FATIGUED AND DISTRACTED DRIVERS

After this Session, you will be able to:

 Describe the way in which fatigue and distraction impair safe driving;

 Discuss different jurisdictional approaches to addressing these behaviors; and

 Discuss how judicial awareness of these issues can improve public safety.

The Drowsy Driver

Drowsiness increases a driver's risk of crashes and near-crashes by a factor of _____

Crashes by drowsy drivers are unreported and underreported, according to _____

What are the warning signs of drowsiness?

Drowsiness equals impairment

One night without sleep equals a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .10

 50 percent of all drivers do not know they have fallen asleep Interventions to prevent falling asleep at the wheel – what works?
Fresh Air?
Loud Noise?
Caffeinated drinks?
Brief rests/naps?
Brief stretches?

NONE OF THE ABOVE WORKS

SLEEP AND ONLY REAL SLEEP will reduce drowsiness

When tired, the brain will seize sleep in 1, 2, and 3 second intervals – even while you are driving (micro-sleeps)

Discussion Questions

Is a crash caused by alcohol-induced impairment a more serious crime than a crash caused by fatigue-related impairment?

How should the law treat a sleep impaired driver?

What are the commonalities between sleep and alcohol impairment?

Rusty's Regret

Maggie's Law

 Maggie was 20 years old, in college, heading for work when she was killed.

 Driver swerved across a New Jersey state highway, crashed head on into Maggie.

 Driver had been awake for 30 hours, gambling at casinos, had a trace of crack in his system Driver got a \$200.00 fine (no other law in existence at the time).

Maggie was killed instantly.

Now, in New Jersey, under Maggie's Law, it is a felony to kill someone while driving while drowsy.

Tom and Jane

Drowsy Shift Workers

Drowsy driving is not limited to nighttime
Night Shift and "Swing Shift" workers are always susceptible

 Statistics on drowsy shift workers literally nonexistent

The law does not punish sleepy drivers
How critical is this?



The Distracted Driver

Sources of Distraction
Change the radio station/Put in CD
Deal with the child in the back seat
Intense conversation (argument/discussion)

Categories of Distraction
Visual
Auditory
Biomechanical
Cognitive

The single most common distraction is:

THE CELL PHONE

Cellular Telephones and Cars

 People driving while on their cell phones are 4 times as likely to be involved in a crash

 Talking or Listening on the cell while driving – the numbers are the same (4 times greater)

 Dialing Cell – much more dangerous, since it requires looking at the keys, but occurs less often than talking or listening Laws Limiting Cell Phone Use
Driving w/ handheld cell banned entirely:
CT, NY, NJ, DC

Localities can ban cell phone use:
IL, MA, NM, OH, PA

Localities prohibited from banning cell use:
 FL, KY, LA, MS, NV, OK, OR, UT

Cell phone prohibited while driving school bus ■ AZ, AR, CA, CT, DE, IL, ■ ME, NJ, RI, TN, TX, DC Cell phone use restricted for teens ■ CO, CT, DE, IL, ME, MD, MN, NJ, TN, TX, WV, DC Certain Local Jurisdictions Can Now Regulate Cell Phone Use New Dallas Ordinances Other Cities in Texas

 All but 4 states with cell phone bans or restrictions have primary enforcement laws

NJ, secondary for all but school bus drivers and learners permit holders

 CO, MD, and WV secondary law (only enforced when driver stopped for something else)

Judicial Awareness Why do judges need to know these statistics?

What should judges do with this information?

What is the judicial responsibility for education of the public on this subject?

What is your responsibility as a judge, if any, regarding modification of the law as it is applied to those driving while drowsy?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

You may call, email, or text message me at any time:

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