



CUSTOMER ADVISORY

NAVAL SAFETY CENTER, NAVAL STATION NORFOLK

160713-04

Pokémon Go and Similar Game Applications Raise Dangers

NORFOLK, Va., July 13, 2016 – There are mobile gaming applications, such as the new Pokémon Go, that put players into virtual worlds of game play. In these games players can catch digital creatures, help them evolve and take them to battle, all while leveling up themselves.

These creatures are dispersed around a player's current location using GPS data, and the player must use a mobile device to locate them. If you see zombie-like people walking down the street, holding their arms straight out in front of them and waving their phones like a searchlight, chances are they are playing one of these new games.

There have been alarming reports of people walking into walls, getting robbed and falling into ditches – all while game playing. It is just a matter of time before the first incident occurs of a person walking in front of moving cars. Even more frightening are reports of people who are playing these games while driving. We know this because they are Tweeting about it also while driving. Most states are pushing tougher distracted driving laws and raising public awareness on this issue. Currently, only Montana and Arizona do not ban texting and driving.

Distracted driving kills. According to the national website for distracted driving, **distraction.gov**, in 2014 alone, 3,179 people were killed nationwide and another 431,000 people were injured in vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

Be mindful of what is safe and what is legal. Have fun with these games, but remember these apps do not give you a free pass to be unsafe or violate laws.

- Pay attention to your surroundings when playing (i.e. look up, do not walk into traffic).
- Do not trespass on private property or in restricted areas.
- If you are playing at night, be sure to be visible.
- Be cautious of strangers.
- Do not play while driving.
- Have a designated driver.

-end-