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Drug Impaired Driving

What is a drug?

Although the word drug is defined many ways, Law Enforcement defines a drug as “any substance, which when taken into the human body, can impair the ability of the person to operate a vehicle safely.”

Which drugs impair drivers the most?

Drugs that impair a driver from safely operating a vehicle come from many sources. Most believe drug impaired drivers are under the influence of an illicit drug such as marijuana or heroin. However, prescription and OTC (over the counter) drugs can cause impairment equal or even greater than illegal drugs.

How can a person tell if a prescription or an OTC drug could be impairing?

Reading the warnings on your prescription bottle, or on the packaging, of an OTC drug is an easy way to determine the impairing potential of a drug. The best practice is to check if a prescription drug and/or OTC warning states “do not operate heavy machinery.”

This is referring to driving an automobile. Your doctors or pharmacists are your best sources of information concerning the potential impairing effects of a drug; especially if you are combining multiple drugs or drugs and alcohol.

Can combining multiple drugs, or drugs and alcohol, affect how impaired a driver becomes?

Yes, combining multiple drugs or drugs and alcohol can affect how impaired a driver becomes. Drugs that act in a similar fashion will increase a driver's level of impairment when combined. Often these combinations will have a greater impairing effect than either drug would have alone. Drugs that act in conflicting ways will also greatly impact a driver's level of impairment. Unfortunately, when combined, antagonistic drugs act in a manner that is hard to predict. Often, drivers impaired by antagonizing drugs are the most dangerous drivers on the road because of the unpredictable effects the drugs will have on the driver.



Provisions of New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law

Article 31 Section §1192

Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

What are the Drug-Related Driving Laws in New York State?

Section §1192-4

Driving while ability impaired by drugs.

Section §1192-4a

Driving while ability impaired by the combined influence of drugs or of alcohol and any drug or drugs.

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How big of a problem is impaired drug driving?

Recent studies have indicated that up to 40% of the driving public may be driving under the influence of a drug other than alcohol at any given time.

What does a drug impaired driver look like?

Different drugs affect the body differently. Drug impaired drivers may look and act differently depending upon which drug(s) the individual has utilized. All drug impaired drivers will have a diminished ability to safely operate a vehicle due to physical or mental impairment caused by a drug or a combination of drugs.

Which is more dangerous a driver impaired by drugs or a driver impaired by alcohol?

It really makes no difference whether the impairment is caused by drugs or alcohol. Impaired driving senselessly hurts and kills tens of thousands of people every year.



www.stopdwi.org

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