NCARNG Weekly Safety Newsletter

April 3, 2015

North Carolina State Safety Office Contacts

State Safety Manager
COL John Mullinax
X46253

State Occupational Health Manager
MAJ Christina Henderson
X46206

State Safety Specialist
1SG Gregory Greene
X46420

State Safety Specialist
Waylan Green
X46153

Industrial Hygiene Tech
SFC Wayne Benner
X46388

Lodging Coordinator
Newsletter Editor
Meredith Dixon
X46637

For more information
Visit us at NCGKO
(CAC Login)

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For more Safety information visit
US ARMY SAFETY CENTER

One Text or Call Could WRECK It All

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Thousands have died needlessly because people continue to use their cell phones while driving. An estimated 1 in 4 car crashes involve cell phone use.

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

But, because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

Stop using cell phones while driving. Many distractions exist while driving, but cell phones are a top distraction because so many drivers use them for long periods of time each day. Almost everyone has seen a driver distracted by a cell phone, but when you are the one who is distracted, you often don't realize that driver is you. Driving and cell phone conversations both require a great deal of thought. When doing them at the same time, your brain is unable to do either well. For example, it's nearly impossible to read a book and have a phone conversation. While driving, this often results in crashes due to delayed braking times and not seeing traffic signals.

Recognize that hands-free devices are no safer. With some state laws focusing on handheld bans and carmakers putting hands-free technology in vehicles, it's no wonder people are confused. However, while many drivers honestly believe they are making the safe choice by using a hands-free device, it's just not true.

North Carolina Distracted Driving Laws

It is against the law in North Carolina for drivers under the age of 18 to use a mobile phone or any technology associated with a mobile telephone while a vehicle is in motion.
PENALTY: If a minor is caught using a mobile communication device while driving, they will receive a $25 fine. In addition to mobile phones, the law also stipulates the use of "other technology" that provides access to digital media such as a digital camera, email, music, the Internet or games.

- **North Carolina prohibits ALL drivers from texting or reading a text message while a vehicle is in motion.**
  PENALTY: A driver that is caught texting or reading a text message while driving will face a fine of $100 plus court fees of at least $130.

**For more information visit www.distracteddriving.nsc.org or www.distraction.gov

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Binge drinking is the most common pattern of excessive alcohol use in the United States. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 grams percent or above. This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks, and when women consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours. Most people who binge drink are not alcohol dependent. Heavy drinking can hurt your mind and body. Consider these facts before you buy the next round.

Fact 1: Alcohol affects your brain

Binge-drinking can damage the part of the brain that controls learning and memory, judgment, decision-making, and impulse control. Excessive drinking will permanently damage your organs—particularly the brain and liver—in a very short period of time leading to alcohol poisoning and cirrhosis of the liver, which can eventually kill you.

Fact 2: Binge drinking slows muscle development and leads to weight gain

Your muscles need increased rates of blood flow during exercise to keep up energy and build strength. The more energy you have from good blood flow, the better your workouts. Drinking too much alcohol reduces blood flow to your muscles, so a workout the day after a night of excessive drinking is less likely to help you get stronger. Binge drinking also disrupts your metabolism, causing your body to store fat instead of using it for energy. A bottle of lager beer has 100 to 150 calories. That's as many as 900 calories if you drain a six pack in one night—the rough calorie equivalent to three slices of pepperoni pizza. Alcohol also increases appetite.

Fact 3: Alcohol upsets your sleep

Alcohol is a depressant, so it naturally makes your body tired. But alcohol does not promote rest. When there's too much alcohol flowing through your veins, it disrupts the stage of your sleep cycle that most helps your mind and body recover from the day. Alcohol can also decrease your overall sleep time. Reduced sleep time and poor sleep quality put you on a crash course for sleep deprivation.

Fact 4: Alcohol weakens your immune system

Drinking too much alcohol can weaken your immune system, which makes it harder to fight off common colds and more serious infections. Alcohol most directly affects the liver, which rounds up and filters the wasteful chemicals that you put into your body.

Fact 5: Binge Drinking costs everyone

Drinking too much, including binge drinking, cost the United States $223.5 billion in 2006, or $1.90 a drink, from losses in productivity, health care, crime, and other expenses. Heavy drinking increases your risk of injury as well as taking part in risky behavior. For instance, acute intoxication impairs your judgment, making you more prone to violence, unsafe sex, motor vehicle accidents, and foolish risks. Alcohol is the primary date rape drug. In fact, approximately 75-percent of reported acquaintance rapes on North American college campuses start with excessive alcohol consumption. While about three-quarters of females who are the victims of nonfatal domestic violence admit their partner or spouse was drinking before the attack.

*For more information on the Affects of Binge Drinking visit these websites: www.activebeat.com/your-health/10-facts-about-binge-drinking-and-your-health/, www.guardyourhealth.com/health-topics/alcohol-drugs/binge-drinking/, and www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm