

206.57A FELONY DEATH BY VEHICLE. FELONY.

*NOTE WELL: This instruction is to be used for offenses occurring on or after December 1, 2006. For offenses occurring before December 1, 2006, use N.C.P.I.—Crim. 206.57.*

*NOTE WELL: If a separate charge of driving while impaired is submitted, then the jury may only convict the defendant of this offense if it also convicts the defendant of driving while impaired. See State v. Mumford, 2010 No. COA09-300, N.C. App. LEXIS 35, (Jan. 5, 2010).*

*CAUTION: If the jury convicts the defendant of this offense and driving while impaired, the court should arrest judgment on the driving while impaired offense. If the jury finds the defendant not guilty of driving while impaired, the court must arrest judgment on this offense.*

The defendant has been charged with felony death by vehicle.

For you to find the defendant guilty of this offense, the State must prove four things beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, that the defendant was driving<sup>1</sup> a [vehicle]<sup>2</sup> [commercial vehicle].<sup>3</sup>

Second, that the defendant was driving that [vehicle] [commercial vehicle] upon a [highway] [street] [public vehicular area] within the state.<sup>4</sup>

Third, that at the time the defendant was driving that [vehicle] [commercial vehicle] the defendant:

*NOTE WELL: If the evidence supports submission of the case under alternatives (A), (B) and (C), instructions on each alternative should be given.*

(A) [was under the influence of an impairing substance. (Name substance involved) is an impairing substance.<sup>5</sup> The defendant is under the influence of an impairing substance when the defendant has taken (or consumed) a sufficient quantity of that impairing substance to cause the defendant to lose the normal control of the

defendant's bodily or mental faculties, or both, to such an extent that there is an appreciable impairment<sup>6</sup> of either or both of these faculties.<sup>7]</sup>

(B) [had consumed sufficient alcohol that at any relevant time after driving the defendant had an alcohol concentration<sup>8</sup> of [0.08[ [0.04]<sup>9</sup> or more grams of alcohol [per 210 liters of breath] [per 100 milliliters of blood]. A relevant time is any time after driving that the driver still has in the driver's body alcohol consumed before or during driving].<sup>10</sup> The results of a chemical analysis are deemed sufficient evidence to prove a person's alcohol concentration.<sup>11</sup>

(C) [had any amount of [a Schedule I controlled substance] [metabolites of a Schedule I controlled substance] in the defendant's blood or urine]. (*Name substance*) is a Schedule I controlled substance or is a metabolite<sup>12</sup> of Schedule I controlled substance.].<sup>13</sup>

(If the evidence tends to show that [a chemical test known as a(n) [intoxilizer] [breathalyzer] [blood test] [urine test]<sup>14</sup> was offered to the defendant by a law enforcement officer and that the defendant refused to take the test] [the defendant refused to perform a field sobriety test at the request of an officer], you may consider this evidence together with all other evidence in determining whether the defendant was under the influence of an impairing substance at the time the defendant (allegedly) drove a motor vehicle.)<sup>15</sup>

And Fourth, that the impaired driving by the defendant proximately but unintentionally caused the victim's death. Proximate cause is a real cause, a cause without which the victim's death would not have occurred, and one that a reasonably careful and prudent person could foresee would probably

produce such [injury] [damage] or some similar injurious result. (The defendant's act(s) need not have been the last, or nearest cause. It is sufficient if [it] [they] concurred with some other cause acting at the same time which, in combination with it, proximately caused the victim's death.)

If you find from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that on or about the alleged date, the defendant drove a [vehicle] [commercial vehicle] on a [highway] [street] (or) [public vehicular area] in this state and that when doing so the defendant [was under the influence of an impairing substance] [had consumed sufficient alcohol that at any relevant time after driving the defendant had an alcohol concentration of [0.08] [0.04] or more grams of alcohol [per 210 liters of breath] [per 100 milliliters of blood]] [had any amount of [a Schedule I controlled substance] [metabolites of a Schedule I controlled substance] in the defendant's blood or urine], and that defendant's impaired driving proximately but unintentionally caused the victim's death, it would be your duty to return a verdict of guilty. If you do not so find or have a reasonable doubt as to one or more of these things, it would be your duty to return a verdict of not guilty.<sup>16</sup>

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1. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01 defines the driver as the operator of a vehicle.

2. If there is any doubt, define "vehicle" under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(49), or "motor vehicle" under § 20-4.01(23).

3. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(3d) a and b defines commercial vehicle. *See also State v. Jones* 140 N.C. App. 691, 538 S.E.2d 228 (2000).

4. If there is any doubt, define "highway" or "street" in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(13). "Public vehicular area" is defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(32).

5. An impairing substance includes alcohol, controlled substance under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, or any other drug or psychoactive substance capable of impairing a person's physical or mental faculties, or any combination of these substances. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(14a).

6. The phrase "appreciable impairment" is not defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01 or other subsequent statutes. However, appellate case law has defined appreciable to mean the effect of the impairing substance "must be...sufficient to be recognized and estimated." *State v. Harrington*, 78 N.C. App. 39, 45, 336 S.E.2d 852, 855 (1985). This additional language may be provided to the jury, if requested.

7. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(48b).

8. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(1b) defines alcohol concentration as “the concentration of alcohol in a person, expressed either as (a) grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood; or (b) grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath.”

9. Use 0.04 where a commercial vehicle is involved.

10. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-4.01(33a).

11. The term “deemed sufficient” is not defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-141.4, other statutes or any appellate court decisions. Absent a specific definition, it can be presumed that the legislature intended the words to be given their ordinary meaning.

12. A metabolite is any substance produced or used during metabolism (digestion). In drug use, the term usually refers to the end product that remains after metabolism.

13. Driving with any Schedule I controlled substance, or its metabolites in one’s blood or urine is a *per se* violation of impaired driving offense.

14. Note that if the offense occurred between December 1, 2006 and June 27, 2007, there was no statutory provision during this time that required the defendant to take a urine test.

15. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-139.1(f).

16. Note that Misdemeanor Death by Vehicle is not a lesser offense included within this offense. See N.C.P.I.—Crim. 206.58.