



THE ASSOCIATION

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DISTRACTED DRIVING

Mike Cox

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Imagine, if you will, cruising along behind the wheel of your vehicle while you text message someone, eat breakfast or read a book, and not worrying about traffic around you or getting stopped by the law! Sounds like a long-term goal, but it is happening now, with what appears to be great success. Google, a company with a lot of money, and a keen interest in having people constantly using their mobile communications devices, has been testing a variety of “autonomous” vehicles in a variety of locations, including San Francisco’s hairpin turn Lombard Street and Golden Gate Bridge, as well as around Lake Tahoe. The vehicles are called autonomous, because the vehicle is “driving” itself. The Google team announced in recently that it has completed more than 300,000 accident-free miles. While there are capabilities for driver over-ride and control of the vehicles, they rely on information contained in their mapping

systems to control routes, as well as speeds. Distance from other vehicles and objects is maintained by a system of sensors all around the vehicle. Sounds like a scheme to put crash investigators and lawyers out of business! That is, until you get to the price tag for the equipment, which is currently over \$150,000, and the fact that there are no immediate plans for production. However, three states, Nevada, California and Florida, have enacted laws allowing autonomous cars to operate on their highways. So, while we wait for the driverless vehicle to hit the streets in numbers, how are we doing with the above-mentioned (and other) distractions? Not very well, it seems. At any given daylight moment, approximately 660,000 drivers in the United States are operating their vehicles while using cell phones or other electronic devices. In 2011, at least 23% of all vehicle crashes involve cell phone use, equaling about 1.3 million crashes. Nearly 70% of drivers from 18 years old to 64 admitted to

using a cell phone while driving, and 30% of drivers in the same age group reported texting while driving. Those are just the numbers for cell phones and texting. When you add in those drivers who are: eating and drinking; talking to passengers; grooming; reading, including maps; using those neat built-in or dash mounted navigation systems; watching a video; or adjusting the preferred music/news source, there are a whole lot of distracted operators on our streets and highways. For the year 2011, crashes involving a distracted driver killed 3,331 people, and injured 387,000. All but three states have enacted some laws dealing with distracted driving. Here in Indiana, it is illegal to type, transmit or read a text message or e-mail message while operating a moving motor vehicle, unless the device is being used hands-free or by voice operated technology, under I.C. 9-21-8-59.

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MORE ABOUT: DISTRACTED DRIVING

Drivers under 18 years old may not use any type of phone, hand-held or hands-free, for any purpose other than to call 9-1-1. So far, 11 states and District of Columbia have banned all handheld use of any kind, while 41 states have banned texting for all drivers. Six states have banned texting for novice drivers, generally defined as those drivers under the age of 18. Several states have banned hand-held and/or texting by bus drivers.

After all those numbers, why are we paying that much attention to activities that have become such a key part of our lives? With all the practice we all get in text messaging and talking on the cell phone, shouldn't we be getting really good at multi-tasking, so we can drive and text or drive and talk? It doesn't appear that way, with nearly 1 of every 4 crashes in the U.S. involving cell phone use at the time of the crash.

There have been movements toward hands-free and voice activated cell phones, to help alleviate the problems of physically holding the device. However, studies have shown that drivers become so involved in their phone conversations that they neglect normal safe driving activities, such

as watching other traffic, checking speeds and speed limits and observing for pedestrians. A tragic example occurred January 4, 2004, in Michigan, when a 20-year-old woman ran a red light southbound while talking on her cell phone and hit another vehicle that was crossing the intersection with a green signal. The vehicle she hit was the third or fourth vehicle to cross with the green signal, and the ensuing investigation showed that the woman did not attempt to stop while traveling at 48 mph at the moment of impact. Witnesses said that the woman was looking straight out the windshield of her vehicle, not dialing or texting, when she drove past 4 cars and a school bus, also southbound, that were stopped for the red signal. This crash killed a 12-year-old boy in the vehicle that was hit. It's called inattention blindness caused by the cognitive distraction of a cell phone conversation, which causes drivers to look, but not see up to 50 percent of the available information in their driving surroundings. Ironically, the woman was talking on the phone with her church, where she volunteered with pre-teen children. She pled guilty to negligent homicide. Hands-free or hand-held, in this case and others, would not have

made a difference. Paying attention to driving would have.

As the number of crashes involving distracted driving increases, so too will the number of laws introduced and passed to try to stop the distractions. Since Indiana banned texting while driving, I have written just 3 tickets for that infraction. All 3 involved obvious driving deficiencies, reminiscent of impaired driving. It is difficult to observe the act of texting, making sure the driver wasn't just inputting a phone number or answering a call. There has to be a point at which education of drivers and enforcement will begin to decrease distracted driving, but we are not there yet. As crash investigators, we can do a better job of checking for possible distractions while we are completing our field reports, and that includes getting other officers to do the same. That information needs to be accumulated, collated and distributed to law enforcement, driver training educators, parents and all drivers by as many means as possible. We already fill out the crash reports, so it is just a matter of asking a few more questions. NHTSA and National Safety Council already

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Insurance Scams gone amuck -

According to the *Austin (TX)*

Staterman, police claimed Clayton Daniels, 27, dug up the corpse of a deceased 81-year-old woman, dressed her in his own clothes, burned her beyond recognition and stuffed her into his car.

His wife, Molly Daniels, then 25, attempted to collect \$110,000 from his life insurance policy, claiming he had been killed in a car accident.

When state police launched an investigation, they found Clayton alive at home—with a new hair dye job. Molly was sentenced to 30 years in prison in 2005 for her role in filing the claim.

(From *Businessinsider.com*.)

IACAI HOSTS PHOTOGRAMMETRY TRAINING IN LAFAYETTE

The Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators hosted a iWitness Close Range Photogrammetry training course at the LaFayette Police Department’s training center on October 14-18, 2013. The program instructed the attendees on the use of the iWitness Close Range Photogrammetry program, how to properly prepare the crash scene for photogrammetry and the proper method of taking photogrammetry photographs. For those who are unfamiliar with the photogrammetry, taking these photographs is not like taking regular scene photographs. It takes planning and thought prior to taking the photographs, and requires the user to think in “angles” as they take the pictures. 11 students participated in the class, representing agencies from across the state. Officers from the Indiana State Police and the Boone County Sheriff’s Department provided instruction for the class.



Posted on a highway in OHIO:
 “No signs allowed.”
 A sign in a park in Graftin, WI:
 “No Soccer playing allowed. Soccer is allowed on the archery range.”
 San Antonio, TX:
 “Cemetery Road, Dead end.”

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION TRAINING

IPTM <http://www.iptm.org/Schedule.aspx>

- 12/2-6/2013 **Pedestrian/Bicycle Crash Invest.**
\$795 Jacksonville, FL
- 02/10-14/2014 **Advanced TCR w/HVE-CSI**
\$995 Jacksonville, FL
- 02/24-28/2014 **Advanced Crash Zone**
\$825 Jacksonville, FL
- 03/10-5/18/2014 **At-Scene Traffic Crash Invest.**
\$825 On-Line (Call to Register)
- 03/10-14/2014 **Applied Physics**
\$825 Jacksonville, FL
- 03/17-28/2014 **At-Scene Traffic Crash Invest.**
\$950 Jacksonville, FL
- 03/31-4/11/2014 **Advanced Traffic Crash Invest.**
\$950 Jacksonville, FL
- 04/14-25/2014 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction**
\$950 Jacksonville, FL
- 04/14-18/2014 **Advanced CV Crash Invest.**
\$795 Jacksonville, FL

To Register, visit the website or call: 904-620-4786

NUCPS www.scs.northwestern.edu/program-areas/public-safety/courses/crs_list.asp

- 1/13-3/21/2014 **Crash Investigation I (On-line)**
\$975 Evanston, IL
- 1/13-3/21/2014 **Crash Investigation II (On-line)**
\$975 Evanston, IL
- 2/24-28/2014 **Crash Reconstruction III**
\$875 Evanston, IL
- 3/10-21/2014 **Crash Investigation I**
\$975 Evanston, IL
- 3/24-4/4/2014 **Crash Investigation II**
\$975 Evanston, IL
- 4/7-11/2014 **Math & Physics Workshop**
\$775 Evanston, IL
- 4/21-5/2/2014 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction**
\$1050 Evanston, IL
- 5/5-9/2014 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction II**
\$850 Evanston, IL
- 5/28-30/2014 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction Refresher**
\$500 Evanston, IL

To Register, visit the website or call: 800-323-4011

TOP 10 BEST POLICE VEHICLES EVER

Over the years, law enforcement has had a wide variety of law enforcement vehicles to work with. Some have been truly awesome pieces of work, while others, well, have just been pieces of work...

This unofficial top 10 list of the most popular and therefore, the best, police cars ever produced in the US are as follows:

- 10} The 1955 Buick Century 68. This true police car, along with it's cousin, the 1955 Chevrolet Bel-Air, gave police what they needed most, 322cc of V8 power, generating a then aw-dropping 236 horsepower.
- 9} The 1969 Dodge Polara 440. One of the first truly bad-ass police cars, this car could go 0-60 in 6.3 seconds and generated a top speed of 147 mph with it's 375 hp 440cc V8.
- 8} The 1972-74 AMC Matador. This police car was popu-

lar with the larger cities, with it's 255 hp, 401 cc V8.

7} The 1975-79 Chevrolet Nova 9C1.

With the energy crisis of the late 1970's, gone were the muscle cars...and hello to the beginning of the era of 'compact' cars. The Chevy Nova was a popular car, durable and energy efficient. It sported a 170 hp, 350cc V8.

6} 1982-1993 Ford Mustang SSP. After several years of wimpy, under-powered police cars, Ford stepped up to the plate with this 5.0 V8, which generated 157 hp. Initially used by the California Highway Patrol as a pursuit vehicle, it made impressions that are felt to this day!

5} The 1991-2002 Chevrolet Camaro B4C.

What do you do to top a bad-ass police car such as the Mustang? You create a bad-der-ass car, the Camaro!

This pursuit rated police car won the hearts of thousands

of officers with it's 205 hp, 5.0 V8 engine which topped out at an astounding 159 mph!

4} 1968-1970 Plymouth Belvedere.

Popular with large cities, this powerhouse played a prominent roll in many police departments and even starred in the TV series, "Adam-12."

3} The 1994-1996 Chevrolet Caprice 9C1. Built like a whale and shaped like one, this police car was a powerhouse loved by many. With the optional equipped LT1 Corvette engine, it was unstoppable!

2} 2005-present Dodge Charger. Designed as a police car, and despite it's problems, it's still a respected bad-ass police car.

1} The 1999-2011 Ford Crown Victoria. The CV Interceptor was perhaps the most popular police car of all time. Tough and dependable, it was the face of many police departments across the U.S.



Looking for a CDR Kit? IACAI member Robert Plummer has one for sale. The kit was last updated in 2011. So, with the kit, power supply and cables, the asking price is \$1,000; however, that price is negotiable. If interested, please contact Bob at plummer4309@gmail.com

Just In Time For The Holidays: Cop Superstitions!

(Originally written by Pamela Kulbarsh and published in the Officer.com website)

The Top 13 of the most common Cop Superstitions:

1. Friday the 13th is a day notoriously linked with ill-fortune, bad calls, and bad karma.
2. Dead bodies always happen in 3's or 6's.
3. Same goes for suicide attempts.
4. Never say the word "Quiet" in any squad room in the United States. Ditto for saying "It's slow" or "I'm bored."
5. Never leave the house without kissing your significant others on the way to work.
6. Also, pet the dog(s) or cat(s).
7. Never make definite plans for immediately after the shift.
8. The full moon brings out the aluminum foil brigade.
9. Always bring your lucky gear; a special pair of handcuffs, feathers, special pens, etc.
10. Dress in exactly the same order each day.
11. Dry firing your gun a specific number of times before going to work.
12. Sitting in the same chair every day in the patrol briefing room.
13. Don't ever piss off the dispatchers! (That's not superstition, that's common sense!)



MORE ABOUT: DISTRACTED DRIVING

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publish reports on these and other driving problems, so there would not need to be new reports, just more comprehensive data. Technology can create ways to prevent texting and calling on cell phones, but I haven't seen any proposals yet that would stop a driver from eating a donut, drinking coffee and reading the newspaper while driving. For many drivers, new traffic laws to ban cell phone use/texting are a matter of another freedom being taken away by the government. In my opinion, more research is not needed, but a combination of enforcement, driver education and appropriate technology is needed to reduce the tragedies occurring on our highways caused by distracted driving.

Writing Successful Crash Reports

David McElhaney

As police officers, we often have to do things we don't want to do...deal with domestics, investigate death scenes, make notifications, etc., things of which we hone into a finely crafted skill set. Included in these tasks is the sometimes frustrating, but mostly hated, process of writing reports.

As a supervisor who reviews reports, I am constantly amazed at the lack of creativity, let alone the lack of information, that is put into a report. One sentence crash reports, one-paragraph burglary reports, agghh!!!

Writing reports, whether it be for a criminal investigation or for a crash reconstruction, doesn't have to be difficult. Writing a report requires a little thought and planning but can become a real informative work of art in a short period of time.

When writing a report, the officer must first consider the following: First and foremost, the report must be accurate. Secondly, it doesn't have to be forty pages long, but should be long enough to convey what it is that you have done or observed; and finally, it must be clear. I often instruct new officers that one of the goals in writing a report is to paint a picture of what it is that you are trying to convey...something that anyone can read and immediately understand.

With that said, writing a report requires a little preparation. Gathering the facts and having them in front of you when you do the report is always the way to go. If you have to do a little research as to what a particular part is called, do it before you write your report, not during it. Have your math done and figures complete before you

start. Get your ideas together and plan on what it is that you want to say.

What kind of reader will read your report? How will it be used? Plan the arrangement of your report. Write down the purpose of your report and choose a title that sets the stage. (Very useful in crash reconstruction reports). Consider your collected facts and ideas. If they aren't necessary or useful, toss them.

Make sure that your conclusions line up with the facts that you put into your report. Provide the necessary justifications and attach the math, if needed. Consider illustrations, maps, etc., as attachments to help better push your point across.

Finally, write the report and don't forget to include a one paragraph summary as to what was just covered.



Answers from last issue of the IACAI skill review:

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. C
6. B
7. D



SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT
- PLEASE POST -

The Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators will be sponsoring a seminar on

"Legal Update for Crash Investigators"

&

"Chemical Testing for Crash Investigators"

Wednesday, November 20, 2013 0900-1500 hrs

at the

Greenwood Police Training Center

736 Loews Blvd, Greenwood, Indiana, 46142

IACAI Attorney Tim Cain will present the Legal Update portion of the seminar; Chris Daniels (IPAC) will provide the afternoon presentation on Chemical Testing.

Cost: \$50 for IACAI members; \$75 for non-members

No advanced registration is required.

Registration begins at 08:30am

Questions regarding this seminar may be directed to IACAI

President Kip Shuter

email: kshuter@warsaw.in.gov

- PLEASE POST -

The Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators
P.O. Box 1566
Warsaw, IN 46581-1566

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