

PERSONAL INJURY POST

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COVID-19 Pandemic: Its Relation to Drowsy Driving

Driving is one of the most dangerous activities people engage in throughout a day. Even if a driver stays alert, follows all traffic signs and signals, and has zero distractions in their vehicle, there is still a chance they could end up in an accident. There are also many things that could increase the risk of accidents, including drowsiness.

Drowsy driving occurs when someone gets behind the wheel and begins to nod off while they're driving. This can happen when the driver is suffering from a sleep disorder, is exhausted, or has already spent several hours on the road. Over the years, we've had clients who have suffered from accidents with drowsy drivers because of these reasons. While this is something we all have to be aware of while we're going about our daily lives, there have been other developments we should keep an eye out for, too.

Recent studies have shown that the COVID-19 pandemic can be the cause of many of the more recently drowsy driving related accidents. One study, published by Cell Press, states that because people are at home more often, it is impacting their sleep patterns. The study shares that because school and work schedules have become somewhat relaxed over the months, it "has led people to sleep more on average with less 'social jetlag' as indicated by a reduced shift in sleep timing and duration on work days versus free days." To better understand this, I first want to dive into exactly what "social jetlag" is.

Social jetlag was a term first used by German researcher Till Roenneberg in 2006 to describe the different sleep patterns of work or school days and free days. A person who goes to sleep early Monday–Thursday only to stay up late on Fridays and Saturdays and sleep in the following

mornings is an example of social jetlag. Typically, when a person has less social jetlag, opting to keep a fairly regular sleeping pattern instead, they're far more rested. Because of the pandemic, we might assume that social jetlag has decreased and people are getting far better sleep, but this is not the case.

Christine Blume, a sleep researcher and cognitive neuroscientist from The Centre for Chronobiology in Basel, Switzerland, states that overall sleep quality is decreasing. "We think that the self-perceived burden, which substantially increased during this unprecedented COVID-19 lockdown, may have outweighed the otherwise beneficial effects of a reduced social jetlag."

This information is important to be aware of because it can be used to keep us, our loved ones, and other people safe. By understanding this is an issue, we can stop people from getting behind the wheel if they haven't had a good night's rest. We can even stop ourselves from driving by recognizing the danger we put on ourselves and others. One of the most important things we can do to push safety is to stay aware of circumstances like these and stay abreast as things develop.

All of us at Garcia & Ochoa wish everyone good health at this time and encourage you to reach out if you have any questions. We're here not only to provide our legal services for those in need but also to answer questions about any concerns you may have. If you or a loved one was involved in an accident related to drowsy driving, there may be something we can do to help.

— Ric Garcia

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BLACK FRIDAY: COVID-19 EDITION

How to Turn the Shopping Holiday Into a Stay-at-Home Family Event

A string of retail stores, including JCPenney, Bed Bath & Beyond, Walmart, Target, Kohl's, and Dick's Sporting Goods, have declared they won't be open for the traditional Thanksgiving and/or Black Friday shopping this year. But that doesn't mean the annual shopping holiday is canceled! If you're an avid Black Friday shopper, you can keep the tradition going and involve the whole family by using the day to shop online. Here are a few tips to get everyone involved in the fun and turn the holiday into an overnight party.

Divide and conquer.

Does your whole family love shopping? If they do, it's time to break out the laptops, cellphones, and tablets. Take the list of items you're hoping to snag and divide them up so that each person has things to browse for. Then choose a start time — midnight is always good — and let everyone loose to bargain hunt. While you're shopping, remember to use store apps, websites like RetailMeNot and Groupon, money-saving browser extensions like Honey, and price-comparison apps like Flipp to score the best deals.

Refuel with caffeine.

No all-night shopping spree is complete without a coffee run. To keep your family fueled, make sure to stock up on your favorite coffee in advance and set a time for a coffee break. It's not quite the same as taking a break at the mall's Starbucks, but it will help you power through the night. For an extra bit of fun, you can even try to recreate your favorite Starbucks drinks at home. ChowHound.com is a great resource for DIY recipes and has hacks for the caramel frappuccino, pumpkin spice latte, and more.

Celebrate with a big breakfast.

When you've finally dropped the last item into your virtual cart, it's time to celebrate! Depending on how long your spree took, it might be 3 a.m., or you might be able to see the sunlight peeking through your blinds. Either way, you deserve to reward yourself with breakfast. Try cooking your favorite breakfast foods as a family or, if it's late enough, order home-delivered pancakes and hashbrowns from your favorite local restaurant. Once you're stuffed, you can crawl into bed knowing that you had a fantastic family night.

AN INTERSECTION ACCIDENT

Days Before the Holidays

Being involved in an accident is never something you want to experience. In fact, motor vehicle accidents are a major source of fear and anxiety. What makes matters worse is when the accident occurs around a special occasion, such as an anniversary, birthday, or holiday. For two of our clients, this was the exact position they found themselves in. A little over a week before Christmas, they were involved in a serious accident caused by another driver's inattentiveness.

Case Facts: On the day of the accident, our clients were stopped at an intersection due to a red light in his 2002 Daewoo Leganza. As the light turned green, giving our client the right of way, he began to pull out into the intersection. It was just as he was going through when the defendant, driving a 2017 Ford Explorer, failed to heed the right of way to our client. Driving at an unsafe and high speed, the defendant crashed into our clients. Both of our clients, the driver and passenger, were severely injured from the crash, which also left them with permanent debilitating injuries.

The Outcome: The defendant knew that by driving the way he did, he not only put himself in danger but also other drivers. However, he

WARMING YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

Make Your Safety a Priority





still chose to drive that way, which led to the violent collision with our clients. Our attorneys laid bare the defendant's folly and settled the case in favor of our clients.

Unfortunately, we see cases like these time and time again. While we would prefer health and happiness to all the people throughout our state, that is not the case. This is why we are here to fight the injustices done against the public and set things right, no matter when or where that accident takes place.

As always, if you or a loved one have been injured in a motor vehicle accident, our team of professional attorneys and staff will do everything in our power to bring you the justice you deserve. Don't hesitate to reach out to Garcia & Ochoa in your time of need.

As it gets colder outside, people want to warm up their homes. In addition to using a built-in heating unit, they might also turn to quicker and cheaper methods to heat up some rooms more than others, such as space heaters. However, while space heaters are an excellent source of heat, they become extremely dangerous when misused.

The Harm Space Heaters Cause

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are around 25,000 residential fires that result in over 300 deaths each year due to space heaters. An additional 6,000 people are sent to the hospital for burns from their hot surfaces.

There are two factors that cause these fires and injuries: the amount of electricity used and the amount of heat produced. Space heaters use an immense amount of electricity. Energy.gov writes that "Space heater capacities generally range between 10,000 BTU and 40,000 BTU per hour." Keep in mind that 1 BTU is used to heat one pound of water by one degree.

How Does This Happen?

Fires are often caused when space heaters are placed too close to flammable objects, such as mattresses, blankets, clothing, or furniture. A typical space heater should be set up at least three feet away from any objects. Additionally, young children and pets can easily burn themselves or knock the heater over, which can result in serious injuries or home fires.

Space heaters should only be used to heat a single room, never left unattended, and never left running overnight while you sleep. With the proper safety measures in place, space heaters can be a wonderful source of warmth. Just stay vigilant, follow the guidelines above, and be sure to follow the instructions that come with your space heater.

If you were recently involved in a tragic accident and a space heater is to blame, you may be qualified to receive compensation. Call Garcia & Ochoa to learn about your options today at (956) 587-5833.

Hardworking Lawyers Helping Hardworking People.

CINNAMON-SPICED CANDIED SWEET POTATOES

Inspired by FoodAndWine.com

INGREDIENTS

- 4 lbs orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, peeled and cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces, then cut lengthwise into 1-inch wedges
- 1 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, cubed
- 4 (2-inch) cinnamon sticks

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Place sweet potato wedges in a 4-quart baking dish.
3. Sprinkle sugar, salt, and cloves over sweet potatoes.
4. Dot with butter and place cinnamon sticks around sweet potatoes.
5. Bake, turning every 15 minutes, until sweet potatoes are tender and the liquid is syrupy, about 1 hour and 15 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and let stand for 10 minutes.
7. Discard cinnamon sticks and serve.



BE INSPIRED

**You are never
too old to set
another goal
or to dream a
new dream.**

~ C. S. Lewis

The Garden of Dreams
www.dawnkinzer.blogspot.com

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3 Memorable Thanksgiving Day Football Plays

Thanksgiving is all about good food, family, and football. Each year, football fans look forward to sitting down and watching the game with their family, regardless of whether or not their team is playing. While many games have been played over the years, some stand out more than others because of some major players and their quick actions. Here are three individuals who made their Thanksgiving Day games ones to remember.

Lawrence Taylor

New York Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor was said to have "single-handedly" beat the Detroit Lions in this memorable 1982 Thanksgiving Day matchup. The game was only the fourth of the season for Taylor, who had just recovered from a sprained knee injury suffered in a previous game. With the score tied at 6-6 in the fourth quarter, Taylor intercepted the ball from the Lions quarterback, Gary Danielson, and ran it 97 yards for a touchdown.

Leon Lett

The Miami Dolphins were up against the Dallas Cowboys on Thanksgiving Day in 1993. This game

was marked by its strange weather: Snow covered the field in Dallas, and temperatures reached only 26 degrees F. But that wasn't what made the game memorable. In the last 15 seconds of the game, the Cowboys blocked the Dolphins' last 40-yard field goal attempt. As the ball was rolling on the ground, Cowboys defensive tackle Leon Lett dove for it but slipped and missed. The Dolphins recovered the ball and were given the chance to kick another field goal at the 1-yard line. The attempt was successful, and they won the game.

Phil Luckett

One of the most memorable moments during a Thanksgiving game took place in 1998, when the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Detroit Lions entered overtime in a 16-16 tie. Referee Phil Luckett oversaw the coin toss, and that's when things became tense. Steelers running back Jerome Bettis appeared to call tails, but Luckett said, "Heads is the call." Upon review later, officials discovered that Bettis changed his mind mid-toss and had indeed called heads first. The Lions got first possession and scored a field goal to win the game.