



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Drinking Drivers



We've all seen the effects that alcohol has on driving. A man who drives under the influence drives much as he would walk - in a staggering, weaving manner. His actions are unpredictable. Other drivers, when they realize that a drunken driver is on the street or highway, give him the widest berth possible.

Statistics show that alcohol consumption is responsible for a large percentage of traffic accidents. The laws in most states against driving while drinking are usually quite strict, as they should be. Often they result in license suspension, with a heavy fine or imprisonment. While strict law-enforcement helps reduce the problem, all drivers should be aware not only of what alcohol does to our brains and bodies but how it affects our own safety at the wheel, and the safety of others.

You may not realize that it doesn't take much alcohol to influence your driving ability. Although many people may be able to take one drink and drive capably, each person's capacity is an individual matter. Some of you may remember times when lack of food or sleep, or some factor, caused one drink to "hit" you with about the same impact as if you had downed three or four. A number of states and cities have set up standards stating that a certain percentage of alcohol in the blood makes a person incapable of driving. You can't bank on those standards, because your ability to handle alcohol not only varies as an individual, but it varies from day to day.

Don't kid yourself. Would you wear a blindfold while driving? Of course not, but that's what you're doing when you take the wheel after sending alcohol to your brain through your blood.

In spite of what most people think, alcohol is not a stimulant. It's a depressant. Your ability to perform a task is lessened to the point of eventual unconsciousness. Unfortunately, most people aren't aware that their ability to perform simple tasks is greatly impaired. Some may even get the feeling they can perform better, do things they wouldn't ordinarily try, or couldn't do. The part of the brain that flashes a warning, keeping them from acting without caution, is numbed and finally out of commission.