

# 2026 Sample List of Sessions

Updated February 4, 2026. This list is subject to change.



## Pre-Conference Workshops\*

June 1, 2026 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC

\*Additional registration is required for all Pre-Conference Workshops. Space is limited. Check workshop description for prerequisites.

### Large Truck and Bus Enforcement

**8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

To address the reluctance of law enforcement officer to conduct large truck or motor coach stops, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has created the Large Truck and Bus Traffic Enforcement Training program. This course is designed to enhance officers' knowledge about the dangers of unsafe driving by large trucks and buses. Topics include methods to:

- Provide for safe, effective commercial vehicle traffic stops;
- Help get dangerous commercial drivers off the road;
- Help detect and deter other serious crimes;
- Reduce serious traffic violations; and
- Prevent hazardous cargo spills and crash-related traffic congestion that endanger your community and divert law enforcement from critical responsibilities.

### SFST: Standard Field Sobriety Test Refresher Training

**8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

What better way to start the day than talking about HGN! Let's spend a few hours talking about DWI Detection and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing. This session will review the three phases of DWI Detection and review the three SFSTs. We'll talk about some common challenges and defenses to DWI to keep us on the right track to detect impaired drivers.

**Prerequisite:** Prior completion of the 24-hour SFST training course is required for this refresher.

### Death Notification Victim Sensitivity: Delivering the News with Compassion for the Bereaved and Concern for the Messenger

**8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Steven Burritt, MADD NC**

MADD's Death Notification Victim Sensitivity training is a facilitated conversation death notifications pulling from MADD's 45 years of experience working with victims/survivors.

Performance Objectives:

- To enhance awareness of the emotional hazards of crisis work
- To explore essential needs of the bereaved
- To discuss strategies for delivering a compassionate and thorough death notification

Objectives are met through a combination of instruction, group discussion, group review of video clips where positive and negative practices are shown, and testimonial from a victim. Topics include Stress and the Notifier, Aftermath of Homicide/Traumatic Death, and Practices for Proper Death Notification.

**Note:** Limited to 75 participants

## Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) Workshop

**9:00 am – 4:30 pm**

**UNC HSRC and Safe Kids**

Attendees will be able to earn all 6 CEUs needed for recertification. Presentations will be broken down into four separate topics (1.5 CEUs each) that will include hands-on practice with car seats and other topics to be determined.

## Railroad Investigation Safety Course (RISC)

**1:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Bradley Meyers (Apex Police Department), Margaret Cannell (NC Operation Lifesaver)**

Approximately every three hours a train collision occurs in the United States often requiring the assistance of first responders at the scene of an incident. The collision scene may be complex and consist of a variety of safety concerns for first responders. The Railroad Investigation and Safety Course provides first responders with critical information allowing them to effectively respond to and safely investigate incidents involving the railroad.

Attendees will learn personal safety techniques while they are investigating a grade crossing collision or trespasser incident, in addition to maintaining on-scene safety unique to the railroad environment.

## ARIDE: Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement Refresher Training

**1:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

If it's been a bit since you last took ARIDE, these dynamic four hours will review important concepts for the ever increasing problem of drug impaired drivers. Start the Traffic Safety Conference out right and refresh your skills here!

**Prerequisite:** *Prior completion of the 16-hour ARIDE training course is required for this refresher.*

## Highs in Disguise: Emerging Drug Trends and Impairment Risks in Everyday Items

**1:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Kenny Benfield, Forensic Tests for Alcohol**

Join us to uncover the truth behind today's most insidious substances, from kratom's hidden super-potent alkaloid to lethal fentanyl analogs lurking in "prescription" pills, and the wild world of new cannabinoids (delta<sup>8</sup>, delta<sup>10</sup>, HHC) flooding vape shops and headshops. You'll learn how everyday objects like pill presses in a closet, a "harmless" vape cartridge, or a bag of mushrooms can turn deadly, and exactly what Narcan can (and can't) do when seconds count. We'll also dive into hemp products that aren't as innocent as they seem, plus synthetic benzos, gabapentin combos, and the next wave of mushroom-derived psychedelics. Discover how vape devices mask illicit opioids and designer cannabinoids, arming you with practical field tactics to intercept these threats and protect your safety.. Continuous vigilance and practical field tactics are the greatest weapons against today's evolving substance landscape. Don't miss this chance to stay one step ahead.

## Face to Face for Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers

**4:30 pm – 5:45 pm**

**Margaret Cannell, NC Operation Lifesaver**

Operation Lifesaver has a network of volunteers across the nation who assist states in providing rail safety information to communities, schools, groups, and businesses. The process has three steps: application, online training and Face-to-Face training. At completion, applicants are Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers and capable of representing the organization.

**Note:** *Attendees will be required to complete the application and online training before attending this session.*

## Conference Sessions

June 2 - 4, 2026 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC

### Sessions on Multi-Disciplinary Topics:

#### **The Intersection of Psychology and Road Safety: The Impact of Emotional Regulation and Mental Health on Driver Decision Making**

***Beyond the Wheel: Integrating Mental Health and Emotional Preparedness into Teen Safe Driving***  
**D'Nise Williams, ECU Health Medical Center Injury Prevention Program**

Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of injury and death among adolescents, yet many teen driving interventions focus primarily on technical skills and rule compliance. ECU Health's Teen Safe Driving Program uses a holistic, prevention-focused approach that recognizes driving as a cognitive, emotional, and developmental task.

This session will highlight how the program integrates mental health awareness, emotional regulation, stress management, and caregiver engagement into teen driving education and intervention efforts. Participants will learn how adolescent brain development, emotional readiness, trauma exposure, peer influence, and caregiver-teen communication impact driving behavior and decision-making.

Through program examples and practical strategies, this lecture will demonstrate how addressing the whole teen—mind, emotions, environment, and support system—can strengthen safe driving behaviors and improve outcomes for teens and families.

#### ***From Distraction to Attention: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Safer Driving***

**Tasha Hairston Springs, Crash Survivor and Advocate**

Despite education, enforcement, and technology, distracted driving, speeding, and impairment continue to cause preventable deaths. This session explores why drivers persist in risky behaviors even when they understand the consequences and what actually helps change those behaviors. Drawing from lived experience as a distracted driving crash survivor and a degree in psychology (child and adolescent development), this presentation examines how trauma, stress, habit formation, and emotional regulation affect attention and decision-making behind the wheel. Rather than focusing solely on rule-breaking, it centers the human nervous system and the conditions that influence safer choices. Attendees will gain insight into how trauma-informed, mindfulness-based approaches can complement Safe System strategies by addressing the root causes of distraction and supporting sustainable behavior change before crashes occur.

#### **Decoding the Drive: Engineers Explain Signals, Speed Limits, and Road Safety Treatments for the Rest of Us**

##### ***Road Safety Treatments***

**Carrie Simpson, NCDOT**

This presentation will cover an array of engineering safety treatments used by the NCDOT traffic safety unit to reduce crashes, and talk about the effectiveness of them. Some of the more common treatments used by NCDOT for intersections include roundabouts, all way stops, traffic signals, and reduced conflict intersections. For sections, some common treatments include rumble strips, guardrail, signing and marking. For vulnerable road users, countermeasures like signal improvements, and enhanced signing and marking are used.

##### ***How Traffic Signals Work***

**Zach Little, NCDOT**

This presentation will cover the basics of how a traffic signal operates for the non-engineering crowd. Some of the terminology (signal phases, timing, detectors, etc.) and design features will be discussed so you have a better understanding of how things work when investigating a crash.

## **Speed Limits**

### **Rusty Thompson, NCDOT**

In 2024, 62% of vehicles involved in fatal crashes in NCDOT were exceeding the posted speed limit by more than 10 mph. Speed has been specifically linked to increased rates of pedestrians being killed or seriously injured when struck by a vehicle at increasing speeds.

There are several Goals for the NCDOT Speed Limit Setting Training and Speed Management Program: First, we want to help set appropriate speeds—that means aligning speed limits with the specific needs and context of each roadway. We need to ensure that speeds are supportive of all road users—not just vehicles, but also bicyclists and pedestrians. Next, we’re focused on reducing speed-related crashes and the severity of those crashes. The goal is to create environments where residents feel safe—whether they’re walking, biking, or driving. And finally, we want to see real reductions in fatalities by using comprehensive and effective speed control strategies.

## **Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Education**

### **Walking Smart at Durham Public Schools**

#### **Donna Loop, SRTS Durham**

Durham Public Schools’ Safe Routes to School (SRTS) team partners with Physical Education teachers to deliver pedestrian safety education to elementary school students across the district. Aligning with PE standards, active lessons reinforce learning through movement-based activities.

The curriculum focuses on age-appropriate concepts, such as identifying locations generally safer for walking, understanding traffic signals, and using safe behavior around vehicles. These concepts are reinforced through games, role-play scenarios, and guided practice.

The SRTS team provides in-class support and ready-to-use lesson plans and materials for teachers that can be modified to fit available space, time, and needs. By embedding pedestrian safety into PE classes, students practice real-world skills in a familiar, supportive setting. The program aims to help students make safe choices, while fostering independence, community engagement, and a lifelong appreciation for active transportation.

### **Building Lifelong Bike Safety Skills in DPS Elementary Schools**

#### **Desiree Squire, Bike Durham**

Bike Durham partners with Durham Public Schools to bring bike safety education to elementary students. While youth aren’t the only demographic we serve, we see real value in reaching students early, when they’re active, curious, and forming lifelong habits. Our classes use interactive lessons to teach the basics of bike handling, communication on the bike, intersection skills, and real-world awareness. We also incorporate experiential learning so students can practice these skills in realistic settings. This presentation will highlight how this collaboration supports long-term safety, confidence, and independent mobility for young riders.

### **Safe Routes to School / Wheels of Wellness Program**

#### **Alyson West, Safe Routes to School Chapel Hill**

On Saturday, January 18, 2024, during the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Winter Meeting, the Town of Chapel Hill was awarded a first-prize \$125,000 grant, which will fund its new “Wheels of Wellness” (WoW) program. The program aims to help local children learn safe biking skills and to encourage kids and families to engage in bike riding as part of a healthy lifestyle. Wheels of Wellness will bring awesome block parties and bicycles directly into Chapel Hill neighborhoods. The Wheels of Wellness block parties will be both educational and fun. Children will learn how to ride bikes and how to stay safe while they’re on the go. The grant funds will go toward purchasing a fleet of bikes that will be available to children during the parties, along with safety equipment, supplies, and a part-time staff position to help manage the program. We will share an update on WoW’s first year and where we hope to go from here.

## A Public Health Approach to Preventing Impaired Driving Prevention

### ***Impaired Driving and Substance Use Disorders: Making the Link to Early Treatment***

**John Shaw, ITRE**

This discussion will explore the relationships between impaired driving and chronic use of alcohol and other drugs, along with the sequential intercept model for encouraging at-risk drivers to seek treatment before their substance use disorders become severe.

## Safety Data & Local Programs

### ***Safety is Everyone's Business***

**Matthew Maher, Stantec**

The Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization has recently started their Safety is Everyone's Business project, which is the highest-funded USDOT's Safe Streets and Roads for All planning project in North Carolina. This project is a full-suite Comprehensive Safety Action Plan that adopts the Safe System Approach to identify and recommend improvements to high-risk locations on the region's roadway network, while engaging road users, transportation professionals, first responders, and advocates. Upon its completion, the study will produce regional safety tools, safety funding priorities, and policy recommendations, critical to selecting MPO, state, and local investments in roadway projects to reduce serious injury and fatality crash rates. This session/discussion will cover the innovative tools that we are using at the outset of this project, including a crash data dashboard and language learning models to process hundreds of thousands of police crash reports.

### ***New Partners and Plans for Improving Traffic Safety in Robeson County***

**Lauren Blackburn, VHB**

This presentation will highlight safety data and strategies identified in the recent Robeson County Safety Action Plan (RCSAP) developed by NCDOT and local partners to create a unified vision for how death and serious injury can be eliminated from roadways in the county. This presentation will feature speakers describing how a new rideshare system and a pastoral care program aim to improve access to safe transportation and support families who have been impacted by traffic crashes in the county. Robeson County was the top-ranked county in North Carolina (2020-2023) as measured by the NCDOT based on factors including reported crashes, crash severity, crash rates based on population, registered vehicles and estimated vehicle miles traveled. Trends have fluctuated, with a recent 36% reduction in fatalities between 2023 and 2024. In early 2024, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) initiated the development of a comprehensive safety action plan for Robeson County.

## Technology Solutions for Slowing Speeds

### ***Saving Lives Through Speed Management***

Despite strong investments in driver education, licensing, and enforcement, excessive speed continues to take too many lives. This session focuses on results: how active Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA), an aftermarket speed prevention device, can measurably reduce risk among three critical groups of drivers: fleets, super speeders, and teens.

Unlike warning-only alerts, active ISA directly supports compliance with speed limits during everyday driving. For fleets, major city pilots have shown that ISA technology is effective at reducing speeds to not only reduce risk but also keep critical city systems running smoothly. For super speeders, it offers a targeted intervention that allows continued mobility while reducing public risk. For teens, it reinforces safe speed habits during the critical early months of driving, while preventing severe outcomes from momentary mistakes.

### ***Speed Safety Camera Enforcement in NC School Zones***

**Dan Gelinne, UNC HSRC**

As of Oct 1, 2025, communities in North Carolina can use speed safety cameras (SSCs) to enforce speed limits in school zones. While the new law provides a framework for SSC programs, questions remain about program design, technology, administration, and community engagement. With support from NCDOT and GHSP, the UNC Highway Safety Research Center is working to develop resources and deliver technical

assistance to support SSC programs that can effectively prevent injuries and fatalities on NC roads. Panelists will present details about the new law, share recommendations from national guidance and research, and answer common questions related to program planning, community engagement, legal and administrative frameworks, and key roles and responsibilities. We will couple NC-specific guidance and recommended practice with national examples of successful SSC programs to share the most up to date knowledge about these programs and how they can inform local implementation.

## **Building Strong Partnerships to Move Vision Zero from Planning to Implementation**

**Panel lead by Elyse Keefe, UNC Injury Prevention Research Center**

Across North Carolina, communities are embracing Vision Zero, but moving from plans to on-the-ground change requires more than local resolutions. This panel will highlight NC communities from the Charlotte urban area, Pitt County, and Durham, that have demonstrated success in translating Vision Zero goals into action by building diverse, multisector partnerships and investing in strong collaborations. Panelists will share how local governments, public health agencies, transportation professionals, law enforcement, and more can work together to co-create meaningful local change and sustain momentum beyond initial planning. The session will explore practical strategies and real-world examples for aligning data, funding, and other resources to leverage partnerships and implement evidence-based safety projects. Attendees will leave with actionable lessons on building trust, structuring multisector collaborations, and accelerating Vision Zero implementation in their own communities.

## **Quick Wins with Quick Builds: Advancing Vision Zero through Pilot and Demonstration Projects**

This Pecha Kucha-style presentation will showcase how several North Carolina Vision Zero communities are using quick build projects to rapidly improve roadway safety. Through fast, low-cost, and flexible interventions, local partners will describe how they have come together to design, build, and pilot safety infrastructure on neighborhood streets, downtown corridors, and state-maintained arterials. Presenters will highlight practical examples of traffic calming interventions and lessons learned for successful implementation in NC. Participants will hear about innovative strategies for lowering speeds, calming traffic, improving visibility, and increasing safety for all road users through quick build projects, including through community engagement and evaluation.

## **Open Streets: Re-imagining Streets as Public Spaces for Everyone**

**Panel: John Tallmadge (Bike Durham), Lauren Grove (Vision Zero Durham), Tricia Smar (Duke Hospital)**

Open Streets events invite people to reimagine streets as public spaces for everyone by temporarily closing them to drivers and creating a sense of community and connection around safer roads. Durham launched its most ambitious Open Streets event, Move-A-Bull City, in 2025 with a multidisciplinary planning team, including advocacy, government, and healthcare groups. By collaborating across fields, we managed to pull off a stellar first annual event that impressed elected officials, benefitted local businesses, and invigorated residents to think more inclusively about safer streets. Our planning team will share our process, including business relations, grant applications, community outreach, volunteer coordination, and many lessons learned, from the perspectives of Bike Durham, City of Durham Transportation, and Duke Trauma Center.

## **Organizational Safety Programs & Traffic Safety Culture**

***Organizational Safety Culture and Your Influence on Traffic Safety***

**Wes Kumfer (HSRC), Katie Dively (Banyan Collaborative)**

Culture can be broadly described as the collective force of attitudes, beliefs, and norms and how they influence behavior. If driving behavior is influenced by a complex set of interrelated beliefs and social norms, how in the world can practitioners change traffic safety culture? In this session, we'll examine organizational safety culture and explore the unique role that practitioners have in influencing the transportation system. We'll also draw on research to examine ways that organizations can better assess and understand their own cultures so that they can influence behaviors externally.

## **How Employer Traffic Safety Programs Reduce Crashes, Costs, and Risk**

**Cody Stewart, National Safety Council**

Workplace crashes remain one of the leading causes of employee injury and death. Yet employers have tremendous power to influence safe driving behaviors both on and off the job. This session introduces attendees to an innovative Employer Traffic Safety Program designed to help organizations build, strengthen, and sustain comprehensive driver safety initiatives.

## **Law Enforcement Sessions:**

### **Spotting the Fakes: Tactical Approaches to Enforcing Temporary License Plate Fraud**

**James Murray, Union County Sheriff's Office**

This training provides a robust framework for identifying, documenting, and responding to fraudulent temporary license plates and fake insurance documents. By combining meticulous visual inspections with advanced verification systems, officers are better prepared to safeguard public safety, protect legitimate revenue streams from tax and fees, and disrupt networks of organized crime that utilize these fraudulent mechanisms. The skills imparted in this module are critical not only for immediate enforcement challenges but also for long-term strategic improvements in tackling broader criminal enterprises involved in document fraud.

The knowledge gained from this training will enable officers to conduct more effective field investigations, refine enforcement strategies, and pursue offenders through coordinated legal channels. As fraudulent practices evolve, continuous learning and adaptation remain essential pillars of maintaining regulatory integrity and public trust.

### **Beyond the Hype: Real-World AI Applications in Traffic Safety**

**Captain Thomas Marshburn, Onslow County Sheriff's Office**

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept—it's a tool law enforcement can use now to save lives on our roads. This session will explore practical ways AI can support traffic safety efforts, from predictive crash analysis and speed study automation to enhancing impaired driving detection and streamlining report writing. Drawing on real-world law enforcement experience and hands-on AI applications, attendees will see how to bridge the gap between technology and daily policing. The presentation will include demonstrations of AI in data analysis, enforcement planning, reports, and public outreach, as well as candid discussion of its limitations, legal considerations, and ethical guardrails. Participants will leave with actionable strategies for responsibly integrating AI into their agency's traffic safety programs.

### **Big Rigs, Big Risk - How Enforcement of CDLs/CMVs Saves Lives**

**Bella Truong, Senior Attorney in the National District Attorneys Association's National Traffic Law Center**

Federal masking regulations are designed to ensure that states hold commercial driver's license holders - drivers who operate the largest vehicles capable of creating the greatest potential danger - accountable for bad driving behaviors. Learn to identify various disqualifying offenses and sanctions unique to commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) and appreciate how the enforcement of these regulations result in reducing injuries/deaths by keeping unsafe commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers off the roads by assuring that each CMV driver has one driver's license and one complete and accurate driver's record.

### **Combating Street Takeovers through Direct Enforcement and Investigations**

**Sgt. Kevin Wiggins, Charlotte PD**

This presentation focuses on the multi-faceted approach to combating street takeovers affecting NC public streets and the motoring public. Topics covered include the application of NCGS 20-141.10 and LE procedures specific to this G.S. Social media monitoring and intelligence. Direct enforcement operations aimed at apprehending violators while street takeovers are occurring. This includes the use of real time intel, UCs, RTCC cameras and enforcement team tactics. Follow up investigations after street takeovers occur. This includes social media search warrants, arrest warrants for violators and seizing vehicles as evidence involved in street takeovers.

## Car Seat Basics for Law Enforcement

Car Seat Basics for Law Enforcement is a training for law enforcement officers who are not Child Passenger Safety Technicians. This course will equip officers with knowledge to:

- Take an active role in assessing car seat use, according to evidence-based best practices;
- Talk to caregivers about child passenger safety;
- Share child passenger safety local and national resources with caregivers—all within the context of their regular duties.

Officers will learn key child passenger safety concepts through a series of scenarios that take place in the community. This is a national training developed by NHTSA/National Safety Council.

## Sovereign Citizens

### Ben Byrne, Astute Synthesis

“I am not driving, I am traveling. I am a free person not subject to your jurisdiction.” When your personal contact with a driver starts off with this conversation, you have stopped a sovereign. They aren’t just uncooperative; they are potentially dangerous. This session will help you understand the mind-set of the person you have stopped, as well as how to navigate a potential minefield.

## Steering Toward Safety: Best Practices for Teen Driver Engagement

### Youth-Led Action in Traffic Safety

#### Eliza Fitzpatrick, NC SADD

This presentation will encourage attendees to go forth in their communities with a greater appreciation for youth-led initiatives in traffic safety. Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) is a national non-profit dedicated to student safety and wellness through the lens of peer-to-peer education. Three SADD students from different communities in North Carolina will share their efforts to promote traffic safety and student wellness among their peers with strategies for engagement, retention, and mobilization. This panel of student leaders serves to shed light on the importance of including youth voices in the conversation of youth prevention and traffic safety.

## Teen Outreach: How Law Enforcement Can Reach Young Drivers through Proven Strategies

### Tracy Russ, ITRE

You've been invited to speak at a local drivers ed class. What should you say? How can you influence young drivers to be safe? This presentation will cover research-based strategies for outreach, communication tips, and free resources.

## Traffic Stops and Crash Response for People with Special Needs

### Guidelines for When Law Enforcement Meets Autism at a Traffic Stop

#### Dr. Anne Dickerson, ECU

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the most common developmental disability in children; the Centers for Disease Control has found that 1 in 31 children aged 8 years old in the United States have autism, a significant increase from previous work. As per the title, it is a spectrum of disorders that range from nonverbal individuals with no functional skills to very intellectual individuals who have difficulty with executive functioning and understanding social cues from others. While many autistic individuals are successful in gaining their license, due to their autism, they may appear more impaired than they really are. This session will describe the most common traits and characteristics of this interesting group of individuals and highlight important strategies to support a successful their continuing ability to drive to maintain quality of life.

## Capturing the Transportation Perspectives of Nondrivers with Disabilities in North Carolina

### Alessandro Figueroa, HSRC

This presentation would highlight our NC GHSP funded effort to identify how transportation safety uniquely impacts North Carolinians with disabilities, and specifically which barriers negatively influence or limit their

everyday travel. Our hope is that the findings will help transportation professionals elevate the needs of people with disabilities through better public engagement and outreach, using lived experiences and insights to inform transportation safety related decision-making. Further, we hope to demonstrate that these findings address critical gaps in how people with disabilities are considered and prioritized in transportation projects and programs.

### ***Effective Communication with Individuals Who Have Hearing Loss***

**Donna Platt, NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Communication with drivers and/or passengers who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind can be a challenge especially at traffic stops and during crash responses. People with hearing loss have their own communication preferences based on the onset of loss, education, and social backgrounds. Which tools are the best to communicate with them? The presenter will share some examples that drivers and/or passengers who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind have experienced with law enforcement officers.

### **Digital Evidence in Crash Reconstruction**

**Lee Granger, Raleigh PD**

Modern motor vehicle crash reconstruction now comes with multiple sources of digital evidence, event data recorders, dash and roadside cameras, original equipment manufacturer data tools, infotainment systems and more. With evidence from actual fatal crashes that occurred in Raleigh this presentation will show some of the best ways to collect, preserve and then present these information sources in both civil and criminal court.

### **A Look Behind the Magic Curtain: Getting to Know the GHSP STEP Reporting System and Website**

**Caroline Mozingo, UNC Highway Safety Research Center**

Want to unlock the GHSP STEP System mysteries? This conference session is for you! Join us to get a refresher on the basics and to hear about changes and updates to the system.

This presentation will include speakers from GHSP and the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, which supports and maintains the STEP System for GHSP, to discuss both the rules behind the system as well as how to submit activities and events for your agency. We'll have content geared toward the three different user levels of the system - Local Agency Representatives, County Coordinators, and Law Enforcement Liaisons - and share reminders and tips for everyone. The end of the presentation will be an open Q&A format to help address any questions that we can on-site.

### **Highs in Disguise: Emerging Drug Trends and Impairment Risks in Everyday Items**

**Kenny Benfield, Forensic Tests for Alcohol**

Join us to uncover the truth behind today's most insidious substances, from kratom's hidden super-potent alkaloid to lethal fentanyl analogs lurking in "prescription" pills, and the wild world of new cannabinoids (delta<sup>8</sup>, delta<sup>10</sup>, HHC) flooding vape shops and headshops. You'll learn how everyday objects like pill presses in a closet, a "harmless" vape cartridge, or a bag of mushrooms can turn deadly, and exactly what Narcan can (and can't) do when seconds count. We'll also dive into hemp products that aren't as innocent as they seem, plus synthetic benzos, gabapentin combos, and the next wave of mushroom-derived psychedelics. Discover how vape devices mask illicit opioids and designer cannabinoids, arming you with practical field tactics to intercept these threats and protect your safety. Continuous vigilance and practical field tactics are the greatest weapons against today's evolving substance landscape. Don't miss this chance to stay one step ahead.

### **HGN or Something Else: The Effects of Kratom, Gabapentin, and High-Potency Cannabis on Eye Movements**

**Kenny Benfield, Forensic Tests for Alcohol**

This presentation examines how the emerging impairing substances kratom, gabapentin, and high-potency cannabis affect eye movements in ways that may resemble, but are not true Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus (HGN). Officers increasingly encounter drivers showing abnormal tracking, rebound effects, eyelid tremors, fixation issues, or exaggerated convergence problems caused by these drugs. Understanding the observable

differences between pharmacologically induced eye movement abnormalities and genuine HGN is critical for accurate roadside decisions, proper documentation, and defensible courtroom testimony. This session equips officers with the knowledge to distinguish HGN from “something else,” improving detection of impairment in today’s evolving drug landscape.

## **Gas-Station Pharmacology: What Today’s Drivers Are Using and Why It Matters**

**Kenny Benfield, Forensic Tests for Alcohol**

Unregulated “gas-station drugs” like kratom, 7-hydroxy-mitragynine, Amanita muscaria products, and other natural and synthetic smoke-shop blends are creating a new and dangerous impairment landscape on our roadways. Marketed as legal, natural, or harmless, these substances can produce sedation, dissociation, slowed reaction time, agitation, or hallucinations, effects that directly compromise driving ability. Officers increasingly encounter drivers impaired by these products, yet many differ from traditional impairment profiles. This presentation gives law enforcement the practical tools to recognize these impairing agents, understand their pharmacology, document roadside indicators, and strengthen DWI-D investigations and courtroom outcomes.

## **Multiplying Danger: What Every Officer Must Know About Opiate Potentiation**

**Kenny Benfield, Forensic Tests for Alcohol**

Opiate potentiators are substances that significantly increase impairment when combined with opioids, leading to greater crash risk and overdose potential. Alcohol, benzodiazepines, gabapentinoids, antihistamines, and other CNS depressants intensify sedation, slow reaction time, and amplify respiratory depression. These combinations produce impairment far beyond opioids alone and are increasingly seen in roadside encounters. Understanding how potentiators magnify driving-related deficits is essential for officers, toxicologists, and traffic-safety professionals to detect impairment better, interpret toxicology results, and develop effective prevention and enforcement strategies.

## **The Blood Counts: Preparing the DWI Search Warrant**

**David Barbour, Clayton Police Department**

This training focuses on the DWI search warrant for blood. It covers the statutes and legal standards governing DWI search warrants. It then goes through the DWI search warrant in its entirety, explaining how to properly fill out the document. It ends with explaining how to properly document items seized pursuant to the warrant and returning the warrant to the courts.

## **ACED: Aerial Crash Examination Drone**

**Zachary Sisson, Raleigh PD**

The Raleigh Police Department has investigated hundreds of serious injury and fatal vehicle collisions. This presentation has been designed to educate on the use and importance of drones for evidence gathering, scene re-creation through rendering, and overall aerial photography. While full-scene scanning tools have high costs, drones provide a budget-friendly option for agencies seeking more advanced tools for crash reconstruction.

## **From Handbook to Highway: Applying NC Driving Laws to Protect Vulnerable Road Users**

**Oliver Sendall, Bike Walk NC**

As a supplement to the already successful NC Friendly Driver Program, BikeWalk NC will be developing a presentation aimed at further educating drivers education instructors, law enforcement district attorneys on the importance of enforcing existing laws associated with the privilege of driving. The presentation will draw from information within the DMV Driver Handbook, the NC State points system and other resources to emphasize the importance of educating driving professionals, law enforcement and others on the importance of identifying the basic elements that contributed to the crash, investigative considerations and the gathering of information that represents the vulnerable road user in traffic crashes (“any event that results in injury or property damage attributable directly to the motion of a motor vehicle or its load”).

## NC CRIS- Moving Into The Future

### Clyde Nobel, NCDMV

Presentation for North Carolina law enforcement agencies that submit crash reports, focused on upcoming changes to state and federal reporting requirements. The presentation will introduce the new DMV-349 form, including newly required data fields, the updated reporting structure, and instructions for electronic submission. It will also outline available transition options as agencies prepare for full implementation of the new structure in 2027. In addition, the session will cover new points of contact, updated NHTSA reporting requirements, and changes related to Fatality Analysis Reporting, with emphasis on data accuracy, timelines, and agency responsibilities. This presentation is critical to ensuring agencies are informed, compliant, and prepared for these changes.

## Interdiction for the Protection of Children (IPC)

### Mark Nales, II, NCSHP

Interdiction for the Protection of Children (IPC) uses a multidisciplinary approach to train law enforcement, prosecutors, criminal analysts, child protective services, victim services, and child advocacy center professionals collectively.

The IPC training team works with local, state, federal, tribal, U.S. territory, and international partners to provide classes and educate others on how to intervene when a child is in danger. Documented results prove IPC enhances an officer's ability to identify victims of exploitation, missing children, technology-facilitated crimes against children, high-risk threats against children, and registered sex offender violations. IPC continues to provide invaluable and life-saving lessons, embracing and advocating the proactive message to "Stop Waiting for Children to Ask for Your Help."

The IPC program aims to identify and rescue missing, exploited, or at-risk children (17 years old or older) before they are victimized or further victimized.