



13 Years of
Highlights
(From the Summary of Mishaps)



Best of the **Friday Funnies** Risk Management Resource Guide

How "Not To" Tutorials
for Sailors, Marines and Civilians



Best of the Friday Funnies



Alarming!

As with all types of safety, we here at the Naval Safety Center take precautions, warnings and alarms very seriously. We often publicize problems such as blocked fire exits and padlocked fire extinguishers.

We believe the fire alarm pictured above shares our sentiments, except it had attended the annual office party and spent too long at the open bar.

This was Photo of the Week #569 on our website.

THE NAVAL SAFETY CENTER

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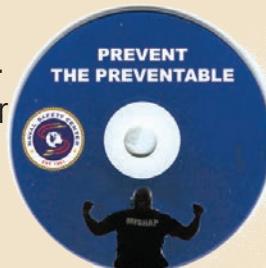


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Visit us at <http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/pages/media/media.aspx>

FUNNIES CONTENTS

How You Don't Want To Be

Famous – Here at the Naval Safety Center, we take humor seriously.

Look Out Below – Drunken Sailors and Marines seems drawn to balconies like moths to a flame.

Why Some Folks Are Safer at Work – Recreation turns into wreck-recreation quicker than you'd think.

Operational Risk Mismanagement – Sometimes you have to wonder, "What were they thinking?" And then you realize they weren't.

Great Lessons, Just Not the Ones in the Lesson Plan – An instructor's blood always gets the class's attention.

Brrrrzzaaapp! – Quick tutorials in the whys and wherefores of tagout.

What "Moderation" Doesn't Mean – You don't have to take field sobriety tests to find out, either.

Welcome to the Wild Kingdom – If humans would learn to mind their own business, we'd have more animal friends.

Safe at Home? You Wish! – In the backyard or garage, all bets are off, supervision-wise.

Pssst—Over Here! No, Over Here! – Small distractions produce large problems.



More Gunplay at the Not-O.K.

Corral – Like clockwork, trained warriors find painful targets at the bottom of their own legs.

Screech! Crash! Whee! Ouch! – Wearing your seatbelt is never a waste of time. When you don't need it, it is still an investment.

How Cars Become Alarm Clocks – First, they navigate themselves into a tree or bridge abutment.

"Sniff Test" Not Recommended – Nor are a bunch of other spur-of-the-moment "procedures."

Rocket Scientists of the Week – The crème de la crème of boneheadedness.

How Not To Check the Weather – More accurately, "when" not to check if the storm has passed.

We're Doomed, I Tell You, Doomed – If safety is an attitude, this one isn't it.

Two Wheels, Too Many Ways To Wreck – For many riders, learning to ride is superseded by learning to wreck.

Appearances aside, the Friday Funnies aren't simply brickbats tossed at unwitting personnel. They are mini-seminars from the college of hard knocks, except you don't have to suffer any knocks plus you get to (figuratively) stand around, raising your eyebrows and thinking, "What a knucklehead!" The only price is that you have to think about how you would have managed the risks (or inanimate objects) that overwhelmed the people in the stories.

Every single mishap involving the Sailors, Marines and civilian workers you'll read about in the following pages could have been avoided. As the guy who creates the message every week, I thank them for being such good bad examples. And I challenge you to do what it takes to avoid giving me more material.

Derek Nelson
Media Division Head



How You Don't Want to Be Famous



Safety is a serious business, and a glance at the daily OPREPs and fatality statistics proves it. That fact informs my messages, both positive and negative. I focus on areas of risk where leadership attention and improvement is needed. It is important to recognize accomplishments and positive trends, of course, but most of the attention is on challenges and opportunities that must be communicated to the Fleet.

At the Naval Safety Center, we use many techniques for communicating about significant risks, prevention strategies, lessons learned and best practices. Our safety communications include formal guidance, technical checklists, quick-response ALSAFEs and topical presentations.

These types of messages are necessary, expected and important, which brings us to something outside the norm: the Summary of Mishaps (a.k.a. the Friday Funnies). It is the Naval Safety Center's best-recognized and most popular product, and it is the opposite of serious. For decades, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. A typical email: "Within an hour, all my troops had read it and were telling others about it. Had it been a 'dry, read it at quarters' kind of thing, the news would have not spread nearly as fast."

Assuming you've been reading this message, you already know that it isn't just a cartoon. It makes serious points about decision-making and headwork. As one fan wrote, "The entire unit found them not only hilarious, but

truly valuable in human-factors studies." Over and over, we hear documentation that the humor attracts readers while the somber message hits home. Countless people have written to say that they analyzed a situation and made a better decision, simply because they envisioned themselves in the dubious Friday Funnies spotlight. The message lets them learn the easy way based on someone else learning the hard way.

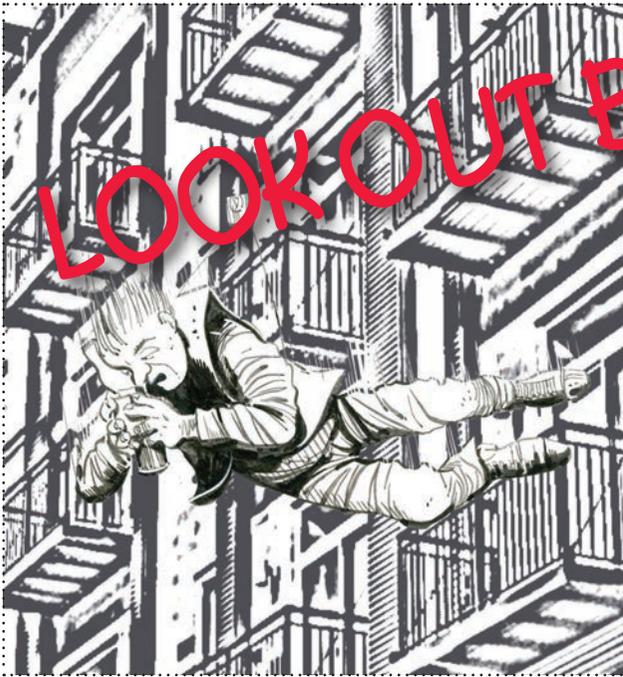
The Funnies zeroes in on human error, which rarely exists in a vacuum. Some of the mishaps could have been avoided had someone in authority spoken up. And it doesn't have to be a supervisor or a boss. All it takes is someone who has more knowledge and experience (or a peer with more common sense) who is willing to intervene.

The point isn't to blame the person who got hurt—supervisory error and the local safety culture also play a role.

This special issue offers numerous potential lessons learned, based on what were apparently lessons unlearned by specific Sailors, Marines and civilian employees on specific days that were punctuated with a resounding "Oops!" and a dash for the first-aid kit. That's the nutritional content. If the anecdotes amuse, so much the better.

RDML Christopher Murray, USN
Commander, Naval Safety Center





A private gets new respect for alcohol, balconies and gravity

A PFC from a Marine aviation squadron was drunk and leaning over a second-story railing at a barracks, jawing with some Marines below. As has happened so often in the past, leaning turned into falling. In the blink of an eye, he was in a position to talk to the other Marines from a much closer location, except that he didn't have time due to the fact that he was plummeting past at near-terminal velocity. He landed on his face and ended up being taken by medevac to a hospital. He got away with a broken bone near his

eye and, incredibly, no requirement for surgery. One month of light duty later, he was back in ranks, we're hoping with a new respect for alcohol, balconies and gravity, not necessarily in that order.

[Originally published *March 2008*]

How to lose a spitting contest

A lance corporal on the balcony had a couple strikes against him. He was underage and had been drinking. He was also on a third-floor balcony. Still, you'd think that he could engage in something as apparently harmless as a spitting contest without accruing major bodily harm, wouldn't you?

There were some NCOs present and they must have thought it was OK, but their risk-assessment quals were about to be revoked. Searching for a little extra distance and better trajectory, the lance corporal started rocking back and forth. He then lost his footing and his grip in that order, and quickly was able to deliver his latest entry in the spit contest via the mouth-to-ground method.

This was not the winning technique, and his ambulance ride, broken wrist, broken ribs and collapsed lung weren't exactly prizes.

[Originally published *May 2007*]

Did You Know?

- Falls are the second leading type of unintentional home-related injury deaths.
- Of the 4,693 fatal work injuries that occurred in 2011, 553 (12%) were the result of falls to a lower level.

For More Information

Navy Fall Protection program requirements are outlined in Chapter 13 of the Navy Safety and Occupational Health Program Manual, OPNAVINST 5100.23G.

Find links at <http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/osh/FP/FP.aspx>:



Why some folks are safer at work



Bags in the back please

An AT1 from a helicopter squadron was out on the links one day. “Specific activity: Playing golf,” the mishap report said. However, that remains to be seen. The report goes on to explain that he was “riding in the back of a golf cart when it went over a steep embankment.” He, in turn, went flying off when the cart collided with a tree.

I’ve played a lot of golf. A lot of bad golf, a little good golf, and everything in between. I’ve played from California to Pennsylvania to Florida. I’ve played in 100-degree heat and when the ponds were frozen. All of this experience has taught me the difference between playing a round in a golf cart, and playing around in a golf cart. Racing golf carts over blind hills with someone riding in the back is definitely the latter.

[Originally published *August 2008*]

Hospitalized by a toy

A major was trying to start his single-engine remote-controlled airplane on a table top. The plane started to taxi towards the end of the table but showed no signs of liftoff. The major didn’t want the plane to hit him, nor did he want it to fall to the ground, so he tried to reach over the prop and grab the fuselage, the operative word being “tried.” the prop sliced into his arm. He found a bandage, applied pressure, and hustled over to a neighbor’s house, where an ambulance was summoned. Soon he was en route to surgery.



Well, at least when people asked him what happened, he could say, “It was a flight-related mishap.” That sounds so much better than being hospitalized by a toy.

[Originally published *August 2006*]

A mystery on the links

Lots of people enjoy a good mystery, if book sales and teevee shows are any indication. So grab your detective kit, and try to help us solve what we call “The Case of the E-2, the Golf Cart and the Broken Axle.”

The facts, while simple, are puzzling. Our engineman-to-be was on leave from his destroyer. He was riding a golf cart barefoot. Not sure why, not sure where. Not sure if he was actually driving or was a passenger. We do know that the cart started to capsize. He abandoned ship, the report says, to “try and prevent it from rolling over.” However, the cart was on a hill, so good luck with that one, not that it made much sense.

The cart continued its cart-wheel and then, according to the report, “the axle broke.” The cart rolled over his feet, inflicting enough damage to put him on LIMPDU for two weeks.

So what, do you reckon, an E-2 (and, perhaps, an unidentified person at the wheel) have been doing in that golf cart? I’m calling NCIS.

[Originally published *October 2007*]



An AT2 gets a thumbfish

An AT2 was making himself a spear gun. Apparently he had gotten as far as the operational testing phase of this little weapons procurement program when something went wrong.

Hard to believe, I know, but there it is. The report said he “failed to mark spear gun at required length,” whatever that means (my last homemade weapon was a wooden slingshot, circa before many of you were born). He got distracted and, although he was originally envisioning a nice grouper or flounder as a target, he instead got himself a thumbfish, which not only hurts but it would take about fifty of them to make a meal.

I’m assuming that this guy would have had to go diving in order to use his new spear gun. I hope he is more careful with his tanks and oxygen regulators.



Incidentally, the lesson learned listed on this report was “Avoid manufacturing homemade spear guns.”

[Originally published *September 2005*]

Oh, well, the crowd found it funny

Who among us hasn’t watched a pair of nearly naked, 300-pound behemoths slam into each other in a small ring and thought, “Gee, that looks like fun?”

Apparently, enough people have to warrant the invention of portable, pretend sumo wrestling, complete with padded, 60-pound outfits that simulate the effects of eating 12,000 calories per day and spending the rest of your day in the gym. The catch being that you don’t actually have the muscles or coordination that real sumo wrestlers have. You just look like the Pillsbury Doughboy on steroids. Most folks find it hard enough to remain vertical in the outfits, much less do any wrestling. Crowds find it hilarious.

Which brings us to an AO2 at a division party, duly outfitted for his sumo match, which consisted of being bumped off the mat and onto the lawn, where his left foot stayed planted while his bulky body tumbled backwards. The result: two jumbo breaks to his left leg, a day in the hospital, and an extra-large helping of LIMDU (eight months, they figured). He also confidently checked “professional sumo wrestler” off his post-Navy career plans.

[Originally published *September 2003*]



Recreation tips

- When playing basketball, more contact means more injuries. Officiated games where rules are enforced are safer for all players.
- The leading causes of recreational mishaps are inadequate training, failure to follow regulations, and lack of experience.
- Wearing portable headphones, earbuds, or other listening devices (other than hearing aids), while jogging, walking, bicycling or skating on naval base roads and alleys is prohibited.



FAQs about Operational Risk Management

►Who is responsible for ORM in my unit?

Commanding officers and OICs are responsible for ORM within their commands. The executive officer, chief of staff, or civilian equivalent is the unit ORM manager and primary agent of ORM implementation.

►What's the best way to implement ORM at my command?

Make sure you meet the existing requirements of OPNAVINST 3500.39 series. You need at least one officer and one senior enlisted trained as ORM assistants. Train all command personnel commensurate with their rank and experience. Identify new and complex evolutions at your command, assemble a planning team made up of operators from the various functional areas necessary to complete the evolution, and conduct a deliberate or in-depth risk assessment. Brief the hazards, controls and individual risk-control supervision responsibilities to all evolution participants prior to execution. Identify root causes of conditions that led to failures. Recommend actionable solutions to the chain of command to prevent future failures, then retain internally and disseminate externally lessons learned, best practices, and the risk assessments for future planners.

►How do I sign up for ORM training?

The ORM training is available on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) e-Learning. There is a two-day instructor-led ORM Application and Integration (A&I) course. You can also sign up for the A&I course on the Enterprise Navy Training Reservation System (eNTRS). It is intended for your ORM manager and assistants.

►I've heard ORM described as both a program and a process. What exactly is it?

ORM is both a program and a process. An ORM program refers to a command's compliance with ORM instructions,

directives, (with regard to its organization) training, implementation, and feedback mechanisms. The ORM process is a systematic approach to managing risks to increase mission success with minimal losses. This involves identifying and assessing hazards, implementing risk controls, supervising, and revising as needed. When commands are assessed for ORM, it will either be an ORM program assessment (compliance-based) or an ORM application assessment (process-based).

►How should I document my ORM training?

Document ORM training in two ways. First, in individual training jackets or Relational Administration (RADM) folders. Second, at the command-level through the Fleet Training Management Planning System (FLTMPS). For example: "Last ORM GMT training occurred on ____."

►How often should service members and civilian employees receive ORM training?

Everyone is required to receive annual refresher training. The content and scope of this training varies with the student's rank and experience level. ORM training must also be included in command orientation.

►What is a risk assessment?

A documented, five-step ORM process. At a minimum, it includes a list of hazards, the residual risks, and who is responsible for supervising the risk controls.

►What is time-critical risk management?

The level of ORM used when you are executing an event or don't have time to plan. You must make risk decisions on the fly.

►How can you get ORM business cards?

Download the files from our website at www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/pages/orm/orm_businesscards.aspx.

CONTROLS BECOME RESOURCES DURING EXECUTION

STRATEGIC

TACTICAL

Time available for planning

In-Depth

- charts
- ship/aircraft
- systems safety
- instructions

Deliberate

- operational planning
- mission briefs
- CO standing orders
- safety equipment

Limited/No time for planning

Time-Critical

- team/crew
- mission execution checklist
- change management
- equipment degradation

MISSION
& TASK
SUCCESS



Operational Risk “Mis”management

“Heave-ho” becomes “Oh no!”

Aboard a cruiser, a fireman apprentice and an E-4 are tasked with sending a 150-pound valve to Davy Jones’s locker. He and some shipmates lug it to the fantail. To help keep his grip, the FA takes a line that is attached to the valve and wraps it around his forearm. The Sailors hoist the valve and give it a great big heave-ho and rightly so, because the line remains wrapped around the FA’s arm, and the routine heave-ho has suddenly turned into a spectacular oh-no. The E-4 grabs the FA’s legs but has no chance to hold both the Sailor and the valve. He does manage

to slow the FA’s plummet enough to slam his face into the hull before the glub-glub part starts.

The FA frees himself from the line at a depth estimated at between 10 and 30 feet and bobs to the surface. If he had been a cat, this escapade would have burned up at least seven of his nine lives, maybe eight. The aft lookout tosses a life ring and a smoke float, the ship executes an excellent man-overboard operation, and a SAR swimmer hauls the FA into a small boat in nine minutes.

A broken tooth, a sore hand, and three days of light duty for the FA. And an experience that should be worth nightmares forever.

[Originally published *September 2004*]

Warnings are for wimps

A Sailor had to recharge the air conditioner at his base-housing unit. Because he was watching an NBA playoff game in his living room and didn’t want to miss anything, he was in a hurry to squirt freon into the air conditioner. He figured if he heated the can in a pan of water in his microwave, the squirtation process would be sped up, possibly fitting into the halftime break. He didn’t have enough time to read the warning on the can (“Contents under pressure... can may burst if heated”). Or maybe he didn’t believe it, figuring it was just more of that idiotic lawyer-ese printed in microtype over every product these days .

Well, friends and neighbors, he believes it now. Now that the range hood is bent upward, the microwave’s innards are melted, the cooking pan is shaped like a football, the top of the range is ruined, 9-1-1 had to be called, and the fire department had to show up.

For the record, “keep away from direct sunlight and other sources of heat” doesn’t mean “works better if heated.”

[Originally published *July 2003*]

For information about culture workshops, visit

<http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavesafecen/Pages/aviation/culture/AviationCultureWorkshop.aspx>

What is a Safety Culture?

- Risk management is everyday business
- Led from the top with engagement at all levels
- Predictive and informed rather than reactive
- Shared Lessons Learned and transparency

Characteristics of a world class Safety Culture

- Senior leadership buy-in
- Responsibilities clearly articulated
- Sailors empowered and part of the process
- Open communication of hazards and lessons learned
- Risk management integrated into processes/operations
- Procedural non-compliance identified and corrected **before** the mishap



They could just as well call non-skid “non-cushion,” don’t you think?

An E-5 was on a B-1 stand, working on an aircraft’s tail light. While inventorying his tools, he also took the opportunity to inventory the relative motion of the deck and noticed that it had some, which

isn’t a good thing. Specifically, the deck seemed to be moving backwards, because the B-1 stand was making a beeline for the deck edge. “Hmm – I guess those chocks and chains would have been a good idea,”

he thought as he took a flying leap onto the nonskid. Two broken wrists, cuts on his head and face, a medevac flight, four days in the hospital, and at least two months away from work.

[Originally published *January 2003*]



Risk Management at a busy campground

One hot summer day, a lot of campers were running multiple appliances in their RVs (yes, they call that “camping”). The power panel started to overheat. Couldn’t let it explode or catch fire – then the ice machine would stop working. What to do, what to do?

For More Information:

The Naval Safety Center’s Operational Risk Management web content is at <http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafe-cen/Pages/orm/index.aspx>.

The all-time, absolute worst butt kit

I sometimes think I’ve plumbed the depths of human boneheadosity.

Then I find something that boggles my mind.

Come with me to a stateroom aboard an oiler in the Arabian Sea. A cook has seen wisps of smoke and smelled something burning. He has alerted the nearest seaman, who said, “Shiver me timbers, shipmate! What are you waiting for? Call the bridge.” And then, with the roving security patrol en route, the cook pursued this mystery to a stateroom, which he entered.

And what to his wondering eyes did appear but a partly melted, plastic, one-gallon milk jug being used as a butt kit. Since it was a quarter full, it appeared to have been in use for a while.

His risk assessment was immediate and flawless. **Item 1:** the oiler had 7 million gallons of fuel sloshing around in its tanks. **Item 2:** that rug was on fire. **Item 3:** there was a sink and a spigot mere feet away.

The guy who couldn’t find an ash tray, soda can, or any other non-flammable receptacle was absent, which is good, because when the security patrol showed up, they would have keelhailed him.

Honestly, a milk jug? Doesn’t the skipper have enough gray hairs already?

[Originally published *February 2006*]



Great Lessons, Just Not the Ones in the Lesson Plan

The captain's gig runs aground near Tonga

Three words: coxswain under instruction. And if that hint isn't tantalizing enough, here are two more words: Captain's Gig. Perhaps you can see where this is going. If so, you're ahead of this boat crew.

First, let's back up a bit. The boat officer and coxswain had made a familiarization ride with the ship's navigator earlier that day, and had gotten the gouge on navigation hazards, the expected track to the boat landing and the weather. The boat crew was making its second run, and coxswain U/I was at the helm.

They left the boat landing with 16 passengers to return to the ship. They passed a couple hundred feet seaward of the green light that somewhat inaccurately marked a reef. Then they felt a vibration coming from the drive train. (Gene, kill the Beach Boys sound track—it wasn't a good vibration).

The coxswain U/I throttled back, turned right, and immediately ran aground in three feet of water. Then the bona fide coxswain took over, put it in reverse and tried to back off the shoal, to no avail. So they killed the engine and waited for help. I don't imagine the ensuing conversations were particularly cordial. An LCPL arrived but couldn't pass a towline, and soon the guys in the gig had to drop anchor to stabilize the gig in the tide and current. Finally, some divers from the local navy in an inflatable boat freed the gig, which was towed back to the ship.

Minor damage to the gig: propeller was ruined, and the hull, thanks to the reef-induced sandpapering, wasn't going to pass inspection for a while. Damage to various egos and futures unknown at this time.

[Originally published August 2003]



Proofreading? That's another matter

Maybe they did it on purpose to get people's attention.

That was "stand down," not "fall down"

One morning in Florida, a civilian police officer was returning to his seat at a stand down in the base theater. Possibly the presentation was so gripping that he wasn't focused on the task at hand (i.e., sitting down). Perhaps it was such a snoozer that some of his cranial monitoring systems had partly or fully shut down. Whatever the problem was, he slipped on the bare floor, smacked his elbow on an arm rest, fell on his side, and jammed his foot under the seat in front.

He picked himself up and hobbled over to the local Occ health office, where docs diagnosed a lower back strain, an ankle abrasion and sprain, and a foot sprain. He spent a day on a crutch.

When the commanding officer of the guy who arranged the stand down asked how it went, the guy said, "Skipper, I had them rolling in the aisles."

[Originally published June 2009]



SMH
(shaking my head)

A master-at-arms third class in Guam was checking buildings at an ordnance annex, as part of some training. Things got interesting when he finished and started his debrief, because, for some mysterious reason, another patrol officer lobbed a coconut at him.

No, I don't know why, and the report didn't say. Maybe it's a local custom, maybe it was just the imp of the perverse at work. The coconut lobber was a good shot, because he caught the debriefer smack on the side of his head. His ear swelled up, and he lost two days of work and spent a couple more on light duty.

I myself have attended some training sessions where I felt like lobbing a coconut at the speaker, but so far I have been able to control myself, plus I didn't have a coconut with me.

[Originally published August 2009]

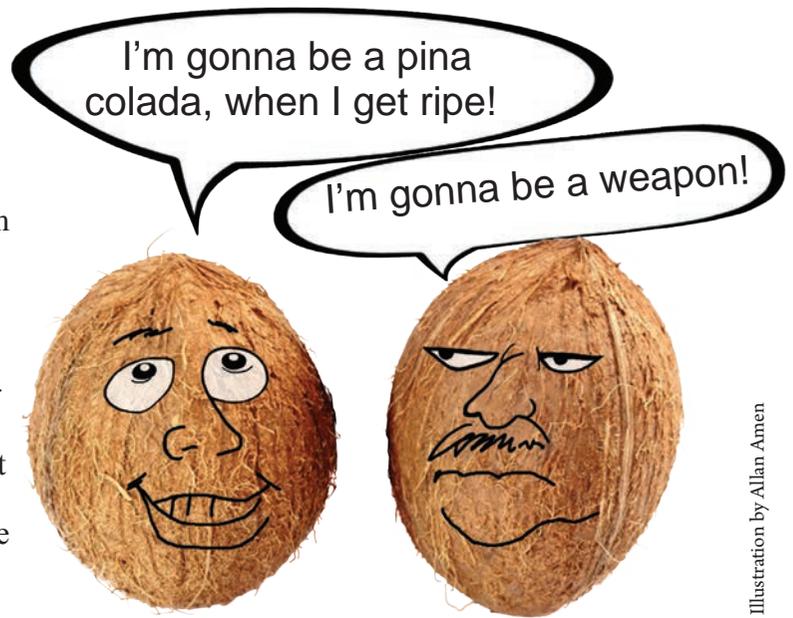


Illustration by Allan Amen

**An extra-good
man-overboard drill**

During a man-overboard drill off Florida, a ship had lowered five Sailors—including a pair of SAR swimmers—in a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB).

The coxswain couldn't start the engine. The winch operator tried to bring the RHIB back up, but the winch didn't work either. Perhaps distracted by these problems, the Sailors manning the forward tending line allowed too much slack. A wave pushed the bow of the RHIB away from the ship. The pelican hook was still attached, and when the RHIB's starboard bow dipped, two Sailors fell overboard. A second wave hit and flipped the RHIB a few seconds later.

At this point, it was glub-glub time for everyone else. The report didn't mention whether three of the Sailors had time to think, "Man, I'm glad we've got those SAR swimmers nearby." The boat officer and coxswain were briefly caught under the capsized RHIB, but they emerged with a renewed belief in the value of lifejackets. All five Sailors were soon recovered.

You still have to wonder: Is a man-overboard recovery drill a good time for an actual man overboard or not?

[Originally published August 2007]



Brrzzzaaapp!

Troubleshooting becomes troublecreating

More proof that the “E” in “E-3” doesn’t stand for “electrician.” An FN aboard a carrier was working as a food-service attendant and noticed that an ice machine wasn’t working. The ship, like all good ships, had about fourteen pounds of electrical manuals, instructions, tagout guides, standing orders, approval chits, trouble-call procedures and whatnot. These valuable resources were superseded, however, by the fireman’s

ample supply of good intentions and his lack of knowledge.

He lifted an access cover on the front of the machine and found a loose wire. He tried to stick it back into the switch.

Then the access panel fell down and his hand became an integral part of the electric circuit. Untrained personnel often get similar 115-volt explanations of why we have actual

electricians. This fireman got away with a minor burn to his ring finger.

I’d be shocked if anyone is shocked by this event.

[Originally published *October 2004*]



Tips from OSHA

- Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down or appears to be insulated.
- Never operate electrical equipment while you are standing in water.
- Never repair electrical cords or equipment unless qualified and authorized.
- Tips are also available from the National Fire Protection Association at <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/causes/electrical/electrical-safety-in-the-home/electrical-safety-tips>.

Did you know?

- U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 47,820 reported home-structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction in 2007-2011.
- These fires resulted in 455 civilian deaths, 1,518 civilian injuries and \$1.5 billion in direct property damage.

Just look, don't touch!

In a hangar bay, an EMFN was observing an operational test on a portable receptacle box that was plugged into a 440-volt outlet. He leaned over to get a better look, placing one hand on a watertight hatch and the other hand on the receptacle box. I'm not sure if he got a better view, but he definitely got a better feel for what was going on, in the form of a 440-volt jolt.

This is the sort of thing that provides very memorable training, don't you agree?

Turned out that some shipboard quasi-electrician had wired a power lead where a ground lead was supposed to be. And thus the Sailor got to op-test the EKG machine in medical. It worked, and he was fine. Still, I don't think Sailors with their hair standing on end and wisps of smoke coming out of their ears are part of the PMS system for medical equipment.

[Originally published *January 2005*]



What “moderation” doesn’t mean

To jump or not to jump

A seaman apprentice has been clubbing at the beach and is heading back to his ship at 0145, feeling spry. He successfully navigates his way to the parking lot by the pier and then aboard ship and into his berthing compartment. Ahh, safe and sound

But wait, this is the Friday Funnies, and wait, there he is, strolling to the smoke deck on the fantail. Perchance to smoke, perchance to chat, whatever runs through a befuddled E-2’s mind in the wee hours. Such as the question, “Can he jump from the fantail

to a fender between the ship and the pier?”

Not sure why he wants to, and it doesn’t much matter, because he is quickly performing a forward twisting one-and-a-half in the tuck position. The 38-degree water effectively

extinguishes any smoking materials, ardent desires and plans that he has, in that order.

Some Sailors on the flight deck hear his c-c-c-calls for help (everyone loves a man-overboard drill at 0400, especially when it isn’t a drill) and

a RHIB crew plucks him out of the water 18 minutes later. At the hospital, docs measure his core temperature at a nippy 86 degrees, and his BAC at a bibulous 0.11. He gets to spend a week recovering from hypothermia and bruised ribs.

[Originally published *April 2004*]



One bad decision leads to another

Howdy, Sailor, nice bandages. Looks like a broken leg and some broken ribs, is that about right?

So what happened? You ran into a wrought-iron fence? Oh, not “ran into,” you were “thrown into.” And how did that happen? You had been riding your motorcycle and were going too fast to make it around a curve?

Why were you going too fast? Oh, the cops were chasing you. Well, that makes sense. And why were they chasing

you, pray tell? You’d been testing how fast your 600cc Suzuki would go?

Let me guess—you’d had a few beers. How many? Four beers in four hours? I’d also speculate that it was after midnight. Ah, 0100. Your speed test didn’t have anything to do with those beers, did it?

Certainly you didn’t just launch out on a speed run at 0100, did you? Oh, you started by planning to just check out your new duty station, and then one thing led to another.

Well, at least you were wearing a helmet, even though what it protected wasn’t functioning very well. Had you taken the motorcycle safety class? You had? Hard to believe. And now you’re going to take it again? Good. I hope it sticks this time.

Gotta run. Enjoy your month of convalescent leave. I’m sure all the guys in your work center don’t mind doing extra work until you get back.

[Originally published *April 2005*]



Making a splash

A seaman apprentice returning from liberty was sitting on the edge of a pier, waiting to make a phone call.

He was much too drunk to be in such a precarious position. However, shipmates weren't worried about him, the report said, because he had been "able to hide most of it" and could still walk a straight line. His buddies soon got a chance to note that he could also fall in a straight line, because he passed out and

dropped into the oil slick, soda bottles, cigarette butts, shriveled orange peels, scraps of styrofoam and other assorted garbage below.

A pair of Sailors jumped in to keep him afloat until a rescue boat arrived. He swallowed vomit and spent two weeks in sickbay with pneumonia.

The two rescuers should get tetanus shots and awards, in that order.

[Originally published *January 2003*]



However many it was, it was too many

"At least three beers." How many is that, exactly? Three? Five? A bunch? A boatload? As many as you can afford? Too many to count?

Here's how many. It is enough so that as you steer your Mitsubishi Eclipse down a Florida interstate on a Sunday evening, 20 minutes after leaving a bar, and a van pulls into your lane and stops, you are fully capable of jerking the wheel to the right, narrowly avoiding two other cars, not being able to stay on the pavement as the highway curves left, losing control and running into a utility pole.

It is enough so that even though you were wearing your seatbelt, you broke seven ribs and needed nine stitches in your noggin, and your passenger (also belted in and glad of it) suffered enough bruises to accompany you to the hospital.

It is enough to cost \$17,000 (including a bargain \$8,000 for a Florida utility pole).

In short, "at least three beers" is enough to produce a BAC of 0.129 in an MM2. Just thought you'd like to know.

[Originally published *October 2004*]

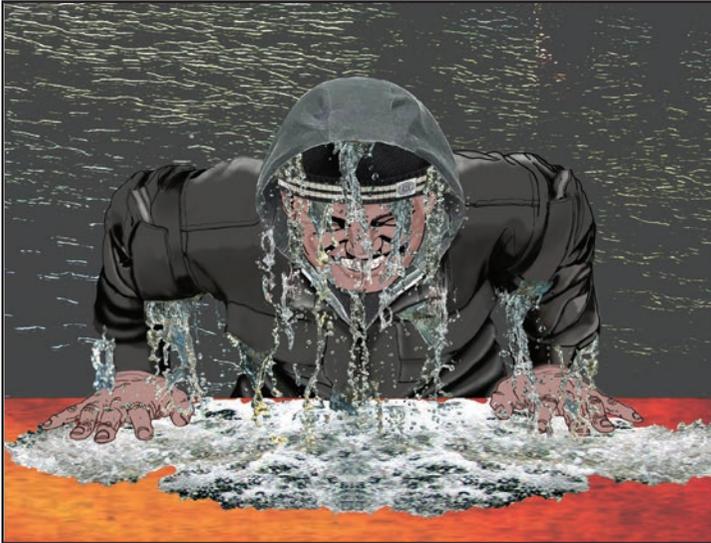


Illustration by John W. Williams

For more information

The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration's website about drunk driving prevention is at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Impaired>.

Did you know?

- Although college students commonly binge drink, 70% of binge drinking episodes involve adults age 26 years and older.
- Men binge drink twice as often as women.
- About 90% of the alcohol consumed by people under the age of 21 in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.



Welcome to the Wild Kingdom

Hmm, think we ought to rescue that raccoon?

A couple years ago, personnel were tending some shore and radio navigation aids that a hurricane had kicked around. It was the second bad storm in three weeks, and the crew had been putting in long hours, doing surveys and repairs.

They motored up to one of the broken aids and discovered a forlorn raccoon perched on top. They had to fix the device, and the raccoon was in the way.

Decision point #1: Leave him there and come back later? It had been four days since the storm—how long had the raccoon been marooned? How scared and hungry was it? Does the fish and wildlife service rescue varmints?

They opted to evict it, using a boat hook. It kersplashed into the water, ten feet below, and gamely started swimming to shore, struggling in the 2-foot chop.

Decision point #2: You were responsible for putting it in raccoon-overboard status. Do you help it or let it flounder? Would a drowned raccoon weigh on your conscience? Are you the kind of person who pulls over to help turtles that are inching across the asphalt?

They opted to try to save it. They drew alongside and a BM2 tried to grab it by the scruff of the neck. All he succeeded in doing, thanks to the choppy water and a lack of experience in handling swimming raccoons, was to shove the critter's head underwater four times in a row.

On the fifth try, he grabbed it by the tail. A second crewmember lifted its head out of the water with the boat hook. The BM2 grabbed the raccoon by the back of the neck and waited while someone got a box.

The raccoon, far from being touched by the crew's humanitarian (animalitarian?) gesture, was understandably scared and/or irritated. So the raccoon bit the boatswain's mate on the hand. Twice.

They put the animal in the box and tied it closed. The BM2 got first aid for his bites and called a vet, who said the raccoon probably didn't have rabies, but described what symptoms to look out for. The crew went back to work, finished surveying and repairing the aids, and returned to the boat ramp.

Decision point #3: Do you let the raccoon go or take it to a vet for testing? How far away is the nearest vet, anyway? Do they all test animals for rabies, or is that some sort of



specialty? How long will that raccoon want to stay in a box? Will it feel like you first started to drown it and now you have it in prison? Should you feed it? They opted for the good-riddance approach and let it go.

A couple days later, the BM2's hand had started to swell, so he went to an E.R., got some antibiotics, and started a series of (ouch!) rabies shots.

The BM2's post-mishap analysis said, in part, "I was thinking with my heart instead of my head." It was his idea to evict the raccoon in the first place. "I could not bear the thought of the animal drowning," he added. "However, when I pulled the raccoon from the water, I needed rescuing from him!"



Another pet dog watches his master and rolls his eyes

An ET2 was in his backyard playing fetch with his dog. This classic scene would be suitable for a Norman Rockwell painting if this weren't the Friday Funnies. Alas, nearby was a hole neatly camouflaged with leaves. According to the report, the Sailor "took off running to retrieve the stick." He stepped into the backyard booby trap, heard a pop, fell over (no doubt

the pooch was loving this part), got up and hobbled inside. Soon a doc was diagnosing a broken ankle. The ET2 missed 12 days of work and spent 10 more on LIMPDU.

Which leaves just one question unanswered. Isn't the dog supposed to be fetching the stick?

[Originally published *February 2007*]

(Not) Leaving it to beaver

A pair of first class petty officers found a great spot to camp: 22 acres of woods in North Carolina, containing a scenic creek that burbled its way through the woods. Unfortunately, a family of beavers had found the site similarly attractive and had set up housekeeping: gnawing down enough trees to dam up the creek, make a pond, and create a few ancillary acres of swamp unsuitable for anything other than beaverhood (which doesn't include tents, grills or campfires).

The petty officers planned their response. One of them, a self-proclaimed "weapons expert," led an expedition to the nearest Walmart, where they acquired enough gear



(actual design unknown) to create three homemade pipe bombs. They dug these devices into the beaver dam and set them off at what they figured was a "safe distance."

Soon, the petty officers were picking wood chips out of their hair and eying three shallow dents in the dam,

Wildlife safety tips

- Wildlife encounters should not be encouraged.
- Observe wildlife from afar.
- Hike and camp away from obvious animal paths, water sources, and signs like droppings or claw marks.
- Nearly all wild animals you encounter in North America would just as soon avoid you, but animals such as grizzly bears, alligators and mountain lions can be fatally aggressive.

which the beavers doubtlessly repaired before another dawn broke over the surrounding forest.

Our recommendation: Give the beavers a few acres and chalk it up to helping Mother Nature's creatures. All things considered, they have a hard enough time finding any habitat at all.

[Originally published *March 2010*]



The startling sage of the sailor, the hatchet and the bee

The following cartoon involves both an ATV and a bee, two sure-fire elements. But you'll be intrigued to learn that it does not, repeat, does not involve, in the case of the former, a dirt-and-twig appetizer, nor, in the case of the latter, a hostile hornet inside someone's helmet.

Our story opens as an FC1 and his dad walk into the woods behind the family homestead in North Carolina. Their mission: to carve out an ATV trail. After they mark a small tree for removal, the Sailor grabs his hatchet and starts a-whacking. Alas, while reconnoitering the job, he has overlooked a beehive whose inhabitants are becoming curious if not downright agitated. One of the bees, perhaps tasked with finding out what the heck is causing such a ruckus, begins his investigation by landing on the Sailor's leg.

At this point, some vestigial organ deep in the Sailor's medulla oblongata springs into action, triggering a flight-or-fight reaction that traces its direct lineage back to Cro-Magnon hunters who regularly had sabertooth tigers nipping at their hindparts. We're talking direct shot of adrenalin to all major muscle groups, bypassing common sense and any logical thought. "Can't take flight," the Sailor's brain computes, since the bee has already landed. "Must fight." In other words, start flailing around with whatever blunt object is at hand.

Except the hatchet isn't blunt. And the self-inflicted slice in his right leg has got to be a lot more painful than a bee sting.

Two days with the docs, who provide a slew of staples and a cast, and two months of LIMPDU.

[Originally published August 2004]

Paging Mr. Miyagi

The set-up: a lance corporal and a private first class were standing guard. A fly began bothering them. What did they do to get rid of this pest? (1) One of them requested temporary relief from guard duty, marched over to supply, and requisitioned the item officially referred to as a "Swatter, fly, plastic with metal handle, black," and then returned to duty. (2) Both bowed deeply while accepting chopsticks handed to them by Mr. Miyagi. (3) One of them

swallowed it while the other broke out his copy of "Burl Ives's Greatest Hits." (4) The PFC tried to kick it while the lance corporal tried to stab it.

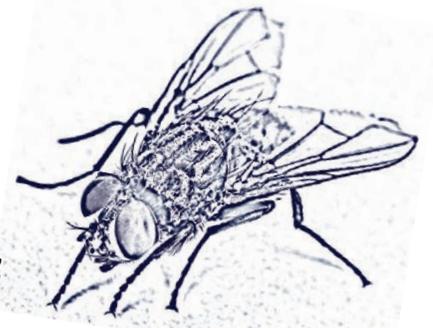
I know that's a tough one and you probably didn't get it right, so here's a bonus confidence-building question: Which Marine was soon getting surgery in Germany?

[Originally published November 2009]



**KEEP YOUR
SAFETY
PROGRAM
AFLOAT - ORDER
YOUR POSTERS
TODAY!**

[http://www.public.navy.mil/
comnavsafecen/Pages/media/
Posters.aspx](http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/media/Posters.aspx)



When You are Doing the Task Use the Mnemonic

When You Have Time to Plan Use the 5-Step Process

TIME-CRITICAL RISK MANAGEMENT

A Assess

Where am I?
What is going on?
What will happen next?

B Balance Your Resources

What are my options?
How do I use them?

C Communicate

Who needs to know? Who can help?
Who can provide back-up? Revise if necessary.

D Do and Debrief

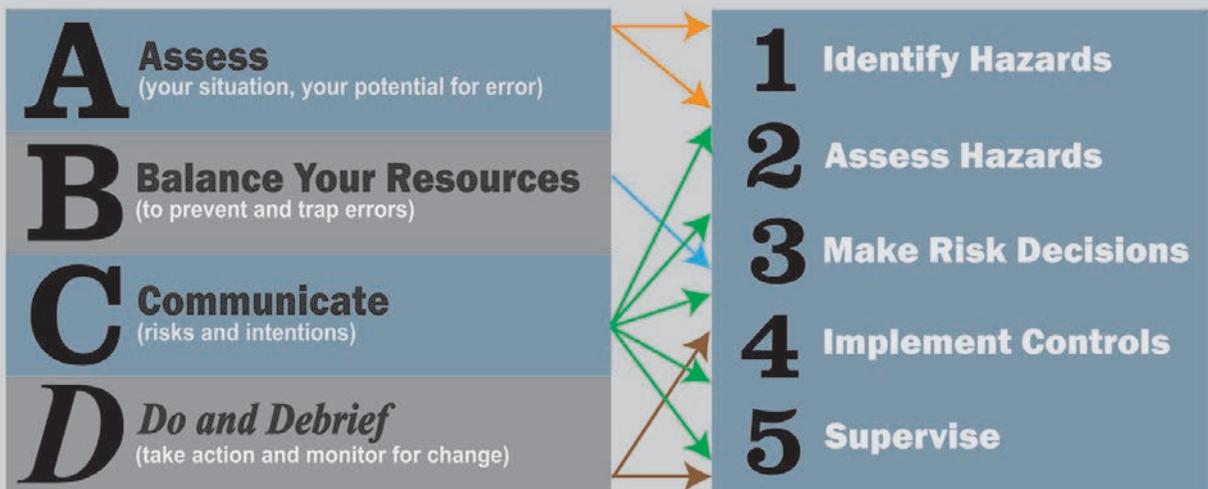
Carry out the plan.
Was mission successful?
Did actions reduce the risk?

Relationship Between TIME-CRITICAL AND DELIBERATE



TCRM Process and Mnemonic

5-Step Deliberate and In-Depth Process



Safe at home? You wish!



Post a fire watch! Borrow a Dalmatian!

Put on your Chief Sparky hat. It's time for a grease-fire update.

At his home in Washington, an IT1 was getting ready for work. His wife was heating a pan of oil on the stove. Figuring that the pan could tend itself for a while (perhaps wondering whether flames are animate or inanimate, and if the latter, could they somehow outwit me?), she walked away. A shrieking smoke alarm put the quietus to her internal monologue, and the couple raced into the kitchen, wife in lead, husband in close trail. Wife grabbed pan, turned, bumped refrigerator door, dropped pan, and splashed burning oil on herself and her husband. Second-degree burns sent the husband to the hospital for three days of skin grafts on his stomach and legs.

Same church, different pew, this one in South Carolina. An E-3 was manning a frying pan when it burst into flame. He grabbed it and shoved open the screen door, which swung back (as screen doors are wont to do), smacked the pan and splashed hot grease on his arm, chest and face. Five days in the hospital, and another five weeks out of commission.

Without fail, several times a year, folks torch off innocent pans of grease, grab red-hot skillet, stumble, drop the frying pans, and sling

burning grease onto the linoleum, the dishwasher, the café curtains and the family canine. They start out cooking a pork chop, and end up sauteeing part of their spouse's anatomy.

[Originally published *February 2003*]

Cue up the "Duh!" sound effect

Have you recently spent twelve years under the ice in Antarctica in a submarine that had no link to the outer world? Have you been living in a remote lighthouse and have never read a newspaper or watched television? Was your memory recently erased in a bizarre medical experiment? If so, then you won't be able to answer the following question. For everyone else, this will be easy. The setting: a CTM3's kitchen. You can hear the snap and crackle of deep-frying chicken. Smells great, doesn't it? Honestly, that's why I'm not a vegetarian. But wait, the frying pan has caught fire. Ohmigod, what to do, what to do! There's no fire extinguisher handy. Better grab it and carry it out to the yard. That's what this Sailor tried to do, the message says, "before a bad situation became worse."

Of course, the bad situation became worse anyway, and the Sailor soon had severe burns



on his arm, hand, leg and foot, and a month in a burn unit, and several months off work.

[Originally published *July 2005*]

Clogged chute, clogged brain

Down in Florida, where they have to mow a lot, a civilian employee was cutting grass on a tractor mower. The chute clogged. And then, apparently, the blood flow to his brain also got clogged because he stuck his hand in without making sure the blades had stopped.

His fingers weren't enough to stop the blades, either, and he ended up with a 15-stitch slice in one of them. Enough to make him miss work for a week and be on light duty for a week and a half.

If you want to find out if your mower blades are still spinning, there has to be a better way than squirting a half-pint of your blood on them, doncha think? And if you are unable to verify that the blades take X number of minutes to stop once you kill the engine, then for goodness sake use a stick when examining a clogged chute, and wear some eye protection whilst you probe, in case a piece of stick comes shooting back at you.

If you want to give blood, call the Red Cross. They have comfy chairs and will give you a cookie afterward.

[Originally published *September 2005*]

Avoiding Mt. Vesuvius on Your Stove

- Get a couple of things next time you go to the store: a fire extinguisher and a deep fryer with a lid.
- Figure out how to use the fire extinguisher and put it where you can grab it easily.
- Next time you start to heat up a pan of oil, put the pan lid next to the pan.
- If flames erupt, put the lid on the pan.
- Use your new fire extinguisher on anything else that has ignited.
- Do not, repeat, do not sprint toward the back door with a pan of burning oil. It is harder than it looks, and it looks impossible.

There, isn't that better? You can call for some carry out, not for a fire engine.

ORM
on the web

browse
preview
download
sign up



<http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/pages/orm/orm.aspx>

Install a QR Code reader app on your smartphone. To open the QR Code reader on your phone hold your device over a QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your smartphone's screen. The phone automatically scans the code or on some readers, you have to press a button to snap a picture, not unlike the button on your smartphone camera. If necessary, press the button. Your smartphone reads the code and navigates to the intended destination, which does not happen instantly. It may take a few seconds on most devices.

For More Information

Safety tips about home safety are available from the National Safety Council at <http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/safety-at-home.aspx>. Family safety presentations from the Naval Safety Center are at http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/presentations/family_safety_pres.aspx.



Blade – Sharp. Owner – Not so much

Wrong “Gerber” Brand

Down Pensacola way, a PFC was standing phone watch. He was passing the time “playing with a Gerber,” the report says, when another Marine, also feeling playful, tried to take it away from him.

Note that this item was not a product of the Gerber Company whose website boasts, “more than 80 years of raising happy, healthy babies” and that sells formula and pacifiers. No, it is a different company, which makes knives and multi-tools, and whose website shows a picture of a deer with the caption, “Hey, America, remember



when meat used to come in its original package?”

The PFC’s finger ended up with a substantial slice in its original package, thanks to this bit of horseplay. Two weeks of light duty, with the added bonus of a daily rebandaging. File this under “how not to liven up a boring phone watch.” The only plus is that at least someone is near a phone in case you have to call the rescue squad or an ambulance.

[Originally published *March 2009*]

How the private stabbed himself (or, darn those reflexes!)

A PFC was goofing around with a knife in his barracks one afternoon. He seemed to be managing the risk successfully until somebody chunked something at him. He reached up to block the incoming object, but the nerve signal that triggered his reflex reaction was quicker than the warning from his self-preservation lobe, the one that said, “Hey, man, you’ve got a blade in your other hand.” Alas, by the time that warning arrived in his cerebral processing center, the blade was embedded in his arm.

Lesson learned, according to the message: “Recommend not playing with sharp objects.” Also, don’t run with scissors. Also, don’t throw stuff at people.

[Originally published *January 2006*]

What they don’t teach at B.U.D.S.

The following thrilling tale features three students, identified by our correspondent as A, B and C. The first two were standing watch when student C pulled a knife out of his boot.

Before we proceed, please note that this is not the recommended location for carrying a knife

He started using the knife for a little personal hygiene on his fingernails. Student A asked to see the knife, and student C handed it to him. Student A duly examined the weapon, then said to student B, “Hey, take this knife and come at me as if you were going to stab me. I’ll show you this trick I learned at BUD/S.

Student B took the knife and pretended to try to stab student A, at which point they both discovered that student A’s skills weren’t as good as he thought. After medics got the bleeding stopped, the next step for all three was CO’s mast.

“Clearly, he didn’t graduate from BUD/S.,” our correspondent noted. However, she opined, “there must be a ninja school here I wasn’t aware of.”

[Originally published *May 2012*]



Pssst—Over here! No, over here!

Smaller engine but similar injuries



Well, here I am on my little 49cc scooter, zipping past the air station mini-mart. This little thing is so cool, a hundred miles a gallon and I don't have to pedal. Tell you what else is cool, now that I think about it—the wind chill. Forty degrees didn't feel too bad while I was walking, but it feels a whole lot nippier right now. My fingers are freezing. Shoulda worn some gloves.

Hmmm. Maybe I can just pull the sleeves of my sweater down over my hands. Let me just reach over and. Woah-woah-woah! Yikes! Thud! Oof! Ouch!

For reference, those are the sounds of handlebars oscillating wildly and an E-2 flying off a Honda Metro, hitting the pavement and breaking her collarbone.

Apparently, steering with one hand is harder than it seems. You know what is as hard as it seems, though? The street.

Scooters and mopeds aren't quite motorcycles, but you sure can't tell much difference based on your injuries when you wreck one.

[Originally published *January 2004*]

Barnacled onto a piling under a pier on a pitch-dark night

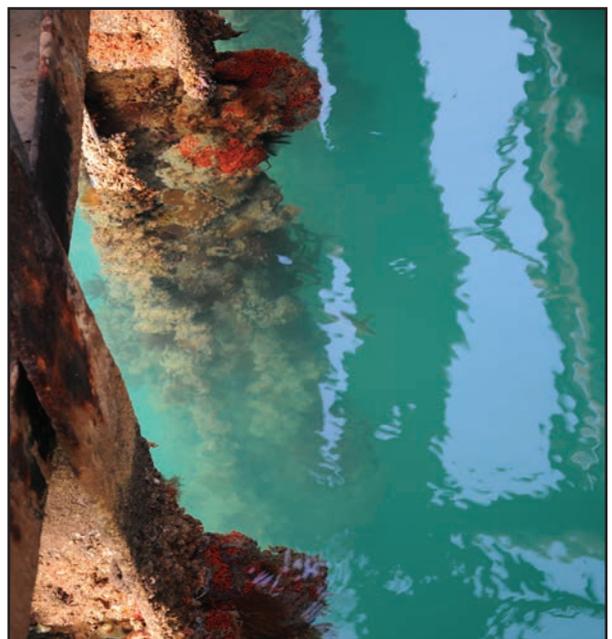
An MMFN had the midnight shift as a roving pier watch in a shipyard. Anxious to keep a close eye on the waterline near the pier, he roved a tad too close to the edge and tripped over one of the numerous pieces of equipment and detritus that typically decorate such venues. A quick drop and a big splash later and he was immediately able to verify that no terrorists were below the pier.

He latched onto a handy piling and radioed for help (no doubt the most interesting call to security headquarters that night). The OOD on the nearest ship heard the transmission and called away man overboard. Other watchstanders and a boat crew responded and found it unsurprisingly hard to spot someone hanging onto a piling under a pier on a pitch-dark, drizzly night. The MMFN had to use his flashlight to attract attention.

No damage that a hot shower, some dry clothes and a little rest couldn't cure. Divers

recovered his M-14 from the sludge on the bottom of the harbor the next day.

[Originally published *July 2003*]



Navy photo by ATCS (AW) Daniel Eborn



More gunplay at the Not-O.K. Corral

*Lights!
Camera!
Action!*

In an equipment storage building, a sergeant was serving as ammunition guard during a security detachment course. After the training, while the Marines were turning in the unused ammo, the sergeant decided to clear his .45.

Here's how he did it. First, take this bullhorn. You can be the technical advisor. Just yell "Cut!" when you detect the hazard. We don't want anyone hurt on the set.

Lights, camera, action! The sergeant draws his pistol, takes it off safe, and points it at the floor at a 45-degree angle. He pulls the slide three-quarters of the way back and eyeballs the chamber for ammunition.

He sees that it is empty and releases the slide. He must realize the magazine is still in it, "doncha" think? He points the pistol at the floor. He couldn't be planning on doing a function check, could he?

Ker-blammo! Hey, I thought you were going to yell "Cut!" Oh well, at least that's one less piece of ammo that the ammunition guard has to guard.

[Originally published *December 2004*]



You'd think two safeties would be enough

An AD3 plunked a few targets at his local range, did some errands and had some chow. Then he got around to unloading his semi-automatic pistol (and it was about time, I'd say—where was the loaded gun while he was running errands?).

The pistol had a thumb safety and a trigger safety. You'd think two safeties would be enough, wouldn't you? You wouldn't? Well, I didn't either.

He moved the slide back but a round lodged in the chamber. As he wrestled with it, the slide

slid forward, his finger slipped off the trigger guard and then, as if you had the slightest doubt, pulled the trigger. The targets this time, in order: his other hand and a wall. Two for two, he was.

Three days in the hospital, two surgeries.

He had taken a hunting-safety course and a gun-safety course, and said that he had nine years of experience with firearms. As previously noted in the Friday Funnies, the connection between experience and bad habits often seems nonexistent.

[Originally published *February 2003*]



“Malfunctioning” pistol, my eye

An ET3 in Connecticut plunked himself in the right hand while at a shooting range. Apparently, this is easy to do if you try to fix a loose barrel with your other hand on the trigger.

My favorite part of this mishap report was its statement that the firearm “malfunctioned.” Oh yeah,

that’s what it was. See, he had bought himself a used pistol, which I reckon had been on too many cattle drives or too many quick-draw contests or something.

He spent a day in the hospital. Missed nine days of work, and then logged six weeks of light duty.

For corrective actions, his command held training “on the dangers of buying old/used firearms,” the report said. How about some training on unloading your weapon before you start to mess around with it? Sheesh.

[Originally published *September 2007*]

When “cleaning” becomes “shooting”

An MM3 decided to clean his shooting iron. He’d had some familiarization training in boot camp, but not enough to remind him to make sure the chamber was clear after he removed the magazine from his 9mm pistol.

“He pressed the firearm’s slide button on the grip and pulled the trigger to release the slide as instructed in the weapons safety manual,” the report said. Next, he pulled the trigger and

fired a round into his leg, not as instructed in the manual. Tore a good-sized hole and broke his femur. Relying on vague boot-camp training is a way to end up in Boot Hill. There’s a huge difference between thinking you know how to clean a gun and actually knowing how to do it. Aiming it at yourself and pulling the trigger proves you didn’t know how.

[Originally published *June 2008*]

For More Information

The Naval Safety Center’s firearms-safety page is at <http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/ashore/explosives/PersonalFirearms.aspx>.

Firearms Tips

- Keep firearms unloaded when you aren’t using them.
- Store firearms and information in separate, lockable locations.
- The preferred “lockable location” is a cabinet, locker, weapons safe or a lockable gun rack.

Did You Know?

- From FY10-FY14, there were 150 Class A, B, C and D mishaps involving off-duty and on-duty negligent discharge of firearms.
- 69 of these mishaps were off-duty.
- The number of reported mishaps has decreased each year, from a high on 53 in FY10 to 10 in FY14



Screech! Crash! Whee! Ouch!

Another "friend" I'm glad I lack

After reading about a bajillion messages through the years, I've seen a plethora containing this phrase: "Did not wear seatbelt." I've finally found one where the unbelted, bashed-in boob actually had a good reason for not wearing it: He was standing on the roof of the car.

The Sailor was fine until the Chevy reached 20 mph, and then he lost his footing and did a nosedive onto the asphalt. His fractured skull netted him three weeks in intensive care, a month and a half convalescing, and more treatment and rehab in the future.

At some point you have to stop referring to stunts like this as "mishaps." We need some other word that combines moronic and self-destructive.

Alcohol was suspected but not confirmed. What is certain is that this guy's buddy, at the wheel of the Chevy, was either mentally deficient, homicidal, or both. Lord, deliver me from friends like that.

[Originally published *January 2005*]

Wrong place, wrong time

And now, for another installment of that edge-of-the-seat, nail-biting, hair-raising serial entitled "Through the Windshield and Beyond." Today's episode is number 12: "Blowout."

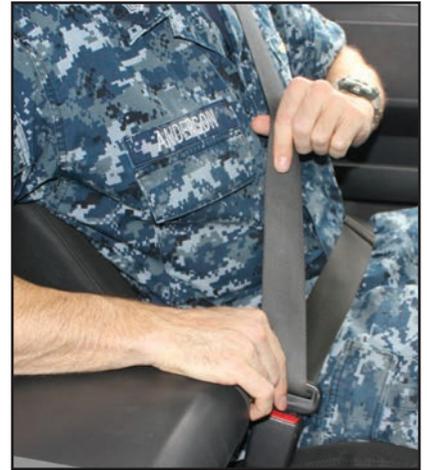
Our scene opens with a bunch of Sailors cruising down a road near Rota. All buckled up except the guy riding shotgun. A tire bursts. The car begins to flip. Care to guess which Sailor got flung out the window and into a barbwire fence?

If this scene was really an episode of an old video cliff-hanger, such as "The Adventures of Captain Marvel," or "The Phantom Empire," or "Commando Cody, Sky Marshal of the Universe," we could leave our Sailor suspended in midair until next week, during which time we would have dreamed up a miraculous escape, involving a barbwire-proof inflatable suit, or a rope dangling from a helicopter just overhead. But alas, this is reality, so he actually has to fly right into the metal bramble patch.

Let's review the bidding. On the one hand, you take two seconds to buckle

up (everyone else in the car walked away). On the other, you have two rounds of surgery and, without getting too graphic, let's just say that the surgeon had to refill his stapler while dealing with your scalp wound.

[Originally published *June 2004*]



I don't need a seatbelt because...

An AO2 at the wheel of a Jeep police cruiser had checked some antennas at a naval radio station and headed back down the mountain. It was dark. The gravel road didn't have any reflectors or guard rails.

This guy's notion of risk management was to not wear his seat belt, because, he figured, if the Jeep rolled off the side of the mountain, he didn't want to rattle around inside it all the way down. No, he wanted to be able to jump out. Unfortunately, his risk management did not include going the speed limit. He had



goosed it up an extra 5 or 10 miles per hour.

Let me get this straight. He is afraid of rolling off the mountain, but he opts to drive so fast that he increases his chances of doing so. Which he does, in fairly short order. Talk about a \$6,000, self-fulfilling prophecy.

Message says he had taken the emergency-vehicle-operators course. I'd like to see the part of the curriculum that explains how leaping out of an out-of-control vehicle is a legitimate life-preserving ploy.

[Originally published April 2004]

For More Information

Resources from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration are at:

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Occupant+Protection>.

Information from the National Safety Council is at:

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/safety-at-home-motor-vehicle-crash.aspx>

Top 4 Things To Know About Seatbelts

1. Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.
2. Air bags are designed to work with seatbelts, not replace them.
3. The lap belt should be secured across your pelvis, and the shoulder belt across your rib cage.
4. Seat belts should fit and can be adjusted.

The image shows a screenshot of the Naval Safety Center website. The header includes the logo and the slogan "Work, Play, Live - Safely! Make Every Sailor's Home and Captain's Count". A navigation menu at the top includes "HOME", "ABOUT US", "AFLOAT", "ASHORE", "AVIATION", "OSH", "PRODUCTS", and "CONTACT US". The "PRODUCTS" tab is highlighted with a yellow arrow. The main content area features a "Media and Public Affairs" banner. Below the banner, there are several sections: "MISSION", "VIDEO LIBRARY", "MAGAZINES", and "SAFETIPS". Callout boxes with yellow arrows point to specific features: "Catch up on the Friday Funnies" points to the "Friday Funnies" link in the left sidebar; "Find links to our latest videos" points to the "VIDEO LIBRARY" section; "Read, subscribe and contribute to our magazines" points to the "MAGAZINES" section; "Download and order posters" points to the "POSTERS TO ORDER" link in the left sidebar; and "Find presentations for safety stand downs" points to the "Presentations" link in the left sidebar. The footer contains contact information for the Commander, Naval Safety Center, and the date of the last revision.

Find hundreds of resources using the Products tab on our website. There are dozens of print and digital media information products and tools for local mishap awareness and training efforts. The latest articles, reports, newsletters and messages are all posted at <http://www.public.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/media/index.aspx>



How cars become alarm clocks

“Questionable” vs. “idiotic”

An airman from a CV was in a hurry to get from Norfolk to Louisiana on a weekend. You’re probably thinking “Visit an internet travel site and find some cheap, last-minute airplane tickets.” But see, that’s why you’re comfortably sitting there reading this message, instead of lying in a hospital bed hooked up to an I.V., with casts on most of your limbs.

The airman wanted to drive, and he had to overcome some significant obstacles. He had to ignore the training he’d had a month earlier, which told him what he was planning was a non-starter. He also had to ignore the ship’s policy that puts the kibosh on driving more than 350 miles in a day when you go on leave. He didn’t tell anybody about his plan, didn’t submit a leave request, and didn’t fill out the travel-risk-assessment questionnaire.

What he did was fill a five-gallon bucket with coffee, climb behind the wheel of his trusty Mitsubishi, and hit the highway at 1030 on a

Friday. At 0200, more than a thousand miles later, he arrived in the Bayou State. Slept a few hours, visited with family and friends the next day, got six hours of sleep, and headed back north early Sunday morning.

Twenty minutes into the second part of his marathon, he thought he saw something in the road and swerved into the median. The car spun and flipped, and, since the airman had his seat adjusted too far back, his seatbelt didn’t keep him restrained, and he greeted the glorious Louisiana sunrise by flying through the car’s sun roof, en route to 14 stitches, internal bleeding, and an 11-day, medically-induced vacation.

The report says he “knew beforehand his trip was questionable.” Questionable? That’s putting it mildly. “Questionable” would be driving 400 miles when the rule is 350, not four times as far. “Idiotic” would be a better word.

[Originally published *January 2005*]

Nightmare nod-off

Nobody wants to fall asleep at the wheel, but let’s just say you had to. I’d choose my driveway, with the car in neutral and the emergency brake on. I wouldn’t pick the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel at 0230.

If you haven’t had the pleasure of cruising this 17.6-mile engineering marvel, you ought to. Once you get through the tunnels, you are surrounded by water. A lot of water. Water almost to the horizon, in every direction. Not where you’d like to nod off and see if the guard-rail could keep you from testing the flotation qualities of your Toyota Supra in pitch-black, 45-degree water. Yet the Bridge-Tunnel is where a BM3 nodded off on the way back from New York to Norfolk. I guess it is less scary when you are mostly asleep, even if you’re going 80 miles per hour. Police flashed their lights at the



car as it whizzed by. The car continued off the end of the tunnel, down an exit ramp, across a road, up the opposite entrance ramp, off the side of the ramp, through a railing, and (puff, puff)



across a highway. The BM3 and his passenger, a seaman, were fully awake by this time, believe you me, just in time to witness the final crash in the median.

The seaman said the driver was incoherent after the wreck (understandable, since he had a concussion). The bosun's mate spent a day in the hospital and missed four days of work. The passenger, amazingly, missed just one day.

By the time police had tracked the Toyota's convoluted path, an ambulance had already arrived at the scene. Both Sailors had been wearing seatbelts. If you plan a similar stunt, I'd add life preservers.

[Originally published *May 2004*]

Failing the fatigue quiz

A Sailor got seven hours of sleep one night. The next night he went to a dance club and stayed until 0400. What happened to him as he drove back to the ship? For you slackers in the back row who haven't been paying attention all semester, here's a hint: the seven hours of sleep weren't a factor.

Choice A: Wide awake and alert, he drove to the beach and watched the sun rise over the blue Atlantic, mentally reviewing the latest CNO guidance and thinking positive thoughts about his upcoming advancement exam.

Choice B: Groggy and exhausted from hours of gyrating and arm waving, he pulled over into the parking lot of a Piggly Wiggly, called the duty officer, said he might be late, climbed in the back seat and took a refreshing nap.

Choice C: He fell asleep, veered off the road, bumped up over the curb, then smacked into a parked Oldsmobile, two trees and a fence.

Undecided? OK, since I'm in a good mood, here's a final hint: his broken leg put him TAD to a Navy hospital for several months. Now, that's all the help you're getting. Fill out your answers and pass your paper to the front.

[Originally published *July 2003*]

For More Information

A comprehensive report about drowsy driving from the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is at http://www.nhtsa.gov/people.injury/drowsy_driving1/drowsy.html

Characteristics of drowsy-driving crashes

- Occurs during late-night hours.
- Likely to be serious.
- A single vehicle leaves the roadway.
- The crash occurs on a high-speed road.
- The driver does not attempt to avoid crashing. The driver is alone in the vehicle.

Did You Know?

- Young people, and males in particular, were the most likely to be involved in fall-asleep crashes.
- Drivers younger than 30 accounted for almost two-thirds of drowsy-driving crashes, despite representing only about one-fourth of licensed drivers.
- These drivers were four times more likely to have such a crash than were drivers ages 30 or older.



To order or download posters, visit www.public.navy.mil.comnavsafecen/Pages/media/Posters.aspx



Two wheels, Too many ways to wreck

Headwork required, even when stationary

My most depressing groundhog day involves mishap reports about motorcycle wrecks in which the rider lost control on a curve. Occasionally a little gravel or a sudden obstruction plays a role, but usually it is just ignorance of the speed limit (by ignorance, I mean either ignoring it or not knowing/caring what it was).

Loss of control doesn't just occur on curves. There's the good old making-it-worse-by-twisting-the-accelerator as you slide off the back of a surging motorcycle that is performing an unwanted and impromptu wheelie.

Apparently, to lose control, you don't even have to be moving. Case in point: an airman in Florida

who was sitting astride her Yamaha, revving the engine and holding in the clutch. The report didn't specifically say why she was doing this, but since her license had been

suspended and she hadn't taken the Basic Rider Course, let's assume she didn't intend to actually go for a ride, she just wanted to listen to the sound effects.

Yet she had it in gear, for some inexplicable reason, and go for a ride she did when she "inadvertently" released the clutch. The motorcycle lurched across a parking lot and diagonally across a road. The startled rider managed to avoid a speed bump but couldn't avoid a curb or the fence four feet away. The result, according to the report: "crushed fingers."

I haven't ridden a motorcycle in a long time, but as far as I know, you can put them in neutral, right?

[Originally published in *August 2012*]



Another worthless safety brief

An airman in Florida had just bought a motorcycle from a Yamaha dealer. He vroomed out of the dealership and crossed the first lane of traffic

into a center turning lane, intending to turn left to head back to base. He lost control and smacked into the left rear quarter panel of a parked truck.

Here's the part I like: "A full safety brief was given prior to individual purchasing motorcycle," the report said. If

that doesn't dramatize the value of actual hands-on training, which he didn't have yet, I don't know what does. Two weeks of light duty, nursing a broken arm.

[Originally published in *July 2009*]



Why the rider is limping

If PPE stood for “Palpably Pathetic Equipment,” the E-5 in the following tale nailed it. He was merrily vrooming away from his home, astride his trusty motorcycle, and accelerated up to 45 mph. He turned off the road onto some grass, which was wet since it had been raining for two days, and when he tried to turn back onto the pavement, he skidded and lost control. His head was fine, since he was wearing a helmet. His feet, however, took a heckuva beating, with enough cuts and bruises to keep him off work for a month. Why? Because, the report says, he was wearing “bedroom shoes.” I may not know much, but I know that bunny slippers aren’t boots.

[Originally published in May 2005]



Figuring out how to ride (i.e., crash)

A lance corporal in North Carolina had a motorcycle that he was storing at a buddy’s house. One day he went over, fired up the bike and went, the report said, “driving around the neighborhood trying to figure out how to ride it.”

Have you, like me, suddenly lost all confidence in the lance corporal’s plan? Was it the “trying to” part? Great minds think alike (I mean me and you, not him). He took a corner too fast, lost control, wrecked the motorcycle, and reaped a bumper crop of road rash on his hands, forearms, chest and knees.

And that’s the trouble with trying to figure out how to ride a motorcycle – it is so easy to figure out how to wreck it first.

In this case, he did learn how to deduct \$5K from the value of a 2005 Kawasaki Ninja ZX10R, but I could have told him that for free.

[Originally published in *October 2014*]

Did you know?

- In FY13, motorcycle fatalities were the single largest category of all Class A Mishaps (20 out of 76)
- These fatal mishaps were 26% of all Class A mishaps, but riders made up less than 8% of the Navy population
- If you ride, you are 15 times more likely to be involved in a Class A mishap than if you drive
- E-4 and E-5 personnel are 41% of the Navy population but have 51% of the motorcycle fatalities (FY06-FY14)
- From FY09-FY14, 60 of 87 fatalities involved first-year riders
- From FY08-FY14, 82% of the fatal wrecks involved sport bikes; 73% of the riders were at fault; 55% were speeding.

Resources on the Naval Safety Center website:

- Training information for riders and mentors
- Checklists for pre-ride and new riders
- Information for Motorcycle Safety Representatives, including ESAMS gouge, sample instructions and best practices



We're Doomed, I Tell You, Doomed!

Lessons learned: Zero

Put on your thinking caps and see if you can detect the common thread in these three reports.

Number one: "On the last ski run of the day, SNM fell and broke his leg. No specific personnel errors."

Number two: "Broken leg while on dirt bike -- member was wearing all proper safety equipment and abiding by the safety regulations."

Number three: "Fractured right hand. accident couldn't be avoided."

The doomed trio included an SKC in Japan (three days in the hospital and another five days off work after this ski trip), an E-5 from a fighter squadron (a day in a hospital and a month of LIMPDU for him), and an AD1 from a patrol squadron (he was doing command PT on an obstacle course when he broke his finger--five weeks of light duty for him).

All of which raises the question: how does anyone survive these activities, if people get hurt for no reason? These reports actually raise this question: are the people who "investigate" these mishaps even trying? I have personally fallen down while skiing on numerous occasions, and the causes were clear: sometimes I was clumsy and inexperienced, sometimes it was late, I was tired and skiing too hard. I have also engaged in PT about five thousand times and my fingers are all intact. Just luck, I guess.

[Originally published April 2007]

Unavoidable? Harrump!

Seems an AD1 from a Navy squadron broke his right hand after falling while doing an obstacle course. The report says, "accident couldn't be avoided."

I have to say that statements such as this one always leave me skeptical. I doubt we are forcing people to do things that are inevitably going to put them on light duty for five weeks. Did every other person on this obstacle course bite the dust at the same point as this Sailor? And if it was unavoidable, why does the same report chalk it up to "lack of attention to detail," hmm? Inquiring minds want to know.

[Originally published February 2008]



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BM2 Marcus Jones, directs a helicopter during flight operations aboard the destroyer USS *Laboon* (DDG 58).
(Navy photo by MC3 Desmond Parks)



Trying to make a rocket



Incredibly enough, our RSOTW is a Marine sergeant who was actually trying to be a rocket scientist. He was, the report says, “experimenting with alcohol,” trying to make an “alcohol-assisted rocket” out of a plastic 16-ounce soda bottle and some isopropyl alcohol. He poked a hole in the lid and lit the alcohol that started leaking out.

Foon! His face was in the second-degree-burn part of the blast zone. Fifteen days of light duty for this guy.

Usually in mishap reports, experiments with alcohol involve people pouring too much of it down their gullets.

[Originally published August 2007]

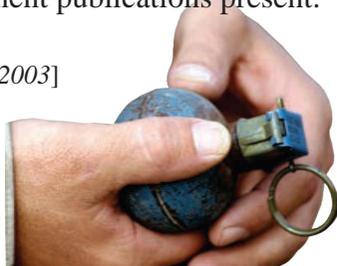
If that’s an “inspection,” I’ll pass

A chief gunner’s mate deployed aboard a CV was inspecting some practice grenades that were going to be used later. He inserted a fuze into the body of one of them. Here comes the part I like. According to the message, “during attempt to understand operation and assembly of grenade, GMC disassembled grenade then pulled pin and released spoon on fuze assembly.”

Now I ask you, of all the things that you shouldn’t try to figure out by taking them apart and putting them together, wouldn’t grenades—even practice grenades—be on the short list? Well, the fuze started getting disconcertingly hot, and before the chief could fling it, it went off in his hand.

Amount of experience that he’d had with this kind of practice grenade: zero. Amount of training he’d had on grenade components: nada. Manuals or other pertinent publications present: none.

[Originally published May 2003]



Oh, here’s a handy target

A lance corporal was out back of his house, shooting a pistol BB gun. He tried to clear the gun, the report said, “and then fired into his hand to see if it was clear.”

Well, I guess that’s one way to find out. Painful, though, plus you have to call your supervisor and ‘fess up and then go to the hospital to get the BB extracted, since there had been one in the chamber. He was awarded some painkillers and a week of light duty, some of which he could have used shopping for a backyard clearing barrel.

[Originally published November 2011]



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media/Posters.aspx](http://www.piblic.navy.mil/comnavsafecen/Pages/media/Posters.aspx)



How not to check the weather

Looking for storm damage during a hurricane

Now that storm video is a staple of network television, we've all gotten used to seeing the raging rivers that have leapt their banks and the gale-force winds threatening to tear down the stoplight. I saw some footage last night showing a tornado that had picked up some cars. The video image had little arrows superimposed to point out the cars so you could tell them from all the other junk that was swirling around.

And that's the great thing about television. I could assess the storm while slouching on my sofa, drinking a cup of tea. When we ride out a hurricane here in the Navy's capital, we listen to the wind and wait.

But a commander figured he'd go out into his yard in mid-storm, while it was raining and pitch dark, with official visibility of ten feet, and winds between 70 and 110 knots, to check for



damage. Found some, too, and real close by—on the bottom on his leg, where his foot and ankle got smacked by a piece of airborne fence.

He got away with a few bruises and contusions. I think he was lucky. Our hurricanes don't usually pick up cars, but they have blown down some giant trees.

[Originally published *March 2006*]

For More Information:

A spectrum of weather-safety resources are available from the National Weather Service at <http://www.weather.gov/safety>. You'll find statistics, information and prevention resources for focus areas including floods, hurricanes, lightning, tornados, heat, cold, winter, wind and rip currents.

Did You Know?

- Americans live in the most severe weather-prone country on Earth.
- Each year, Americans cope with an average of 100,000 thunderstorms (10,000 of which are severe); 5,000 floods; 1,000 tornadoes; and an average of 2 deadly hurricanes.
- This dangerous weather is in addition to winter storms, intense summer heat, high winds, and wild fires.

Oh, yeah that's on the checklist

In our "Say Wha-a-at?" Department, we find an E-4 who was "riding an ATV during hurricane 1 conditions."

The report didn't specify exactly how said conditions factored into his loss of control and subsequent forward gainer with a half twist onto "soft" ground.

For the record, hurricane condition 1 means that the forecast calls for the arrival (within 12 hours) of a tropical storm with at least 50-knot winds. It also means that all preparations for the storm should be complete.

If your local preparations include squeezing in a last-minute ATV ride, they should be revised immediately. It is just possible that the local medics have better things to do than put 12 highly preventable stitches in your knee and 3 more in your elbow.





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10 factors influencing Risk Management

As a safety professional, you can positively shape the risk decision making of your Sailors. Although sailors may identify hazards and understand the outcome, a variety of factors may still influence them to accept more risk than they should. Let's take a look at what can influence risk tolerance and what safety leaders can do to shape those behaviors.

Adapted from "Strategies for Understanding and Addressing Risk Tolerance," Exxon Mobil, 2011. U.S. Navy photos



1 **Overestimating capability (younger people) and experience (role models).** Reflect on your role as a mentor, admit that despite your experience the exposure is still there. Acknowledge skill but reinforce policies and procedures.



2 **Familiarity resulting in complacency.** Encourage Sailors to focus on the task like it's the first time they have done it. How would I teach this to a new person? Stop and think. Draw from knowledge, skill and techniques.



3 **Underestimating seriousness of the outcome.** A hazard could involve a "pinch point" but the outcome actually results in amputation or crushing. Hazard identification should better define the outcome. Get people to ask, "How bad could it really be?" Apply the ABCD process. Teach Sailors worst-case scenarios.



4 **Voluntary actions and being in control.** Key factor in off-duty risk (people are 28 times more likely to be hurt off the job). Overconfidence and false sense of control may lead to underestimating risk. Integrate "stop and think" moments into personal activities. Use checklists to improve situational awareness.



5 **Personal experience with an outcome.** If you've seen a mishap or a near-miss that ended badly, you will be less tolerant of the risk. However, as incident rates improve, fewer leaders will have had these experiences resulting in scepticism. Know what incidents have occurred and point out the consequences. Tell sea stories.



6 **Cost of non-compliance.** Identify the cost of non-compliance and increase where necessary. As the actual or perceived cost increases, the risk tolerance decreases. Remove barriers and reward those who gauge risks and mitigate the factors that increase the potential for error.



7 **Confidence in equipment.** Overconfidence in technology increases risk tolerance. Ensure technical training captures the limits of equipment and engineering. Promote the ABCD process and on-the-spot risk assessment. Make sure Sailors know how to gauge risk. Teach them to ask, "What if it fails?"



8 **Confidence in PPE and rescue.** Relying solely on PPE and rescue efforts increases risk tolerance. Emphasize the limits of protection and rescue measures. Ensure Sailors understand these as "last line of defense" or "not to be relied upon" controls. Provide appropriate ORM and TCRM training.



9 **Potential profit or gain.** Perceived or actual (fiscal, emotional, physical) gains increase or decrease risk tolerance. Remove rewards for risk taking. Eliminate barriers to doing it the right way. Bring these concepts into leadership discussions to increase awareness.



10 **Role models accepting risk.** Leaders' actions influence the mindset, behavior and decision-making abilities of their workers. Identify and address risk-taking leadership (in the appropriate situations). Recognize perceived pressure that could lead to erosion of standards and address immediately.

Kudos to the Friday Funnies

"Your mishap updates brighten my day (the comedic fodder, not the injuries sustained by the individuals in the reports). You have a true gift for delivering such bizarre and potentially sad stories in a way that makes me chuckle. Continue the great work and I will continue to read loyally." -- Jacob Miller, Adult Sports Coordinator, Kings Bay Sports

"I enjoy reading your weekly mishaps report. I'm sorry for the people involved, but you add such a humorous spin that I actually read every word written. Thank you for taking the time and effort to see and write about the humor surrounding these unfortunate incidents."
-- Pat Sanford, civilian, USMC

"You should write a book. You are a master at creating humorous educational, anecdotes of the slapstick variety. I read the choicest bits (today's was the 'Risk-O-Matic app') over my shoulder to my cube mate when they land in my inbox." -- Rosemary Garris, Research Psychologist, Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division

"Just wanted to express my appreciation of your keen sense of humor. I am a huge fan of your summary mishap reporting style considering my background (military and police public affairs)." -- Tammy Van Dame, Director, Corporate Communication, Combat Direction Systems Activity, Dam Neck

"As a 26-year veteran of the Navy and a Navy civilian employee, I have witnessed hundreds of mishaps over the years that could have been avoided if someone said, 'Ya know I just read something like this last Friday.' Sarcasm goes a long ways in fostering information retention. If a single Sailor has that 'Aha!' moment just a second before an 'Oh s...' moment, then the Friday Funnies have served their purpose. Thanks for years of risk-averse behavior." -- Mike Meehan, SUPSHIP Gulf Coast, Pascagoula, MS

"Whoever is the author of those sidesplitting mishap narrative, he should be writing comedy for a living, say for Jon Stewart. He could easily quadruple his salary." -- G. Bruce Copley, PhD, MPH, Advanced Scientific Associate, Epidemiology & Health Surveillance, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc

"I thoroughly enjoy receiving your Summaries of Mishaps every week. They are well-written, concise, and cautionary, with a refreshing and enjoyable splash of humor." -- SSgt. Benjamin Gibson, USAF, Unit Safety Representative, Osan AB, Republic of Korea

"I absolutely love your weekly mishap summary. Most folks understand that, even in tragedy, there is humor and more importantly a lesson to pass on to others. Keep up the great work."
-- Ronald Knight, Safety & Occupational Health Manager, Irwin Army Community Hospital, Fort Riley, Kansas

"Am a big fan of your reports and have always envied our sister service, the Navy, for having a better sense of humor in its approach to mishap prevention publications since I was first exposed to your Friday Funnies decades ago. I never am able to light a grill, water heater, stove, lantern without thinking 'Avoid the Foon!'"
-- Col. Walter Isenhour, USAF, Commander, 89th Maintenance Group, Joint Base Andrews, MD