



# The Group with the Scoop

Wrongful Death | Car Accidents | Defective Products

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Did you know?



*Fighting like a Tiger for you!*

## TEXTING WHILE DRIVING: a deadly decision for teens



Some common-sense suggestions for keeping your teen driver safe:

- Don't just ban cell phone use in the car, set an example for your teen.
- Monitor your teen's texting habits – they might not like it, but you pay the bill.
- Limit the number of young passengers with your teen. Teens tend to take more risks in the company of peers.
- Limit the times during which you allow your teen to drive. Most teen crashes occur at night and social events increase the frequency of texting.

Shocking new statistics expose the risks of texting while driving, and your teen may be at the greatest risk. We all know that young drivers often make poor decisions, but recent studies show just how deadly a decision it can be to text while driving, and how alarmingly often teens do it.

A study released in 2009 by a University of Utah researcher found that texting drivers are six times more likely to crash. Another 2009 study, done by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, found that texting truck drivers are 23 times more likely to crash or to have a "near crash" event.

Why are these statistics so critical? Because, according to the Utah researcher, 60 percent of teens text while driving, and they send or receive an average of 97 texts per day. When coupled with CDC statistics which show that motor vehicle crashes kill an average of nine teens every day, the numbers become very disturbing.

Because the part of the brain which is responsible for planning and decision making is not fully developed in teens, even the most responsible teens may still make bad decisions on the road. Until new technology helps to solve this problem (like automobile features that jam cellular phones while in operation), the best decision might just be to turn off your teen's text service - the statistics leave no doubt that it would save lives. ■

# Spotlight: KAREN GRANT

*Karen Grant and her husband, Bill.*



Karen Stutler Grant, a Clarksburg native, grew up in the Wallace area and graduated from Liberty HS in 1982. Karen married her high school sweetheart, Bill, in 1983.

When the Grants moved to South Carolina in 1984, Karen resolved that she would work in a legal field, first taking a job as a firm receptionist and then as a legal assistant in a noted Columbia, SC, injury firm.

When a family illness forced her to return to Harrison County in 1994, she resumed her legal career as well as her college education. Though working full time as a legal assistant, Karen obtained a B.A. in business administration from Fairmont State in 1999. In total, Karen has been a personal injury legal assistant for over 20 years, including the last two with The Miley Legal Group.

Karen's greatest strengths are her attention to detail and dogged work ethic. "Despite having the longest drive of any member of our staff, Karen is almost always the first person in the office and often the last to leave," said Tim Miley, owner of The Miley Legal Group. In addition to her responsibilities as a legal assistant, Karen is also largely responsible for being the resource for the other staff members on issues relating to the software used by the firm to manage clients' cases. Tim adds, "If something needs to get done and you give it to Karen, you know it will get done. I wish I could clone her."

Karen and Bill currently live in Buckhannon. When she isn't at work, Karen loves camping, reading and playing tennis. When she feels really adventurous, Karen hops on the back of her husband's Gold Wing motorcycle for a long ride. ■

## RECENT PRODUCT recalls

*Despite advancements in overall consumer product safety, there are still many products that we use in our everyday lives that can cause serious injuries. Our firm believes very strongly that public awareness of potentially dangerous products can go a long way towards preventing injuries or harm. To help in that regard, here are a few recent product recalls announced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). In West Virginia, the Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, is responsible for enforcing our consumer protection laws. The W.Va. Attorney General's website has important product recall and safety information: [www.wvago.gov/consumers.cfm](http://www.wvago.gov/consumers.cfm)*

Salomon USA of Ogden, Utah, is voluntarily recalling about 10,000 **Alpine Ski Bindings**. The tow component of the ski bindings could fail to fully secure the ski boot to the ski binding, causing the binding to release unexpectedly. This could cause the skier to lose control or fall and suffer injuries.

Grand World Inc. of Maspeth, N.Y., is voluntarily recalling about 641,000 "**Bobby Chupete**" **Pacifiers**. The pacifiers fail to meet federal safety standards. The pacifier mouth guard is too small, posing a choking hazard to infants and toddlers.

Maclaren USA, Inc. of South Norwalk, Conn., is voluntarily recalling about one million **Maclaren Strollers**. The stroller's hinge mechanism poses a fingertip amputation and laceration hazard to the child when the consumer is unfolding/opening the stroller.

Samsung Electronics America Inc. of Ridgefield Park, N.J., is voluntarily recalling about 43,000 **Samsung Over-the-Range Microwave Ovens**. If an installation bolt comes in contact with an electrical component inside the unit, and the microwave is plugged into an ungrounded outlet, it could create a shock hazard. ■

## CAN FACEBOOK

# ruin your case?



*Popular social media site can be a real headache if you're not careful.*

With around 350 million users, Facebook is undoubtedly the most popular social media site in the world. But if you're in the midst of a personal injury claim, information, posts and photos on sites like Facebook can actually ruin your case. How? Consider this:

- Photos posted by your friends can be viewed by people outside your network of "friends" despite your privacy settings.
- Courts have ordered injured plaintiffs to produce their Facebook pages to insurance company lawyers.
- Evidence from Facebook has been admitted in courts and has been used by police, investigators, and media.
- Law clerks for insurance defense lawyers check Facebook for their opponents' pages, profiles and pictures.
- Defense lawyers always want your medical information, even though it may not be relevant to your case. By talking about your medical issues in a public forum, you may lose the ability to protect your medical confidentiality in Court.

So what steps can you take to help protect yourself?

- ✓ Critically review photos and posts and remove anything you wouldn't want the insurance company lawyer to see.
- ✓ Check your privacy settings and see if you can block certain people from being able to see that you are even on the site (Facebook allows this). Go ahead and block the insurance company lawyers and their clerks.
- ✓ Search for your name in the search field and review the information that comes up to make sure it's acceptable.
- ✓ Never accept friend requests or respond to emails through social media sites from people you do not know.
- ✓ Treat your medical information, including the status of your health, as private and confidential on Facebook and other social media.

While the above steps are not foolproof, they will make it less likely that your personal information ends up in the wrong hands. ■

## FAQ



### If you file a lawsuit on my behalf, will the case go to trial?

Probably not. Most of the cases our firm handles do not end up going to trial. However, it is important to note that we prepare and handle each case as if it may end up being necessary to go to trial to obtain fair compensation for our clients. Our attorneys have participated in many jury trials over the years, and we understand that a trial is sometimes the only recourse when insurance companies have acted in bad faith or fail to live up to their obligations. ■



Fighting like a Tiger for you!

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## Texting While Driving - Shocking New Statistics

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# did you know?

The Alzheimer's Association is helping caregivers track their loved ones when they walk or drive by adapting technology initially developed for monitoring prisoners.

Using a Web-based mapping system in conjunction with a transmitter, families can be alerted when a loved one goes beyond certain virtual boundaries each family can set.

More than 5 million Americans are estimated to have Alzheimer's, and upwards of half of those are in the disease's early stages. Alzheimer's is of particular importance in West Virginia, the state with the highest average age. An estimated 42,000 West Virginians have the disease – a number that is projected by the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services to grow to 105,500 by the year 2024.

alzheimer's  association®

the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

Because of increasingly early diagnosis, many patients have years of independent living ahead of them before they would have to give up their car or stop going out alone.

Nearly 60 percent of Alzheimer's patients eventually begin what's called wandering, creating a need for a greater supervision to ensure their safety. While the tracking will not replace in-person supervision, it can help a person maintain their independence and dignity.

For more information on the program, which is known as Comfort Zone, please visit the Alzheimer's Association website at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org). ■

Call us at **(304) 326-1800**