

DECISIONS

FALL / WINTER 2013



Mission Readiness

TRAINING, PROCEDURES, RESOURCES, AND
CHECKLISTS ARE KEY TO PREPAREDNESS

DECISIONS

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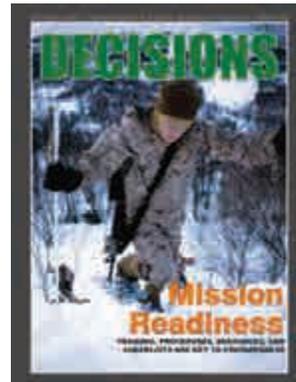
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COVER PHOTO: Sgt. Ryan H. Wright, squad leader for 3rd Platoon, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine division, practices walking uphill in snowshoes at the Allied Training Center in Norway. U. S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Marcin Platek

BACK COVER: Naval Safety Center employee, Henry Gruden, awaits clearance on the ski slopes of Heavenly in South Lake Tahoe, NV. Photo by Kyle Morton

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

Need material for your next safety standdown or holiday safety brief? Browse our collection of resources to complement your activities.

- Posters for download
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and risk-and-resource management strategies. Visit http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/pages/media/submit_subscribe.aspx#submit or send your draft to safe-decisions@navy.mil.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Are You Ready?

Mission readiness — most of us think of military events when we hear this phrase. We may not always think of our daily tasks as “mission.” But every day each one of us prepares for something; sometimes we even do it the night before. Whether it’s for work or a personal activity, we prepare physically and mentally.

While things can change with little or no warning, planning ahead and being prepared can alleviate a great deal of stress and increase awareness. Resources to help improve success in accomplishing a task, or the mission, are available in many shapes and form. Following policies and procedures ensures we don’t miss a step. Writing a list or using a checklist helps us remember. Using automated reminders (such as alarm clocks or headlights) helps us to be attentive. Shipmates and safety briefs give us information. Most of all, knowledge and skill allow us to get the right mindset and attitude to get the job done.

In this issue, our contributing writers give us a selection of articles that address mission readiness. You’ll read about the new hazard classification and labeling system (“The Purple Book”), an omitted process during routine ordnance check (“Missing a Step Puts Marines in Harm’s Way”), preparing for a physical challenge after a DUI-related crash (“Moving Forward: Racing Whitney”), getting the right training and education in the classroom or online (“Fleet Safety Program Training: Shifting the Paradigm”), and much more to help you take away a best practice or strategy.

We hope these articles help you prepare for similar tasks or provide insight to future endeavors. Whatever you do — at work, home or outdoors — use the right resources to get the task (or mission) done without any setback.

As always, we appreciate your submissions and look forward to your personal stories and safety articles for the next issue (spring/summer 2014). You can visit us online (see “On the Web Now,” this page) to download individual articles or the PDF version of this issue.

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One Man's Dedication a True Model for Safety

By Denise Emsley

Steven Christiansen, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii's Environmental Services Branch chief, is the recent recipient of the command's Safety Star award. The annual award recognizes an individual who has clearly made safety a priority in all they do.

"Steve demonstrated an exceptional commitment to safety in the workplace during 2012 and is recognized as a true role model for safety," said Emric Katada, NAVFAC Hawaii safety director. "He manages and motivates a great team that performs high-risk work every day. Most people don't even realize this work is being done or take it for granted. Despite his heavy workload, Steve always supports our safety office, command safety initiatives, and our ultimate goal of 'Beyond Zero Mishaps' position."

Christiansen is responsible for supervising and directing more than 80 professional and trade personnel, both civilian and enlisted military, within the Environmental Services Branch of NAVFAC Hawaii. He oversees branch sections including the Navy laboratory; hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal; asbestos and lead-based paint remediation; and pest management. These are industrial operations and the daily work in each section has unique inherent safety risks.

All of Christiansen's employees are aware of his constant reminder of "safety first." He continuously sets the example through regularly emphasizing the use of the NAVFAC Safety Handbook, providing basic and continuing safety training, making frequent job-site visits and underscoring the use of operational risk management (ORM).

"ORM is not just another catchy safety buzz word or program," said Christiansen. "It is a valuable tool that should be used in all aspects of our life. If followed, the five simple steps will allow us to make the best decisions at home and work resulting in a healthier and happier life."

In addition, the NAVFAC Hawaii safety office representative is a fully integrated member of the environmental division team. Christiansen's efforts ensure all employees understand that safety is first priority. He has provided a model approach to safety that has inspired all supervisory members of the environmental division and produced an enviable safety record for the division.

.....
Ms. Emsley is the public affairs officer at NAVFAC Hawaii.

The Purple Book

OSHA'S HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD PUBLICATION GETS A FACE LIFT.

By Cindy Chester

A new system, informally referred to as the “Purple Book,” will soon provide chemical manufacturers, handlers and users a standardized way to classify hazards and label hazardous materials.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has introduced the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for Hazard Communication. OSHA has adopted this concept for their Hazard Communication Standard (1910.1200). The standard has not changed, but the hazard classification and labeling of hazardous material will be made uniform. Material Safety Data Sheets will be replaced with standardized Safety Data Sheets (SDS), which will make it easier to locate required information about hazardous chemicals.

The Purple Book is the GHS document that establishes the agreed-upon hazard classification and communication provisions with information on how to apply the system. It provides a mechanism to meet the basic requirements of any hazard communication system. First, to decide if the chemicals that personnel work with or produce are hazardous. Second, to prepare a label and/or locate a safety data sheet.

WHO'S AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE?

The system is to be used by chemical manufacturing, importing and/or distribution companies to classify the hazards associated with chemicals in their products. Labels will be simplified with specific and standardized hazard warnings. The scope of the GHS covers all hazardous chemical substances, dilute solutions, and mixtures. Pharmaceuticals, food additives, cosmetics and pesticide residues in food will not be covered at the point of consumer/end use, but will be covered where

workers may be exposed and in transport.

GHS training is required by December 1, 2013, because employees and employers will begin to see the new labels and SDS sheets on the hazardous chemicals in their workplace. It is important that the training be conducted so that employers and employees will understand the changes and benefits of the new labeling and SDS hazard communication format. Employers are responsible for making sure employees are trained on physical hazards, health hazards, emergency procedures, PPE, and the employer's labeling system.

STANDARDIZED FORMAT & INFORMATION

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard is designed to ensure that information about chemical hazards and protective measures are disseminated to all workers. It defines hazards and provides specific criteria for classification of hazards and mixtures to ensure manufacturer consistency and make SDS and labels more accurate. Standardized format and information requirements on SDS will make it easier for the end user to identify hazards and necessary precautions.

For labeling purposes, the GHS signal words are “Danger” or “Warning” to inform the user of the severity of hazard. The use of just two signal words simplifies warnings and labels.

Hazard Statements have been standardized and are used on labels for products that have more than one hazard, to give the chemical user additional information about the hazard that is depicted in the pictogram. For example, the “Flame” pictogram would be used on a label for a flammable liquid. The hazard statement for that flammable liquid may be “Keep away from fire, sparks, and heated surfaces”.



Pictograms have been standardized to convey information about health, physical and environmental hazards. OSHA has included nine authorized pictograms in the revised Hazard Communication Standard.

The Navy and Marine Corps have created some train-the-trainer tools on our OSH Web page to assist with training. All Navy and Marine Corps organizations must conduct awareness training by Dec. 31, 2013. We will update our organization's hazard communication programs and training to reflect the Globally Harmonized System. Until Dec. 1, 2015, there will be a transition period where every chemical we receive can have either the current hazardous chemical label and MSDS or the new GHS label and SDS. Updates to the Navy and Marine Corps Instructions/Orders and guidance on alternative workplace labeling to meet GHS compliance is underway. By June 2016, all Navy and Marine Corps organizations must be in full compliance.

Visit the GHS Toolbox at <http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/pages/osh/GHS.aspx>

Ms. Chester is a safety and occupational health specialist in the Shore Safety Programs Directorate, Naval Safety Center.

PHASE-IN PERIOD FOR GHS INTO HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD



Effective Completion Date	Requirement(s)	Who
Dec. 1, 2013	Train employees on the new label elements and SDS format	Employers
June 1, 2015	Comply with all modified provisions of this final rule, except:	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers
Dec. 1, 2015	Distributors may ship products labeled by manufacturers under the old system until Dec. 1, 2015.	
June 1, 2016	Update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication program as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards.	Employers
Transition Period	Comply with either 29 CFR 1910.1200 (this final standard), or the current standard, or both.	All chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers

Missing a Step Puts Marines in Harm's Way



Photo by GySgt Daniel Devine, USMC

By Sgt. Justin F. Kenney and Cpl. Derrick A. Ybarra

As with all military aviation operations, attention to detail and strict adherence to procedures is absolutely necessary. This is especially true for high-tempo, combat-support operations in austere environments. The following events dramatize the importance of following every step in publications and checklists. Although the incident was serious, it could have been catastrophic if not for a multi-layered precautions for ordnance procedures.

On Aug. 6, 2013, aboard Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, HMLA-167 had a section of two AH-1W Super Cobras scheduled to launch to a nearby Forward Operating Base. Both aircraft took off, but one had issues with a 20 mm cannon shortly after departure, so it

returned to base. The pilots landed and ordies de-armed the aircraft. The pilots rolled to the back-up aircraft and continued their mission.

As the aircraft were returning to base, Maintenance Control announced over the radio that one of the AH-1Ws in the returning section had a 20 mm cannon that would not fire. Anticipating their arrival, the ordnance line team assembled and prepared to de-arm both aircraft. Knowing that the ordnance maintenance team would be working on the gun “No Fire” discrepancy, Maintenance Control advised the team to download all remaining rounds from the linkless feed and gun systems. After both aircraft were de-armed and shut down, the team began the download, supervised by the quality assurance safety observer (QASO). The QASO then visually inspected the gun and feed chute for any



Photo Illustration by John W. Williams

After clearing the area immediately forward of the aircraft and incorrectly visually inspecting the feed-chute, feeder, and gun for any remaining rounds, the ordnance maintenance team QASO started to duplicate the discrepancy.

obvious mechanical issues that might have caused the discrepancy.

Finding no obvious problems, the QASO determined the system to be mechanically sound. The QASO then discussed the discrepancy with the ordnance maintenance team's QASO, seeking potential causes. They decided that the discrepancy stemmed from something electrical. They agreed that the next step should consist of replacing the firing volts cable, which splits into two plugs — one plug provides voltage to the feeder and the other provides voltage to the gun to fire the rounds.

Before retrieving the replacement cable, both QASOs disconnected the linkless feed chute from the ammo can end, the booster motor cable and all three ends of the firing volts cable. They retrieved the new firing volts cable, and the ordnance maintenance team headed back out to the aircraft to begin troubleshooting. With a different section of aircraft inbound and requiring de-arm, the ordnance line team headed to the opposite end of the ramp in order to de-arm the weapons of the returning section.

While the ordnance line crew was taking care of the returning aircraft, the ordnance maintenance team proceeded with troubleshooting the gun "No Fire" discrepancy. After clearing the area immediately forward of the aircraft and incorrectly visually inspecting the feed-chute, feeder, and gun for any remaining rounds, the ordnance maintenance team QASO started to duplicate the discrepancy. Thinking that the aircraft had been downloaded and that the firing volts cable had been disconnected, the QASO began to isolate the electrical problem. This process included plugging in the feeder to verify whether or not the gun would cycle with both burst and sustained trigger pulls.

Shortly after leaving to de-arm the other section, the ordnance line team heard a rapid series of loud bangs coming from the direction of the ongoing troubleshooting. It was immediately apparent that something had gone wrong. The ordnance line team finished de-arming a UH-1Y Huey and headed toward the ordnance maintenance team. When they arrived, they observed nine 20 mm semi-armor piercing high explosive incendiary (SAPHEI) cartridge casings lying



beneath the gun along with a large hole in the HESCO barrier positioned approximately 30 feet directly in front of the aircraft. Within seconds, Marines swarmed to the site, fearing someone had been injured. Because required safety backstops were in place, and the area forward of the gun was properly cleared, there were no injuries caused by this procedural error.

It turned out that the ordnance line crew had missed an important step in the checklist: cycling a dummy round through the entire feed chute and gun system. It is suspected that the linkless feed system had a gap between rounds in the feed chute, possibly created by loading rounds too quickly during ammunition storage unit loading. Due to the gap, and during the download process, the ordnance line crew assumed they had reached the last round but in reality had left rounds in the feed chute.

Both QASOs missed the rounds during their visual inspection because the area above the turret is difficult to visually inspect. The checklist specifically directs that a dummy round be cycled through the feed chute, through the feeder and through the gun, partly because of the difficulty of the visual inspection. If this step had been followed, the system would have been clear of all ammunition. Instead, this step was skipped in its entirety.

The ordnance line crew could have avoided the incident by following established downloading and troubleshooting procedures. However, per NAVAIR 01-H1AAC-75-17-1 (Checklist, AH-1W 20 MM Gun Linkless Feed System), the crew did not insert one dummy round in the feed chute on the ammunition storage end unit, did not connect the feed chute to the feeder and did not rotate the barrels until the dummy round cleared the system and exited the gun. Investigators determined this omission to be the causal factor of the incident. The biggest lesson learned from this incident is using a checklist minimizes the potential for error.

Sgt. Kenney and Cpl. Ybarra are with HMLA-167 Ordnance Line Crew.

Editor's Note: Although this event took place in the aviation community, the emphasis on adhering to procedures applies to all aspects of DON operations.

New Risk Matrix

This familiar card has been around a long time, but this new version addresses a major change to the way we look at risk management. It's the **MISSION** and how severity and probability impacts the accomplishment of it.

Risk Assessment Matrix		PROBABILITY			
		Frequency of Occurrence Over Time			
		A Rare	B Probable	C May	D Unlikely
SEVERITY	I Loss of Mission Capability, Unit Readiness, Afloat, Fatality	1	1	2	3
	II Significantly Degraded Mission Capability or Unit Readiness, Severe Injury or Damage	1	2	3	4
	III Degraded Mission Capability or Unit Readiness, Minor Injury or Damage	2	3	4	5
	IV Little or No Impact to Mission Capability or Unit Readiness, Minimal Injury or Damage	3	4	5	5

Risk Assessment Codes
1 - Critical 2 - Serious 3 - Moderate 4 - Minor 5 - Negligible

The desired risk management behavior is that every member of the command, from the most junior E-1 to the CO, exercises risk management in everything they do both on and off duty.

ORM
on the web

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



TRAINING

Marine Corps Ground Mishap Investigation Course

A-493-0078 Equivalent

40 HOURS OF ADVANCED MISHAP INVESTIGATION INSTRUCTION

This five-day course uses a case study that focuses on root-cause analysis and report-writing techniques. Classes held at Fort Rucker integrates a crash dynamics lab to practice evidence collection.

COURSE TOPICS

Background

- Introduction
- Legal Aspects of Mishap Investigation
- Types of Investigations
- Types of Investigation Boards
- Reporting & Recordkeeping requirements

Investigation Techniques

- Preparation
- Mishap Site Management
- Evidence Collection
- Interviewing Techniques
- Reconstruction Techniques
- Analytical Tools & Techniques
 - DoD HFACS
- Developing Conclusions & Recommendations
- Safety Investigation Report (SIREP) Writing
- SIB Executive Summary Briefing

"I learned more about safety (ORM and mishap investigation) than I ever learned in 12 years of active duty service."

"The part of this course I enjoyed most was learning DoD HFACS. It not only opened my eyes to understanding why mishaps really occur, but I can use this tool to be a better leader and improve how my command views the risk management program."

MOBILE TRAINING COURSE: CMC (Safety Division) provides mobile training opportunities without the aid of an interactive crash dynamics lab. Mobile training course dates are dependent upon instructor availability. Call for details and travel requirements.

FORT RUCKER: Course dates are in conjunction with the 15-week Joint Services Safety & Occupational Health Training Program (CP-12). Organizations are responsible for funding student travel. Call for seat availability, funding, and travel details.

The Marine Corps Ground Mishap Investigation course was developed in 2011 by CMC, Safety Division's "Team Rucker." It serves to aid ground safety officers (GSO) and GS-0018 safety specialists in closing a skills gap. The course fulfills the requirements set forth in MCO 5100.29B and NAVMC 5100.8. This course is the only A-493-0078 equivalent and provides 40 hours of advanced mishap investigation instruction beyond the introductory class offered in the ground safety for Marines (GSM) course.

The primary training location is at Fort Rucker, Ala., which capitalizes on an interactive training site (Crash Dynamics Lab) that provides students the opportunity to practice evidence collection and interviewing techniques.



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A Slice of Finger

“I then followed the blood trail back to where she had been working with other Marines and gave them an earful about wearing their PPE.”

By Gunnery Sgt. Amber Allison

I was in Iraq working out of a makeshift shop when a Marine walked up, holding one of her hands. She calmly waited until I finished speaking to another Marine, then uncupped her hands. Blood began forming a sizable puddle in the sand. I asked her what happened as I poured water on the wound to get a better look. That's when I saw the tendon in her finger and heard her say "I was banding." That was enough for me; I put her in the platoon vehicle and drove straight to the branch clinic.

I have to give this young Marine credit; she stayed calm and somewhat poised. Her composure disappeared when medical staffers tried to give her a shot to deaden her finger. I had to hold her down. She was lucky that she did not sever her tendon and needed just six stitches. It could easily have been much worse.

I went back to my makeshift shop to investigate the source of her injury. I dug into our Quadcon (safety gear container) and found all the required PPE for this type of preventable injury. I then followed the blood trail back to where she had been working with other Marines and gave them an earful about wearing their PPE. I don't think that any of them realized that we were actually a micrometer

from having to send a Marine home from a deployment when we were already short-staffed.

They grumbled as they put on the gloves and one of them actually turned to me and asked, “Do I have to wear this face shield if I’m wearing sunglasses?” Crossing my arms angrily, I barked, “Yes!” I watched them for a few minutes to ensure they knew how serious I was. Just as I was ready to walk away, the banding slipped and snapped into that Marine’s face shield making him jump back. All I could say as I walked away was, “And now you know why!”

When looking for a black-and-white answer to what gear to issue during palletizing projects, NAVSEA OP 5 is a little vaguer than NAVSEA OP 4. NAVSEA OP 5 refers to local SOPs and OPNAVINST 5100.23, which states “Employees shall wear approved eye and/or eye and face

protection when there is a reasonable probability that wearing such equipment will prevent injury.”

However, according to NAVSEA OP 4, page 4-4, paragraph 4-6.2 “Face shields/eye protection and leather palm gloves shall be worn when installing or removing steel strapping.”

It is a Navy and Marine Corps requirement to provide Sailors, Marines or other employees with proper PPE for installing or removing steel strapping. Supervisors must enforce the wear of such equipment and workers must wear the safety gear from the start of the operation to the end. Don’t wait for a mishap to happen.

Gunnery Sgt. Allison worked as a weapons analyst in the Shore/ Ground Safety Programs Directorate, Naval Safety Center.

Marine Reservists band ammunition during their two-week annual training at Crane Army Ammunition Activity this summer under the watchful eye of Army civilians. The reservists are a part of an ammunition company with the 4th Supply Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group out of Greenville, S.C. *Photo by Thomas Peske*



Who's Laughing Now?

By Gunnery Sgt. Amber Allison

A few years back I was filling a billet as a group ammo chief and assigned as the platoon sergeant for the shop where I worked. I took both jobs very seriously and made sure that everything was done by the book. I inspected all my armories to ensure that, aside from security, both live and dummy rounds were accounted for and stored properly.

I got to know the armorers pretty well. At least I thought I could tell which ones were possible trouble.

On a cold morning in February, while half the platoon was in the pool house with me for swim qualifications, I got an urgent phone call. All I could hear was an out-of-breath Marine telling me to come to the armory because someone had been shot.

I told him to call 911, then I hung up. Knowing my S-4 Chief could get there more quickly, I called him to go investigate. A million thoughts ran through my head about what could have happened. I needed to move quickly.

Here's what had happened. An armorer whom I believed to be one of my more trustworthy Marines had decided to function check his weapon with the dummy rounds I had stored in the safe. Instead of using





Photo Illustration by John W. Williams

an empty magazine, he thought it would be okay to put the dummy rounds on top of the live rounds in a magazine he already had out for security purposes. He then pointed the weapon at a new Marine in the armory and pulled the trigger. He thought it was hilarious to see that new Marine jump, scream like a girl and nearly have a heart attack.

After a good laugh he decided to take the dummy rounds out and put them away. But instead of releasing the magazine and emptying the rounds from the magazine, he decided to just rack the weapon back a few more times so the rounds would be naturally extracted. He lost count of how many dummy rounds he had put in the magazine. He racked the weapon one too many times and shot himself in the left hand.

To make matters worse the bullet ricocheted off the concrete floor and hit a .50 caliber machine gun in the side near the charging handle, welding itself to the gun and making it inoperable.

I had to write up an expenditure report and file charges for destruction of government property, assault, and dereliction of duty. Meanwhile, the Marine got four stitches to close up the hole in his hand.

I had mixed feelings at his court martial, thinking of all the good he had done for the battalion. But this one act of recklessness erased all that. In the end he spent 60 days in the brig, was busted to private and lost a half-month's pay for two months. I also had to de-certify him in the Arms, Ammunitions and Explosives Program; he could no longer do his job. When he got out of the brig, he had to finish his contract as a clerk answering phones in the S-4 shop.

HE THOUGHT IT WAS HILARIOUS TO SEE THAT NEW MARINE JUMP, SCREAM LIKE A GIRL AND NEARLY HAVE A HEART ATTACK.

Fleet Safety Program Training: Shifting the Paradigm

Special from the Naval Safety and Environmental Training Center

The benefits of global online training when compared to “travel to” training are huge, both in direct travel cost avoidance and in returned productivity days. Naval Safety and Environmental Training Center (NAVSAFENVTRACEN), the leader in naval occupational health and environmental training, has set new Navy benchmarks with its Global Online brand of distance learning (DL). Global Online includes live instructors (synchronous) and individual assignments (asynchronous) to provide a blended training approach.

Global Online – Flank Three Ahead

Global Online leverages two cloud-based environments: Defense Connect Online (DCO), hosted by Defense Information System Services, and Sakai, hosted by Naval Postgraduate School. Students across the globe now have an opportunity to keep their luggage in the closet and enjoy extra time in home port, since Global Online training is available from practically any computer (home, internet café, office, computer resource center).

Recently, NAVSAFENVTRACEN added the OPNAV-required Safety Programs Afloat (SPA) and Aviation Safety Specialist (AVSS) courses to its Global Online course offerings, providing virtual seats for thousands of students annually. This directly translates to thousands of productivity days returned to the Fleet, and well over \$1 million annually in travel cost avoidance. That buys a lot of fuel, maintenance and parts. For the Sailor this means more time in homeport with family and friends.

Live Engagement

Global Online is not the dull page-turner that many associate with Navy online training. In contrast, Global Online students meet online with the instructor in engaging discussion and presentation, reaping the full benefit of a live and seasoned instructor with years of experience. The asynchronous or individual component of the training, offers the student challenging assignments that require focused research and problem solving, based on real-world context.

The goal is to add a high level of student-centric engagement over and beyond what is available through video tele-training or even some resident courses. The school has created and employed a checklist of engagement criteria that is applied to each Global Online course.

“Sakai and DCO offer tools for the instructor to create a virtual canvas of unique navigation, assignments and student participation.”

— Al Melcher, Learning Standards Officer

Shifting Paradigms

Global Online pushes against old paradigms and calls for leadership commitment. We live in the age of information exchange where people can conveniently access their web browser to acquire information, from accessing YouTube to get that quick “how to” for that new digital camera, to taking an online course from a university in Colorado, while at home in Virginia. These use-cases are common activities today.

“As our instructors gain experience and comfort with the different virtual tools and uses, we expect the level of student engagement to only increase.”

— Cmdr. Greg Cook,

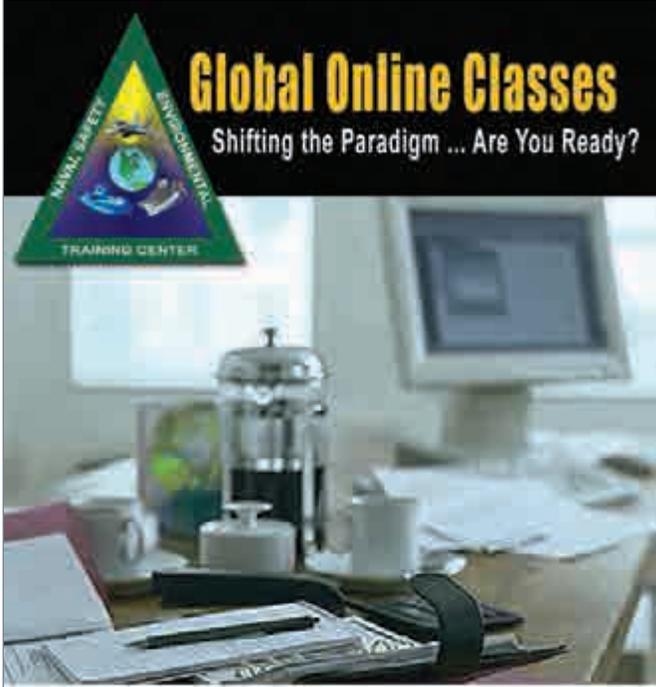
Commanding Officer, NAVSAFENVTRACEN

However, for the fleet Sailor, taking a Global Online course (so they can do their jobs) can be a challenge. Ships are difficult places to take training—access to ship’s computer equipment is limited, bandwidth can be poor and the potential frequent interruptions from shipmates can be a pain. Couple this with leadership that may look at online training as something done on one’s own time, or where one can be supervised or observed, and we begin to understand the challenges facing the fleet Sailor.

Global Online courses can be taken from practically any computer, including one’s personal home device. If that is the best environment for a Sailor to take the training, then make it happen, send them home to take the course, or to a computer resource center, library or even a café.

We trust our men and women to carry out critical operations and maintenance every day that can impact our very lives. We should be able to trust them to take a course, and let the challenge come from within the course content, not the administrative burden of where and how to take the course.

For more on Global Online training, and course and training information, visit NAVSAFENVTRACEN at <http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/navsafenvtracen/pages/default.aspx>.



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Global online courses meet OPNAVINST 5100.23, 5090.1C and 5100.19 requirements.

POWERED BY Sakai DCO

Campaign for Readiness

Group Order promotes awareness for this Hawaii-based Marine unit and its subordinates. Everyone is engaged.

By Evelyn Odango

Reckless behavior can alter the course of any individual's life. For a Marine force that must be able to provide combat-ready, expeditionary, aviation assets for short-notice, worldwide deployment, reckless acts degrade the mission.

Marine Aircraft Group 24 (MAG-24), one of the five subordinate units under 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, is serious about force preservation. So serious, in fact, that Commanding Officer Col. Paul A. Fortunato issued Marine Corps Group Order 5101.1 to combat alcohol-related incidents. The Order is multi-faceted in its approach, blending aspects of several Marine Corps programs and MAG-24 unique programs into a consolidated campaign. MAG-24 and its subordinate commands began implementing the Alcohol-Related Incidents and Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol (ARI/DUI) Prevention campaign in February.

The campaign addresses the readiness impacts of irresponsible drinking, as well as personal troubles (financial, domestic violence, sexual assault) fueled by reckless alcohol consumption. The programs outlined in the campaign serve as a tool kit of best practices for liberty planning, safe driving and responsible drinking habits.

The ARI/DUI campaign consists of action items or programs akin to a playbook. It prepares leaders and service members to ensure that they are ready when duty calls. In the heart of its concept is integration. That means persistent information is unavoidable (they're everywhere), tools are available, and rewards are given to those who are eligible.

Everyone knows about the campaign—from initiatives to incentives. Marines and Sailors checking into the command meet Ground Safety Officer Gunnery Sgt. Jeremy Miller. He makes sure he gets to do a one-on-one before they meet their PowerPoint quota.

"I prefer having face-time with each Sailor and Marine because I can look them in the eye and tell them

that this [safety campaign] is serious," said Miller. "It's also an opportunity for me to create a dialogue with them."

Miller coordinates the DASH program (an evolution of the national fee-based Arrive Alive program) for MAG-24. This program gives Marines and Sailors a cab ride from and to anywhere on the island. Promising full anonymity, the program has proven to be successful, according to Miller. He is the only one who knows the names of members using the service, and he coordinates payments for the invoices received from the cab company.

Miller monitors the program's success by posting a usage/participation survey in the Plan of the Week (how many people use the DASH Card program and the names of the liberty lottery winners). He also relies on staff OICs to brief their personnel on what's acceptable and what is not. He emphasizes, though, that the program should not be used as the primary means of transportation. It should be used only as a safety net. MAG-24 personnel can also use the free shuttle service provided by the base.

Designated drivers and a viable back-up plan are encouraged for personnel planning on consuming alcohol. Those who plan accordingly and are smart about their decision-making reap the rewards of the ARI/DUI Campaign.

Incentives are among the most proven motivators of all times. MAG-24 leaders know the value of a day off for their Marines and Sailors. Liberty days are given to deserving commands and individuals (see "Campaign Highlights," on page 18).

In terms of behavior, command expectations are high. Every Marine and Sailor must intervene at the first sign of reckless behavior. Leaders must set a positive example and mentor their personnel. So far, the program seems to carry a lot of weight.

Safety Director Maj. Chad Bignell, who oversees the campaign for MAG-24, has seen major improvements in the off-duty risk-management culture.

“Between FY11 and FY13, we are on track to decrease DUIs by more than 30 percent,” said Bignell. “As it stands now MAG-24 has three of our five units with more than 200 DUI free days; one of those units has well over 500 DUI free days.”

Bignell admits there’s work still to be done. Between February and June, the command has had one DUI incident.

“We want to instill in every Marine and Sailor attached to MAG-24 [and subordinate commands] that we are serious about fostering an involved leadership climate,” said Bignell. “We look to our mentors—the ones I call the ‘grass roots guys’ to keep watch over their people. These are the guys that know their personnel better than anyone.”

Leveraging the Marine Corps Mentoring Program (MCO 1500.58), this person-to-person intrusive leadership has engaged the unit’s nearly 1,500 men and women. Command leaders and key personnel (safety

officer, chaplain, OICs and section chiefs) work with the Marine Corps Force Preservation Council to identify at-risk personnel. The group looks at stressors—personal, professional, medical, financial, legal—that could impact their Marines and Sailors.

Maintaining readiness is MAG-24’s top priority. Bignell and the Safety Department focus on the preservation aspect. “We continually develop, refine, and implement programs and initiatives. We examine what works and what we need to improve upon,” said Bignell, who has seen a more overt involvement from leadership and increased participation from Marines and Sailors. “By linking everyone to the same cause, we foster a safety-conscious command climate. We accomplish the mission.”

Editor’s Note: MAG-24 is based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Its subordinate commands include HMH-463, HMLA-367, MALS-24, and MWSD-24.

DUI-Free Days (as of June 13, 2013)

MAG-24 PSD	263
HMH-463	132
HMLA-367	151
MALS-24	33*
MWSD-24	498

**MALS-24 ended with 414 DUI-free days on May 12. Related story on page 20.*

MAG-24 Demographics

1,492 Personnel	
Female	9%
Male	91%
Under 21	15%
22-35	73%
36-40	7%
Over 50	5%

Information about the campaign and the command’s performance is visible throughout the MAG community. The ground safety information board (top) and roadside signs are updated monthly. Information boards are located throughout both work and living spaces.

Photo courtesy of MAG-24 Safety Department



ARI/DUI CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

► SKIT

During formation, the ground safety officer pulls individuals from formation. This continues until there's a small group of people left. The individuals taken out of formation represent those who act recklessly. The skit shows how their behavior can impact their readiness.

► SIGNS

During the month of April, gravestones were placed next to the monthly ARI/DUI awareness sign.

► PERSONAL STORIES

Personnel who have been involved in or affected by alcohol-related incidents or drunk driving share their stories and experiences.

► "RUM AND VODKA" SHOW

The base held a two-day safety standdown where more than 300 Marines and Sailors watch a one-man monologue that creates awareness of social health issues.

► PRE-LIBERTY AND LIBERTY ACTIONS

In addition to safety briefings before a liberty period, every Marine and Sailor is required to carry

a variety of information cards, contact lists, and transportation resources (among these resources is the DASH card).

► 72- AND 96-HOUR LIBERTY

An individual MAG unit gets 72 hours of liberty for 72 DUI-free consecutive days. The entire MAG gets 96 hours if all units maintain 96 DUI-free consecutive days.

► 72-HOUR LIBERTY LOTTERY

Those who have successfully used or acted as designated drivers get a chance to win a 72-hour liberty lottery. One to three names are drawn each month.

► INFORMATION BOARDS

Updated monthly to reflect a "surround sound" approach, information boards are in and around unit work paces and living spaces. Posted on these boards are ground safety resources, uniform victim advocate and substance abuse programs, and alcohol deglamorization posters from the "That Guy" campaign. Roadside prevention awareness signs are visible and posted monthly.

ONLINE RESOURCES

CMC Safety Division

► <http://www.safety.marines.mil/>

Semper Ride (Motorcycle Safety)

► <https://www.mccdc.usmc.mil/Motorcyclesafety/>

► <http://www.facebook.com/SemperRide1>

"That Guy" Program (Alcohol Deglamorization)

► <http://www.thatguy.com>

U.S. Marine Corps Ground Climate Assessment Survey System

► <https://www.semperfisurveys.org/>



Simple Measures Go a Long Way

By Lt. Nathan Ferree, HSL-49

Responsible driving and motorcycle riding begin within the first 30 seconds from either getting in the car or on a motorcycle. Ensuring a driver and passengers have their seat belts fastened or a rider has completed a periodic motorcycle inspection is key to saving lives.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety device for preventing death and injury.

This is why the “Scorpions” at HSL-49, stationed at Naval Base Coronado, Calif., do periodic and random seat belt checks to ensure squadron Sailors are buckled up. During a recent random check, 140 of the 146 Sailors stopped by the safety team were buckled up. That means HSL-49 may have saved six lives. This simple measure is one way HSL-49 promotes off-duty safety and keeps Sailors safe in their automobiles.

Quarterly motorcycle rides are helping to raise safety awareness in the command as well. Rides begin with a refresher motorcycle inspection using the T-CLOCS checklist and end with a 30-minute motorcycle ride for training, experience, and proficiency. Motorcycle safety begins with periodic and relevant training, as it saves lives.

As an additional measure, during a recent HSL-49 “Strategic Pause,” the commanding officer



Top photo: TCLOCS checklist being used to ensure motorcycle safety prior to an HSL-49 ride. Above: A notional \$142 seat-belt ticket being issued to a command Sailor at HSL-49. *Photos courtesy of the author*

encouraged and emphasized off-duty safety by establishing an incentive program: Zero off-duty injuries for 90 days will earn one command day off.

As most supervisors know, one off-duty injury often impacts

a squadron or department much more than one work day. Active leadership and engagement with Sailors is making responsible driving and riding a priority.

.....
Lt. Ferree is HSL-49's aviation safety officer.

Will You **Make** and **Keep** the Promise?

By Sgt. Ian Insley, MALS-24

For a unit of more than 700 Marines and Sailors, reaching over 400 consecutive days without a DUI is not an easy feat. The Marines and Sailors of Marine Aviation Logistics 24 (MALS-24) Squadron reached this milestone through proper risk management, mentorship, and being accountable to each other.

Our commander, Lt. Col. Edwin Rich, has made a promise to us, and asked for one in return. "I promise not to do anything that embarrasses the Warrior Ohana, Marine Corps or Navy. Will you make the same promise?" He holds us accountable. When one of us breaks it, we apologize to the unit. This promise

resonates within our unit. Ask members in our unit about their reasons not to drink and drive; not breaking the promise is one of them.

We reached our 400-plus days of DUI-free streak because everyone in the command had an integral part in this success. Small-unit leaders reviewed liberty plans, assessed risks, and advised Marines and Sailors on their decisions. Through the MALS-24 Liberty Accident Reduction Program (LARP), Marines and Sailors shared their weekend plans with their mentors. Together, they assessed the risks and set up measures to reduce those risks.

LARP provides forms that are completed weekly for E-5 and below, as well as by all hands prior to long weekends or leave periods. Personnel notify their



U.S. Navy Photo

mentors when plans change, allowing a chance for on-the-spot risk management and guidance. The keys to this portion of the MALS-24 DUI Prevention Campaign are honesty and integrity. Mentors develop strong professional relationships with their personnel, ensuring the success of these plans.

Proper planning of off-duty events eliminates a large majority of risk of an incident; however, plans could break down. There are multiple programs in place at MALS-24 to help Marines and Sailors if their plans fail.

On May 12, MALS-24 Warriors' DUI-free streak ended at 414 days, but in the bigger scheme of things, our program isn't about numbers. We are not too concerned with setting records for consecutive DUI-free days; we want to ensure that everyone makes it home.

While at a going-away party for another Warrior early in May, a second class petty officer tried to drive home after drinking. Several Warriors stepped in to prevent him from driving. They talked to him, even yelled at times. They eventually convinced him that he needed to sleep it off at a friend's house.

One of our sergeants took the petty officer to his house, two miles from the party. The sergeant went to bed after he thought the petty officer had settled in. However, once the sergeant had fallen asleep, the petty officer left the house and walked back to the house where the party had been and where his vehicle was parked. Other members of the unit, who were also at the party, spotted the Sailor leaving in his vehicle.

Left with no other options to prevent an incident, MALS-24 personnel reported the Sailor to the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Provost Marshall's Office. The Sailor had driven 1.5 miles before base security stopped him at the front gate, administered field sobriety tests, and subsequently arrested him for operating a vehicle under the influence.

Following this incident the commanding officer held a squadron formation, where the Sailor addressed the entire unit. He apologized for his actions and for breaking his promise to us. A DUI Taskforce met to hotwash the incident.

As a result, new programs and policies are being developed to ensure that our Marines and Sailors are provided solid alternatives to drinking and driving through proper planning, assessment, and contingencies.

"The measure of a unit comes from whether they spiral out of control [after an incident] or pick themselves up and keep marching," said Sgt. Maj. Vincent Santiago, the MALS-24 Sergeant Major. "MALS-24 has, and will continue, to keep marching. We are a proud unit that looks forward to another 400-plus consecutive days DUI-free streak."

.....
Sgt. Insley is the MALS-24 ground safety officer.

MALS-24 Programs and Incentives

DASH: Cooperation with a local cab company where a Marine or Sailor can get a safe ride from one location to another with a deferred payment. Personnel can get out of a risky situation and to a safe location of their choosing. This program is managed by the Ground Safety Office, ensuring anonymity of personnel to prevent any negative stigma of repercussions for usage. Marines and Sailors are taken directly to their house, barracks or hotel as opposed to the squadron duty office.

Marine Corps Base Hawaii's Liberty Shuttle: The free service takes Marines and Sailors to and from Waikiki. The shuttle is highly recommended as an option for their pre-liberty planning as well as in the event their plans fail.

Arrive Alive Fund: Marines and Sailors may have any cab take them directly to the squadron duty office where the duty officer pays the fare using the funds maintained there. Arrangements will then be made to ensure safe transportation of the individual to their home or barracks. Command policy is that this is not a punitive program. Personnel aren't punished for using this program yet this program continues to see less usage than the DASH program due to a negative stigma associated with it.

DASH Drawing: Each month the Safety Office creates serialized slips for each Warrior who has used the program since the last drawing. The CO draws one of these slips out of a hat, and the member is reimbursed for their cab fare. In order to maintain anonymity only the individual who wins, the Safety Office, and the Family Readiness officer know the name of the winner. Winners are encouraged to identify themselves in order to positively promote the program and solidify the policy that no negative repercussions will come from its proper usage.

DD Lottery: Marines and Sailors who use or serve as a designated driver may be entered into the monthly drawing. This program is an honor-system based drawing. Marines and Sailors come to the Safety Office following their use or service and submit their own names, or their leadership submits them. The names are then placed in a hat. Once a month the commander draws at a minimum one name from the hat, however he has typically chosen multiple at each drawing. The winner(s) receive a meritorious day off in honor of their sound decision-making and responsibility. Since this lottery's inception, the number of submissions has greatly increased, with many members entering multiple times each month.

Moving Forward: **Racing Whitney**



Photo courtesy of News Channel 6 WBJF, Augusta, Ga.

One year ago, a Georgia Sailor suffered major injuries after his car was struck by a drunk driver. Despite the likelihood that he would not be active again, he defied odds and trained for a charity bike race.

By CTTSN Robert A. Hartland

In May, Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) 1st Class Whitney Bellow participated in Tour LaFitte, a 10-mile bike ride in Louisiana. The Sailor from Navy Information Operations Command (NIOC) Georgia accomplished a feat that doctors told him would be nearly impossible after he was injured by a drunk driver.

For the past four years, Bellow has been participating in the bike race to raise money for the Special Olympics. This year Bellow raced on a hand-

cranked trike lent to him by the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center as part of his personal road to recovery.

“In doing this, I think we’re going to show that no matter what obstacle you may encounter, no matter what happens in your life, you fight, you push forward, you overcome those things,” said Bellow.

In December 2012, he had been a designated driver for some friends. After dropping them off, he had

stopped at a gas station to get a soda. As he was leaving the gas station, Bellow's car was struck on the driver's side by another car. That driver was drunk.

"You can't control life, you can't control what happens to you, but you can control how you face it," Bellow said. "Sometimes things are just going to happen regardless of all the planning and doing the right things."

Waking up after the accident, Bellow recalled, "they [EMTs] had to peel the car away from my body, it was so mangled."

His seat was knocked off the car's frame, the steering wheel was bent and Bellow was hit so hard his shoe came off from the impact.

Bellow sustained a concussion, a punctured lung and spleen, four broken ribs, a fractured pelvis, and a dislocated left leg. He had to go through multiple procedures in the hospital. The doctors told Bellow the outlook for being active again was not positive.

Through the support of family and friends, Bellow has progressed from using a wheelchair to walking with a cane. Oftentimes—through the help of physical therapy—he walks without any assistance at all.

"I had to work towards making progress, moving forward," he said.

With this positive attitude Bellow has excelled in his recovery faster than expected. "Having a sober acceptance of life doesn't mean that you can't hope and strive for better," he said.

In addition to his participation in Tour Lafitte, he has used his experience to educate Sailors on the dangers of drunk driving by speaking to groups stationed at Fort Gordon, Ga.



Photo courtesy of News Channel 6 WBIF, Augusta, Ga.

Unsafe actions have consequences, he says, "and you can't ever undo anything you've done. I can't say that you shouldn't drink but you need to be safe about it, plan ahead. I'd rather pay a \$20 cab ride than hear about a fatality."

While a civilian caused the accident that involved Bellow, his message is universal.

"I'm still trying to understand this new perspective; this has changed me irrevocably. I have to figure out how to do things," said Bellow. "This is an experience I have had to go through, that didn't have to be this way. I am in this position because of a choice someone else made, and I'm paying the consequence. Take an extra second to make a plan and reach out to your leadership."

“ THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE I HAVE HAD TO GO THROUGH, THAT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. I AM IN THIS POSITION BECAUSE OF A CHOICE SOMEONE ELSE MADE, AND I'M PAYING THE CONSEQUENCE. ”

Bellow was days away from leaving for a deployment and had plans to take part in an officer ascension program.

"Beyond my life, my world, those I am close to, there are higher implications," he said. "My career was put on hold. The person I was [due] to relieve and the Navy's mission were affected."

NIOC Georgia has begun implementing a hand-held alcohol detection device (ADD) in accordance with OPNAVINST 5350.8 as a deterrent to alcohol abuse. The ADD is already being implemented at many Navy commands and will be used to reinforce the Navy's Right Spirit Campaign and other alcohol-awareness campaigns by helping to reduce the irresponsible use of alcohol.

The ADD is a supporting tool in the campaign that can help promote safety, enhance education and awareness, and assist with identifying those who may put the member or unit at risk.

"[This] will reinforce supporting actions and help commands detect and deter alcohol or substance abuse," said Vince Krajcir, a NIOC Georgia Drug and Alcohol Prevention Advocate.

The consequences for driving under the influence are severe and have long-term effects that could follow an offender to the end of his or her career. NIOC Georgia advocates taking preventive measures to travel safely by using a designated driver, SafeRide (a fee-based driver-for-hire service), a taxi, or calling the chain of command as a last resort.

CTTSN Hartland is with the NIOC Georgia Public Affairs.



21st CENTURY SAILOR & MARINE



The Objective: The 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative is a set of objectives and policies, new and existing, across a spectrum of wellness that maximizes each Sailor's and Marine's personal readiness to hone the most combat effective force in the history of the Department of the Navy (DoN).

We want to provide our Sailors, Marines and families with the tools needed to face the challenges of the 21st Century and to help Sailors and Marines preserve the skills and talents they bring to the fight.

By Lisa Johnson

On March 5, 2012, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced the 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative. This initiative was comprised of five major tenets that define and focus the future direction

of the Navy and Marine Corps efforts for personal development. The five tenets are Readiness, Safety, Physical Fitness, Inclusion and Continuum of Service.

Safety is an extremely high priority because it directly impacts the other four tenets and can result in the loss of our most precious asset—our Sailors and Marines. Within the safety tenet, personal motor vehicles fatalities continue to be the area responsible for the greatest human loss the Navy encounters, and nearly half of those fatalities involve motorcycles.

Both riders and leadership must review the lessons learned from FY12, in order to further reduce our losses that result from motorcycle mishaps. The most critical and easily corrected lesson learned is that the training mandated in OPNAVINST 5100.12J and MCO 5100.19E is effective in giving our riders the skills and knowledge they need to be successful

Unfortunately in FY12, nearly half (48 percent) of DON motorcycle fatalities were not fully trained. All should be aware that riding a motorcycle continues to be one of the most dangerous activities our personnel do. Even the smallest of errors made by a rider can have a significant negative outcome. Motorcyclists are 37 times more likely to become a fatality if involved in a crash, than an automobile occupant. Riders can reduce these risks by obeying speed limits, not exceeding their skill level, and maintaining heightened situational awareness in an ever-changing traffic environment.

Lastly, speed and loss of control continue to dominate causal factor trends of our mishaps and these errors are judgment errors that can be reduced through training. We have training that is available but only effective if completed. Let's embrace the Secretary's 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative and get our people trained.

.....
Ms. Johnson worked as a traffic safety specialist in the Shore/Ground Safety Programs Directorate, Naval Safety Center.



Choosing to Be Safe

By Rob Pry

Everyone has heard someone refer to safety. It may have been when you were a child and were told to be careful crossing the street. After a period of time and casual instruction, you learned that “being careful” meant to look both ways before crossing the street. Being careful equates to being safe and it is your choice to be safe ... or not.

The military has multiple programs to keep us safe. They build on the lessons we learned as children—when something happens, we act to prevent it from happening again. Even though each of us has an idea of what safety is and a choice to be safe, the commanders and their immediate staffs are responsible for these programs. They must carefully track and respond to each new safety violation.

Oh yes, I said it: violation.

You can call it an “accident” or a “mishap.” But if you aren’t following the procedures and haven’t donned the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) and aren’t following the rules, you have in fact committed a violation.

Let’s say I’m on a motorcycle wearing some of my PPE and zipping down the roadway at double the speed limit. I haven’t checked tire pressure nor performed any other preventive maintenance procedures suggested by the manufacturer. I bob when I should have weaved and smack directly into another vehicle. Or better yet, I miss the apex in a curve and launch right off the roadway into a fixed solid object. Is this a mishap or a violation?

The military spends millions of dollars providing training for our riding population on safe, closed-circuit courses. Many of the riders “get it” and make the choice not to push their skill level on the open roadway. Unfortunately, many take their new found (and very limited) skills and need-for-speed to the road. The ratio

of motorcycle “mishaps” to the known riding population painfully illustrates the result of poor choices.

Some have declared that we, the military, should ban motorcycle ownership and riding. Besides being illegal, this would be nearly impossible to enforce. Instead, what if we were truly honest? Could you name a person who hasn’t had the prerequisite training, hasn’t registered their bike on the installation, or only wears PPE and follows traffic rules when they think someone is watching?

If you intervened as a friend or concerned colleague, could you change the reckless rider’s behavior? Maybe, but I doubt it; riders who make these choices have many ways to rationalize their decisions. Unfortunately it is the family members who are left with the consequences: loss of a loved one, abandonment, monetary instability, and overwhelming uncertainty. Commanders and their staff are affected by the loss of a trained and reliable team member. The riding community suffers to endure another safety stand-down and additional scrutiny.

If you are a military rider you know what safety is; do your part, make the right choices.

.....
Mr. Pry, a U.S. Army retiree, is an occupational safety and health specialist at Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, Camp Smith, Hawaii.

Editor’s Note: Send your viewpoint article or commentary to safe-decisions@navy.mil.

Falling for Ultralight Backpacking

Story and photo by Evelyn Odango

A cooling trend is sweeping across the country. Folks who love the outdoors are breaking out their backpacks, hiking shoes, tents and sleeping bags. It's time to enjoy the autumn foliage.

Fall is also the perfect time of year for backpacking. I became interested in ultralight* backpacking in my early twenties. Just before college graduation I took a backpacking elective class. The instructor organized a trip to the Appalachian Trail on the Virginia side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Twenty students signed up; we were excited to try this new adventure.

I had no experience in backpacking or carrying a pack that would provide me shelter, food and clothing for three days. I'd hiked at Virginia Beach's First Landing State Park and the Belle Isle Park along James River, but nothing as strenuous as carrying a full pack uphill.

The experience was an eye-opener. Weighing about 90 pounds and standing 5 feet tall, I overestimated my ability to carry the heavy pack (the base pack weight** should be between 20-30 percent of your body weight). The first part of the hike was uphill, about two miles from Maupin Field Shelter, where we were to set up camp. Within a few hundred yards into the hike, my calves started to burn. By the time we were halfway up,

my legs, back and shoulders cramped; I couldn't go any further. Not wanting to go back and spoil it for the rest of the group, I asked the lead for help. He had a couple of students redistribute my load on theirs.

I was embarrassed that I wasn't prepared to carry my own pack, but I was glad I spoke up. Had I hurt myself, the trip would have been cancelled, the lead instructor would have had to write an injury report to the school administration, and I probably would have missed graduation. We all made it to base camp, and the rest of the three-day camp-out was uneventful.

By fall of that year, I went backpacking again (a challenge to myself), but this time I was better prepared. I took the time to select an external-frame back pack suitable for my height and weight. My dome tent came with ultralight carbon-fiber tent poles. A lightweight sleeping bag and better-quality hiking shoes also made a big difference. My food pouches consisted of trail snacks and freeze-dried meals. I'd also learned how to choose and pack my outdoor gear better.

Since that time, I've enjoyed many trips to George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. I've hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail (reaching the summit of The Priest) and the Massanutten Ridge Trail. I've gone on horse trail rides in northwestern Virginia, hiked Crabtree Falls and Wildflower Trail, and camped in the mountains and at state parks.



A quick stop at Reeds Gap along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I was able to enjoy all these outdoor activities because I'd learned to refine my abilities and respect my limitations.

Before you head for the trails, know the "Big 3" in ultralight backpacking gear: the backpack, tent, and sleeping bag.

First, take care of yourself. Focus on staying physically fit and well. Warm up with short day hikes at your local parks. Practice carrying a pack and monitor how far you can go. Adjust weight and distance.

Shop around for the right backpack, tent, trekking poles, rain gear, sleeping bag, clothing, and cooking gear you're going to carry with you on the trail. Remember that, other than personal preferences, price is a determining factor in choosing the right gear.

Backpack: Decide whether to get an external frame or internal frame backpack. The ultralight backpack holds all of your gear, so it should be adaptable to everything you cram inside and comfortable for long-distance, long-term wear.

Tent: Narrow your choices based on personal preferences, conditions of environment, weight, and price.

Sleeping Bag: As with the tent, your choice of sleeping gear may depend on conditions you are most likely to encounter and cost. When choosing a sleeping gear—whether you get a down fill or synthetic sleeping bag—remember that in worst-case scenarios, your sleeping bag (and tent) can save your life.

To do more research on necessary gear, check online bloggers (backpackingfanatic.com is one of my favorites) about the topic. Your local sporting goods associates can also help.

*Ultralight backpacks have base pack weights below 20 pounds and 10 pounds. Traditional backpackers often carry base pack weights between 30 pounds and 60 pounds.

**Base pack is the weight of the pack plus the gear inside, excluding consumable items (food, drinks, fuel).

How to Prepare for Backpacking

If you are a novice backpacker and inclined to head for the mountain trails, here are some tips for a safe and fun adventure.

- Stay hydrated; carry plenty of water and drink frequently. Leave the alcohol at home.
- Use sunscreen and wear a hat. Wear sunglasses (constant exposure to bright sun may result in macular degeneration).
- Make sure your shoes or boots fit and that they're broken in. Wear synthetic/wool socks, not cotton.
- Carry protective clothing consistent with the season and environment.
- Figure you'll need a lot more calories than you do just going to the office. For strenuous backpacking, such as hiking up a mountain, plan on upwards of 3,500 calories per day.
- Carry a basic first aid kit and emergency protection, such as a space blanket.
- Carry a compass, knife, and dry matches (even if you have a lighter).
- Try an overnight somewhere close to your car to test your preparations.
- Look for groups of like-minded people; try a Web site such as MeetUp.com. Find free classes (e.g., REI).
- Hike with a buddy. Let someone know where you've gone. At state and national areas, always sign in at the trail head.
- Know how to protect and respect the wildlife. Store food properly near your campsite and know what to do if you encounter potentially dangerous wildlife (bears, mountain lions, moose, elk, badgers).
- Check local restrictions before going out (e.g., fire bans/trail closures).

Courtesy of BackpackingFanatic.com

Invisible Danger

By Marilyn Richards

One early, cold and dark February morning in 2009, I was driving into work when I came across a patch of black ice. Suddenly, I felt my tires lose traction and I started fishtailing. I panicked and slammed on my brakes and lost complete control of my car—a very bad thing to do!

My car ended up flipping upside down on the side of road. According to eyewitnesses, they saw my car roll three times before landing on the embankment. I had been the third person that came on the scene as there were two other individuals who lost control of their vehicles due to black ice. They were on the side of the road waiting for emergency response to arrive.

I unlocked my seat belt, dropped out of the driver's seat and crawled out of the passenger side window without injury, other than the fact that I lost my shoe in the process of crawling out. There were no other persons, vehicles or objects involved. My car ended up

getting totaled but I ended up coming out alive and I'm thankful for that.

The sad truth is that not many people can say that they've made it out of an accident injury-free or worse. Winter might bring snow and ice conditions and sometimes we may not be able to avoid Mother Nature's fearsome grip. Proper information and information can help us maintain control in winter driving situations.

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Ms. Richards works at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.



Photo courtesy of the author



Driving in the winter means snow, sleet, and ice that can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers and unforeseen dangers. To help you make it safely through winter, here are some suggestions from the National Safety Council to make sure that you and your vehicle are prepared.

Weather

At any temperature – 20 degrees Fahrenheit below zero or 90 degrees Fahrenheit above – weather affects road and driving conditions and can pose serious problems. It is important to listen to forecasts on radio, TV, cable weather channel, or forecasts in the daily papers.

Necessary Equipment

An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time and you must be prepared. Depending on where you live, weather and road conditions can change drastically. Aside from a full tank of gas and fresh anti-freeze, you should always keep:

- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack
- A shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- A bag of salt or cat litter
- Tool kit

Your Car

Prepare your car for winter. Start with a checkup:

- Check the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Change and adjust the spark plugs.
- Check the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspect the distributor.
- Check the battery.
- Check the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Check antifreeze level and the freeze line.
- Your car should have a tune-up (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts and faster response on pick-up and passing power.

Essential Supplies

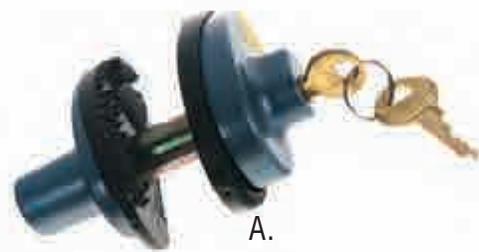
Keep a survival kit in the car and replenish after use. Essential supplies include:

- Working flashlight and extra batteries
- Reflective triangles and brightly-colored cloth
- Compass
- First-aid kit
- Exterior windshield cleaner
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Wooden stick matches in a waterproof container
- Scissors and string/cord
- Non-perishable, high-energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy
- If you are driving long distances under cold, snowy, and icy conditions, you should also carry supplies to keep you warm, such as heavy woolen mittens, socks, a cap, and blankets.

If You Become Stranded

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation.
- To attract attention, light two flares and place one at each end of the car a safe distance away. Hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna.
- If you are sure the car's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending upon the amount of gas in the tank.
- To protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia use the woolen items and blankets to keep warm.
- Keep at least one window open slightly. Heavy snow and ice can seal a car shut.
- Eat a hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

For more winter-driving safety tips, go online at <http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/pages/media/safetips.aspx#w>



Unload. Lock. Secure.

By Gunnery Sgt. Amber Allison

It's your toddler's nap time, and he doesn't want to lie down. You take him to your bedroom. You lie there a while with him until you think he is just about asleep. Finally, you sneak out of the room to go about your afternoon chores.

Some time passes and suddenly, you hear a loud bang. You rush to your bedroom to find your 2-year old lying in a pool of blood and a pistol in his hand. A pistol

that you thought was hidden. You left it loaded and cocked in case of a home invasion.

The hard decision has yet to come. The doctors tell you he has no brain activity, do you pull the plug on your child's life support?
Here's another scenario...

You put your pistol-cleaning on a table. You take your pistol and remove the magazine, then start to wipe it down. As you do so, you inadvertently pull the trigger



B.



and discharge a round — because you forgot to clear the chamber. When you get up to look where the bullet landed, you find your dead 10-month-old child.

Here's another scenario...

Your teenager is having problems at school and decides to take matters into his own hands. He sneaks into what you think is your secret hiding place. You get a call from the school. Your son has shot someone and then attempted to kill himself. He is in a hospital hanging on by a thread while in surgery.

The sad truth is these types of mishaps happen. We, as parents, are not securing our personal firearms. In a health and wellness survey, the Navy has found that at least 30 percent of Navy personnel own personal firearms. Of that gun-owning population, only 65 percent of them report that they are familiar with the basic safety rules. Somehow, 80 percent claim they are very familiar with the safety features of their gun.

It doesn't take a genius to comprehend that those figures misrepresent what is actually known by military gun owners. Adding insult to injury, only 60 percent of the same gun population store their firearms separate from the ammunition and locked in separate places.

This in turn leaves 40 percent of that population with an increased chance of a mishap in their home.

As a firearm owner and mother of three, I would love to think that my children know not to touch the places where we store our firearms. However, several studies that surveyed children and firearms suggest that even kids who are taught not to touch guns can't resist. This means that most parents, like me, have unrealistic expectations about their children's behavior around guns.

That is why Naval Safety Center and other safety experts encourage parents to keep guns unloaded and locked separately from ammunition. It is also wise to ask other parents about guns at the houses where their children play.

The National Safety Council reports that in the United States, an average of 3,400 children ages 0-19 will be killed as a result of an unsecured personal firearm in the home. About 500 of those deaths are children ages 0-14; the others are ages 15-19. We, as gun-owning parents and responsible military members, can avert a lifetime of heartache if we take extra time to store our firearms safely and properly.

C.



There are several different types of firearm safety locks shown here:

A. The trigger lock, which encloses a firearms trigger makes it impossible to pull the trigger once the lock is engaged.

B. The cable lock — shown applied to both hand guns — once applied, makes it impossible to close, load or fire the weapon.

C. Gun lockers, such as the stand-up for rifles (far left) and the combination safe for hand guns, provide secure storage. The National Safety Council recommends locking and storing ammunition in a separate place from where you lock and store your firearm.

Holiday Season Safety Tips

CHRISTMAS TREES, LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS

Christmas tree fires are not common, but when they occur, they are likely to be serious. Between 2006-2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of 4 deaths, 21 injuries, and \$17.3 million in direct property damage annually.

Do's and Don'ts

Select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green; and trunk sticky with sap. Needles should bend and not break, plus be hard to remove from branches.

Cut off two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a water holding stand. Ensure tree doesn't dry out.

Stand tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Ensure tree doesn't block foot traffic and doorways.

If using an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

Only use indoor lights indoors (and outdoor lights only outdoors). Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets.

Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs.

Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

FOOD PREPARATION AND HOLIDAY PARTIES

Holidays are times we share the kitchen with family and friends. Make it a goal this year to also share good food safety practices. Each year, 1 in 6 Americans get sick from and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases.

Food and Cooking

Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry.

Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.

Alcohol, Parties, and Driving

Ensure that at least one person in each group is prepared to be the non-drinking designated driver.

Provide plenty of food to keep your guests from drinking on an empty stomach. Avoid salty snacks, which tend to make people thirsty and drink more.

Offer non-alcoholic beverages or mocktails for non-drinking designated drivers and others who prefer not to drink alcohol.

If preparing an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream faster with a carbonated base.

Have the number of a taxi service on hand for those who need a ride. Offer your sofa or a guest room to those who need to sleep it off.

Sources: Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, Mothers Against Drunk Driving

HOLIDAY TRAVEL AND WINTER DRIVING

When the hustle and bustle of holiday travel starts, people become more distressed with long waits and unexpected challenges. If you travel by air or car during the cold season, you can count on more delays than you'd experience in the summer.

Airline Travel

Plan ahead and leave at least an extra hour earlier to anticipate delays. Bring something to read. In cities with snow or ice, delays can exceed two to three hours and de-icing procedures can take an hour before takeoff.

Before you leave, get the flu shot or nasal spray flu vaccine. Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer constantly.

Stretch your legs often. Walk around and stretch your arms and legs once every hour.

Winter Driving

Have your car examined before you leave. Make sure your tires are winter ready and properly inflated.

Familiarize yourself with your route and be prepared for road changes. Keep the directions as well as appropriate state map(s) handy, in case you need to reroute your trip.

Stay hydrated – fluids can help you stay alert. Pack high-energy food including sandwiches, fruit and a thermos filled with soup.

Pack a winter safety kit for the car. Your kit should consist of a first-aid kit and basic car maintenance tools.

Make frequent rest stops. Winter driving is much more tiring than in the summer, so stop frequently and stretch your legs.

Source: American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA Travelsense)

A Reason to Celebrate



PLAN AHEAD. MANAGE RISK. ENJOY THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

Download holiday safety tips at <http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/pages/media/safetips.aspx>

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Julie Matyascik



Photo courtesy of Henry Doudin, Naval Subdiv Center

Time-Critical Risk Management

Because conditions can change with little or no warning, being ready and alert can minimize risks.

- Assess the situation and potential for threats.
- Balance resources to prevent error.
- Communicate risks and intentions.
- *Do and Debrief to improve future performance.*