



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
 Division of Public Health • Office of the State Health Director
 1915 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1915
 Tel 919-733-7081 • Fax 919-715-3104**

Michael F. Easley, Governor
 Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Leah Devlin, DDS, MPH
 State Health Director



**FORENSIC TESTS FOR ALCOHOL BRANCH
 DRUG EVALUATION & CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM
 DRUG RECOGNITION EXPERT TRAINING**

Almost ten (10) years ago, the American Medical Association recognized that alcohol related traffic crashes are a "leading cause of unintentional injury and deaths and a substantial contributor to health-care costs in the United States."

Research indicates that 25% or more of alcohol impaired drivers are impaired by at least one other drug in addition to alcohol. Most drug-impaired drivers are not arrested when contacted by law enforcement. The two most prevalent reasons: officers do not know what to look for and officers do not know how to make successful cases.

Drug impaired drivers are not being detected and/or arrested. This is due to the lack of training regarding drug-impaired drivers. Officers and state prosecutors are having a difficult time at trials in prosecuting the drug-impaired driver without the proper training of the officer.

The Forensic Tests for Alcohol (FTA) Branch presently trains and certifies law enforcement in detecting and apprehending the drinking driver. Our commitment to law enforcement in providing specialized training has expanded to include "Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) training and certification. This specialized training will greatly enhance the officer's knowledge, skills and abilities to detect and apprehend the "drug" impaired driver.

Presently, there are no portable devices for law enforcement officers to test the "drug impaired" driver.

This training is an excellent tool for certified DRE officers to utilize in processing the drug-impaired driver. DRE officers will possess the skills to determine whether or not drugs impair a subject and if so, what category of drug, by combining basic medical knowledge about drug pharmacokinetics with validated psychomotor tests.

This intensive training is a necessity for law enforcement in order to deal with the increasing problem of drug-impaired drivers. Possessing the knowledge and the skills will enable the DRE officer to articulate the drug impairment in court for the state prosecutor of which is not presently being done. Drug impaired drivers routinely are not convicted because of the lack of knowledge and skills of the arresting officer.

The Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) and Drug Evaluation and Classification Program provides the law enforcement officer with knowledge, skills and abilities which enable him/her to determine whether or not a driver is impaired by alcohol and/or drugs and, if so, what category of drug. Combining basic medical knowledge about the drug pharmacokinetics with validated psychomotor tests allows the officer to form an opinion.

DRE procedures are not "new" or "novel". Law enforcement utilizes the theories and practices from the medical profession. DRE protocols are standardized, systematic and objective. Tests consist of standardized field sobriety tests, human physiology and drug pharmacology. This process utilizes a variety of readily observable signs and symptoms that are accepted as reliable indicators of drug impairment.

Law Enforcement agencies contact: Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch, Eddie M. Buffaloe, State DRE Program Manager (919) 707-5253 or email at Eddie.Buffaloe@ncmail.net.



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Location: 1330 St. Mary's Street • Raleigh, N.C. 27605

