

The Need for Rest

Martin Moore-Ede, writing in *The Twenty-Four-Hour Society* (Addison-Wesley, 1994), pointed out that our most notorious industrial accidents – Exxon Valdez, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and the fatal navigational error of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 – all occurred in the middle of the night.

This may indicate that fatigue, more than anything, was a contributing factor.

When the *USS Vincennes* shot down an Iranian A300 airbus, killing all 290 people aboard, fatigue-stressed operators in the high-tech Combat Information Center on the carrier misinterpreted radar data and repeatedly told their captain the jet was descending as if to attack, when the airliner actually was remaining on a normal flight path.



In the *Challenger* space shuttle disaster, key NASA officials made the ill-fated decision to go ahead with the launch after working 24 hours straight and getting only two to three hours of sleep the night before. Their error in judgment cost the lives of seven astronauts and nearly killed the U.S. space program.

The conclusion: We ignore the need for rest at the peril of others and ourselves.

– Beecher Hunter