskiest part of the day. Driving requires continuous vigilance and a microsleep can be fatal. In the UK, approximately 20% of road accidents are related to a driver falling asleep at the wheel, with 1 in 25 fatal road accidents caused by fatigue.

Studies have found that individuals who only had 4 hours of sleep at night would suffer from an average of 27.9 microsleeps within an hour the following afternoon, compared to 11.9 microsleeps when the participants had an average of 8 hours sleep the previous night.

Clockwork Research has looked into the best methods to ensure that sleep patterns are not disturbed and that microsleeps are kept to a minimum. Its results show that following a simple sleep hygiene routine throughout the day until bedtime leads to a dramatic drop in the occurrence of microsleeps.

During the day, strenuous activities should be carried out as early as possible and it is also important to ensure a minimum amount of light exposure to help improve daytime alertness and regulate the production of melatonin, known as the 'sleep' hormone, making it easier to fall asleep at night.

In the evening, avoiding alcohol, nicotine and caffeine are easy ways to ensure a good night's sleep. However, the environment and routine before bedtime is equally important and a basic set of rules should be followed:

- Keep your room well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature.
- Block out light and noise using blackout blinds or an eye mask, and earplugs or a source of white noise (e.g. a fan).
- Make sure your bed and pillows are comfortable.
- Avoid blue light from screens, such as phones, tablets, TVs etc. before bed as it has an alerting effect. Ideally, turn these devices off at least 1 hour before bed or use night mode or *f.lux*, which filter out the blue light.
- Exclude computers and televisions from the bedroom can help lead you to naturally associate the room with sleep.
- If possible, establish a bedroom routine, including going to bed at the same time every night and waking up at the same time in the morning – the snooze button is not your friend! Try setting an alarm 30min before your bedtime to remind you to wind down and start preparing for bed.
- Set your bedtime to make sure that you can obtain your sleep need – if you know you need 7h of sleep a night, aim for at least 7h30m in bed to minimise the chances of sleep loss.

Commenting on the research, Mark Briffa, CEO of Air Partner, said: “Clockwork Research prides itself on a being a leader in the fatigue risk management field and advises effective solutions for clients across the whole spectrum of the aviation industry, as well as other safety-critical operating environments, such as the Oil & Gas and Mining sectors.”

“Dr Alexandra Holmes, Research Director from Clockwork Research said, “Microsleeps can pose a serious risk to anybody who is carrying out a task that demands undivided attention and taking simple steps to minimise them is something that everybody should consider. Part of the work that Clockwork Research undertakes with operators is to implement effective Fatigue Risk Management solutions, which helps to minimise the likelihood of microsleeps occurring in safety-critical situations.”

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**About Air Partner and Clockwork Research**

Founded in 1961, Air Partner is a global aviation services group that provides worldwide solutions to industry, commerce, governments and private individuals. The Group has two divisions: Broking division, comprising air charter broking and remarketing; and the Consulting & Training division, comprising the aviation safety consultancies, Baines Simmons, Clockwork Research and SafeSkys, as well as Air Partner's Emergency Planning Division. For reporting purposes, the Group is structured into four divisions: Commercial Jets, Private Jets, Freight (Broking) and Consulting & Training (Baines Simmons, Clockwork Research, SafeSkys and Air Partner's Emergency Planning Division). The Commercial Jet division charters large airliners to move groups of any size. Air Partner Remarketing, which is within the Commercial Jet division, provides comprehensive remarketing programmes for all types of commercial and corporate aircraft to a wide range of international clients. Private Jets offers the Company's unique pre-paid JetCard scheme and on-demand charter. Freight charters aircraft of every size to fly almost any cargo anywhere, at any time. Baines Simmons is a world leader in aviation safety consulting specialising in aviation regulation, compliance and safety management. Clockwork Research is a leading fatigue risk management consultancy. SafeSkys is a leading Environmental and Air Traffic Control services provider to UK and International airports. Air Partner is headquartered alongside Gatwick airport in the UK. Air Partner operates 24/7 year-round and has 20 offices globally. Air Partner is listed on the London Stock Exchange (AIR) and is ISO 9001:2008 compliant for commercial airline and private jet solutions worldwide. [www.airpartner.com](http://www.airpartner.com)