

Fall 1999

The Naval Safety Center's Official Magazine for Shore Safety

Ashore

**CO Detectors: the Difference
Between Life and Death**

**EVOC Training
Is Critical**

Godzilla Approach Proves Deadly

When the Buddy System Fails



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The Naval Safety Center's Official Magazine for Shore Safety

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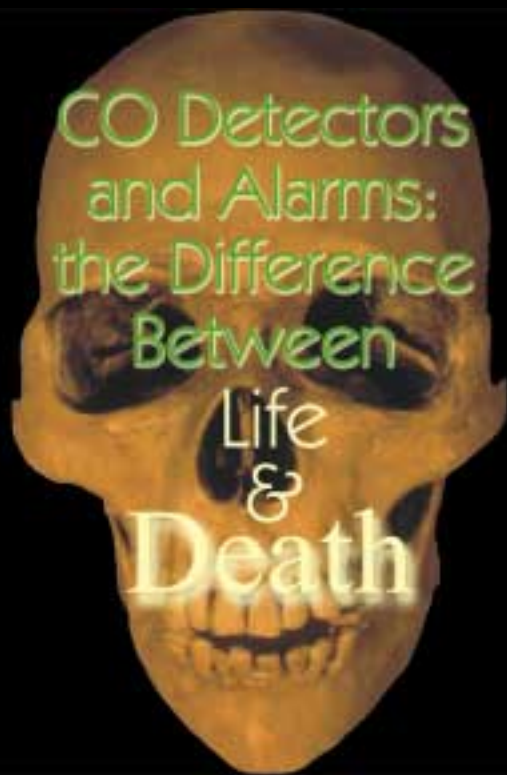
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About the cover: Ahh, liberty. You may be free from work, but you aren't free from danger. Playing it wild and not wearing seatbelts, like the people in this photo, can cut your liberty, and life, short.



From Our Readers...

Dear Editor:

Re: Riptides, Currents and Waves, Oh My! – Summer 1999

No disrespect, but Togo is not an island. It is a country on the west coast of Africa between Benin and Ghana. Lome is its capital. It does have beautiful beaches.

Maj. Michael G. Brohier, USMC
Expeditionary Warfare Training
Group, Pacific
Coronado Island

Dear Editor:

Re: Last Word – Spring 1999

I liked your "The Last Word" editorial in the Spring 1999 issue of *Ashore*. May I copy it and distribute it among our workers? Granted, we fly and you float, but we both have to keep our heads above water when it comes to safety. Also, how can I receive an electronic copy of your magazine on an ongoing basis?

TSgt. Anthony Chaney
NCOIC NAIC/Safety
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

Any articles written by our staff are public domain and are not copyrighted. You may use them freely. As for getting an electronic copy, log onto our web site:

www.safetycenter.navy.mil. Click on "publications" to view the magazine of your choice: Ashore, Approach, Mech, Fathom, and Ground Warrior, as well as other items produced by the Safety Center. Ed.

Dear Editor:

Re: Straight Talk About Motorcycle Helmets – Summer 1999

I read with interest your article on the use of motorcycle helmets. I am a long-time motorcycle rider and strongly advocate helmet use. This advocacy, however, should not include incorrect information. The article closes with a statement that if you don't wear a helmet and are injured, you would be responsible for paying your own medical bills.

This is not true. No such section exists in the instruction. Medical care is an entitlement to service members. They are treated for their injuries whether they are caused by their negligence or not. Whether it is a motorcycle rider who crashes his bike, an in-line skater who breaks an arm, or a Sailor who falls from a ladder extended too far, the Navy doesn't make them pay for their care.

OPNAVINST 5100.12F, (Navy Traffic Safety Program), does say, "When military personnel or civilian employees are injured as a proximate result of their violation of italicized portions of this instruction, such violation may be considered in determining compensation to which the individual may be entitled as a result of the injuries incurred."

This section refers to compensation such as a medical discharge, or continued health and rehabilitative care after initial recovery. It would also be dependent on the LOD/Misconduct determination made. You will note the section says "proximate result." If a Sailor has a motorcycle mishap without a helmet, and breaks his leg, his lack of a helmet would not have any relation to the injury and

would not affect his LOD status or entitlement to later benefits.

I spent three years as an instructor at the Naval Justice School and consistently encounter this wrong information. Medical care is an entitlement. The Navy doesn't withhold it from Sailors or make them pay for it.

LCdr. David J. Gruber, JAGC
Staff Judge Advocate
Cruiser-Destroyer Group FIVE

After consulting with the Naval Safety Center Staff Judge Advocate, we concede that there appears to be no basis for the statement that a person failing to wear a motorcycle helmet would be responsible for paying his or her own medical bills. However, our Staff Judge Advocate did state that violations of OPNAVINST 5100.12F, including failure to wear appropriate protective gear, is punishable under the UCMJ.

Dear Editor:

Re: Shark – Summer 1999

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated seeing the story about how the diver fought off the shark that attacked his buddy last summer. On July 2, I had the honor of attending an awards ceremony on USS *Trenton* (LPD 14) and watched my brother, MMC(SW) Dan McGrath, receive the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions described in that story.

It was a proud moment for our family.

LCdr. John McGrath, USN (Ret.)
Chesapeake, Va.

Dear Editor:

Re: Catting Around Peridido Key – Summer 1999

The author describes how, after numerous attempts to right their overturned catamaran, he and his friend began the “long swim to shore.” I was horrified when I read that statement.

I grew up around the Gulf Coast, taught swimming at the university level and sailing for more than 20 years, and have traveled the world surfing. Never have I told anyone that they should leave their vessel to swim to shore—even if they are wearing lifejackets.

Your vessel is a source of flotation and makes it easier for rescuers to spot you in the water. Besides reducing the chances of your being seen, swimming to shore exposes to you other dangers: cramps, dangerous currents, sharks, stinging nettles, jelly fish, sudden storms with rough seas and lightning, or

offshore winds that can blow you farther out to sea.

Always let someone on shore know your sailing itinerary (where you are going and when you expect to return). Then call that person when you do return. That way, if he doesn't hear from you, he can call us to start a search.

Lt. Michael Long, USCG
Chief, Marine Environmental
Protection Branch
Marine Safety Office New Orleans

Good advice. Also, there is another danger in trying to swim for shore. Just recently in our area, a man and his mother were fishing when their boat was swamped and sank. They floated in the water with their life preservers for more than three hours. They told reporters that boats and personal watercraft came dangerously close to hitting them, but that no one saw them or heard their cries for help.

Ashore's official distribution is to supervisors and managers who oversee workplace safety, enforce safety rules and prevent mishaps. These readers pass on the contents of the magazine to their personnel and employees via base newspapers, Plans of the Day, and other local internal communication media.

The primary target audience also includes Navy personnel and civilian employees responsible not only for their own safety, but for safety in these fields: occupational safety and health, motor vehicles, explosives and weapons, fire protection, environmental health, recreation and athletics, Marine Corps tactical operations, and training.

Members of the target audience are located at shore bases, in aircraft squadrons, and aboard ships and submarines.

We welcome your comments about the articles in this magazine or about any safety issue. Send letters to the editor, with your name, address and work phone number to:

Editor, *Ashore*
Code 713
Naval Safety Center
375 A Street
Norfolk, VA 23511-4399

You can e-mail letters to vmack@safetycenter.navy.mil or fax them to (757) 444-6791 (DSN 564). Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Warning Labels You'll Never See



Consumption of alcohol may make you think you are whispering.
Consumption of alcohol may cause you to thay shings like thish.
Consumption of alcohol may lead you to believe that ex-lovers are simply dying for you to telephone them at 4 a.m.
Consumption of alcohol may make you wonder what happened to your pants (shirt, shoes, socks, wallet).
Consumption of alcohol may create the illusion that you are tougher than some really big guy named Bubba.
Consumption of alcohol may make you think you can dance.
Consumption of alcohol may make you think people are laughing with you.



By Derek Nelson



always found that a shovel worked fine for turning up earthworms. However, in the film “Godzilla,” I saw what looked like a much more efficient method. In one of the opening scenes, Matthew Broderick, who plays a cheerful researcher studying the effects of radiation, croons “Singing in the Rain” while jolting a writhing mass of earthworms out of the dirt. He used two large metal rods hooked by jumper cables to a car battery. In the movie, it worked like a charm.

A 17-year-old dependent living in Navy housing tried the Godzilla approach recently, however, and

electrocuted himself.

His homemade device suggested he knew just enough about electricity to be dangerous. He had hooked up a standard, 3-prong appliance cord; a steel rod, perhaps a skewer; a capacitor (which stores current, then releases it at a higher amperage); and a transformer (possibly a step-up transformer that would increase the voltage from 115 to 220 volts). To make a crude handle, he used a piece of plastic tubing and some electrical tape.

You can buy these parts at any electrical or electronic wholesale house. The ones he used looked

Godzilla Approach Proves Deadly



like they had been removed from household appliances, such as a television, refrigerator or microwave.

The three-prong plug would have provided a ground connection to the home's service-panel ground circuit, but the transformer isolated the ground connection from the house circuit. This hazard let the voltage and current run rampant until it found a way to complete the circuit. The ground was damp. The worm hunter became part of the circuit.

The boy's body, lying near the front door, was discovered by a neighbor at 1330. She unplugged the device and called 911. A rescue unit took the boy's body to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 1400. His mother was home; his father, stationed aboard a ship, was in another state.

You can jolt worms safely. Blueprints for a simple version of this device are readily available,

and outdoor magazines advertise ready-made ones. They use DC voltage from a battery and are designed to trip or shut off in case of a malfunction. The boy's device was isolated through the transformer and would not shut off until the transformer failed. He may have decided the usual process was too slow, and upped the ante by applying more voltage.

The older I get, the more examples I see of the adage "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," and it gets particularly dicey when the possessor of that limited knowledge thinks he knows more than he really does. My own knowledge of electricity is weak, but I know one thing: Just like gasoline, it is dangerous. ■

Mr. Nelson is Editor-in-Chief of magazines published by the Media Department of the Naval Safety Center.

By Dave Smith and
Jon Natividad

Late October last year, an AG1, his wife and their four children went to bed for the night in their on-base housing. Only one of them woke, and she did that several days later.

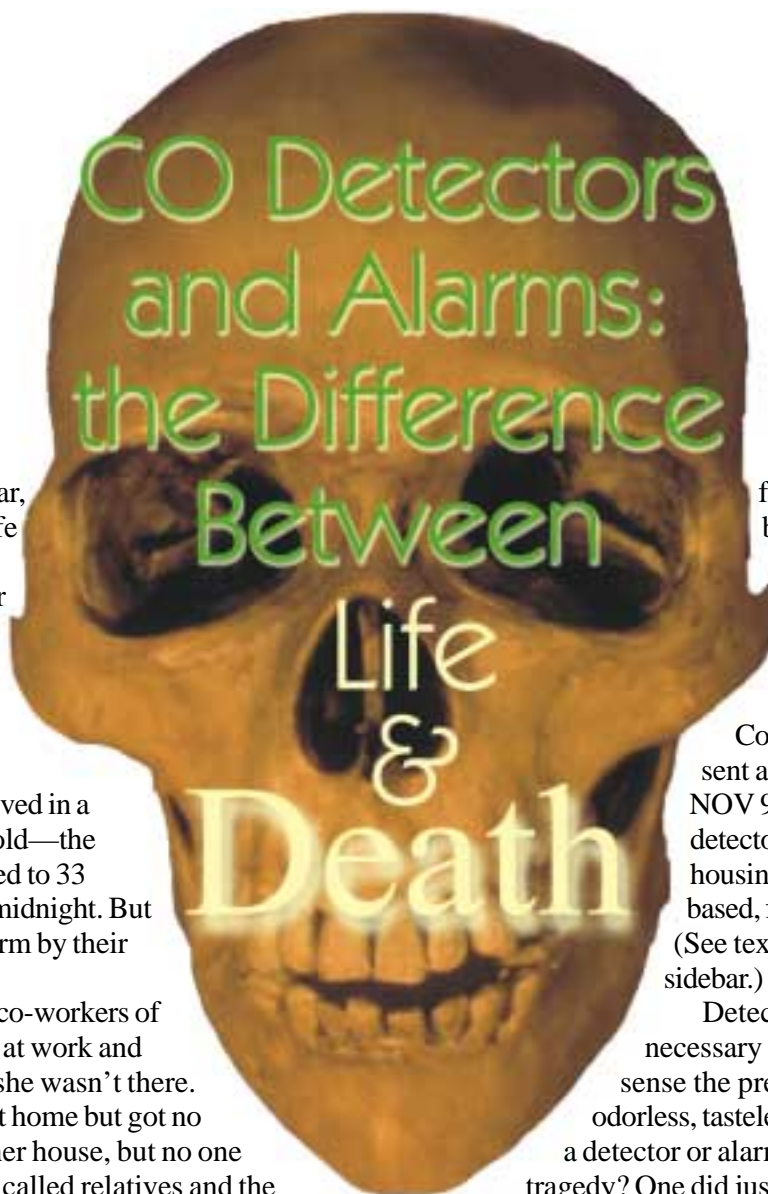
Even though they lived in a southern state, it was cold—the temperature had dropped to 33 degrees Fahrenheit by midnight. But the family was kept warm by their gas furnace.

The next morning, co-workers of the AG1's wife arrived at work and were surprised to find she wasn't there. They tried calling her at home but got no answer. They went to her house, but no one came to the door. They called relatives and the base- security department.

When security patrolmen got no response to their knocks, they used a master key to enter the home. They found the whole family unconscious. They pulled the victims out of the house and tried to revive them. The wife, who had a faint heart beat and foam around her mouth, was rushed to a hospital. She was in critical condition and eventually recovered. A coroner pronounced her husband and children dead at the scene. The family's dog was also dead.

A crucial piece of equipment, which could have saved this family, was lacking—a carbon monoxide (CO) detector or alarm. *(The difference between alarms and detectors is that detectors measure CO from 0 to 999 ppm; alarms measure from 30 to 999 ppm. —Ed)*

At the time this family died, the Navy didn't install CO detectors or alarms in housing. The only



families who had them bought and installed them on their own. However, a month after this tragedy, the Commander Naval Facilities Engineering Command Washington, DC

sent a message (191412Z NOV 98) requiring CO detectors in all Navy family housing served by carbon-based, fuel-burning systems. (See text of message in sidebar.)

Detectors or alarms are necessary since people can't sense the presence of CO. It's odorless, tasteless and invisible. Would a detector or alarm have prevented this tragedy? One did just two months later. A Sailor, his wife and infant were evacuated from their on-base house. Their recently installed detector sounded, telling them there was a high level of CO. Doctors found the whole family had elevated levels of CO in their blood. After treatment, they were released from the hospital.

If your house is heated by anything other than electricity, make sure you have a CO detector or alarm installed. Even if you do have electric heat, if you have an attached garage (where you keep a car), you should have one also. Vehicle exhaust is a frequent cause of CO deaths in homes. Make sure your home-heating system is serviced annually and the filters changed according to the manufacturer's instructions. ■

Mr. Smith is a recreation and athletic specialist in the Recreation/Off Duty Safety Division at the Naval Safety Center. Mr. Natividad is a mishap investigator at the Naval Safety Center.

NAVFAC Mandates All Housing Residents to Have Protection From CO

As mentioned in the accompanying article, here is the text of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command message concerning carbon-monoxide detectors in family housing.

1. Until recently, there have been no federal or DoD requirements to install carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in Navy family housing. Navy has re-examined its policy on installation of detectors. To protect Navy families and recognizing the recent improvements in reliability and cost of commercial CO detectors, detectors shall be installed in all Navy family housing units that are served by carbon-based fuel burning systems.

2. Engineering Field Divisions (EFDs) are directed to assist local housing authorities to purchase and install CO detectors. The following guidance is provided:

A. Detectors should be installed in all Navy-owned or leased housing units, CONUS and overseas, which use carbon-based fuel (natural gas, LPG, charcoal, coal, wood, kerosene, heating oil) burning systems (ranges, water heaters, space heaters, clothes dryers, fireplaces).

B. At least one detector should be provided on each floor of multi-floor houses.

C. Detectors should meet the following specifications: digital display, peak-level memory, battery back-up, multiple installation options, AC powered (battery overseas), minimum five-year warranty, IAS 6-96/AGA Blue Star certification.

D. Detectors shall be purchased using available BP-20 funds.

E. Coordination with local fire protection/prevention organization is recommended. Such organizations will often assist in installation, training in use, and periodic operational testing of CO detector units.

F. Ensure that suitable maintenance and support arrangements are put in place to ensure the continuing servicability of CO detectors once installed, including: (1) establishing an appropriate maintenance regimen, (2) incorporating maintenance expenses in budget plans, and (3) verifying detector operation during occupancy check-in/check-out procedures.

G. EFDs are requested to develop plans to purchase and install CO detectors and to provide NavFac HSG the following information for each activity by 1 Dec 98. (1) number of housing units with carbon-based fuel-burning systems, (2) number of housing units with detectors already installed that meet specifications (C) above, (3) number of housing units requiring detectors to be installed, (4) number of detectors required, (5) estimated cost to procure and install detectors, (6) estimated date to complete detector installation, and (7) activity and EFD POC name, phone number and e-mail address.

3. In addition to installation of CO detectors, EFDs are requested to assist housing activities take the following actions to minimize risks from CO poisoning:

(A) perform inspections of existing carbon-based fuel-burning systems to ensure proper operation and take action to correct deficiencies found, (B) Alert housing occupants to the dangers of carbon-monoxide poisoning. In particular, emphasize the importance of maintaining proper air flow to heating units and avoiding the blockage of return air grilles or make-up air intakes. **A**

According to NAVFAC PAO, a memo was sent after this message authorizing installation of CO alarms rather than detectors.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms Recalled

Kidde Safety, a Mebane, N.C.-based manufacturer of fire and smoke detectors and alarms, is recalling one million LifeSaver and Nighthawk carbon-monoxide alarms whose sensors might have been damaged during shipping. The defective alarms either go off late or do not activate at all. The Navy purchased alarms from this manufacturer late last year.

The recall is only for alarm models, not detectors; if your unit is marked "Carbon Monoxide Detector" (not "Carbon Monoxide Alarm"), you don't need to worry.

The defective Nighthawk alarms were manufactured from Nov. 8, 1998, to March 9, 1999. The approximately 350,000 LifeSaver models (9CO-1 and 9CO-1C) were manufactured from June 1, 1997, to Jan. 1, 1998.

Return any faulty alarm directly to Kidde Safety for replacement. If you have a CO alarm you're unsure about, call the Kidde Safety consumer-recall hot line (888) 543-3356, or go to www.kidde.com or www.nhawk.com. Make sure to have the alarm handy to give the company all necessary information.

If your unit is among the affected models, the manufacturer will test the unit, and if possible, repair it and return it to you. If the device cannot be fixed, the company will send you a replacement. In all cases, it will cover return shipping.

You can find more information about the recall on the Consumer Product Safety Commission Website (www.cpsc.gov) or by calling (800)638-2772.

If you live in Navy housing, contact your housing manager about this recall. **A**



EVOC

Training Is Critical

By John Johnston

A Navy fire-department van on its way to a fire was overturned when it was hit by a car. The van, driven by a petty officer, had its lights and siren on. The driver had stopped at an intersection to make sure the way was clear.

As the Navy van pulled onto the highway, a mini-van crashed into the fire-department van, knocking it over and pushing it into a car.

The drivers of both vans were taken to a hospital where they were treated for minor injuries. The fire-department van, valued at \$50,000, was a total loss. Investigators found the petty officer had not taken the Navy's Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC).

People who drive Navy and Marine Corps emergency vehicles respond to thousands of calls for help during the year. Most of these operators take it for granted that they will arrive at the scene un-

scathed. Their thoughts aren't on getting there safely, but rather on what they are going to do after they arrive. National Transportation Safety Board experts say operators should make their first priority getting to the scene safely and getting victims to hospitals without further injuries.

OPNAVINST 5100.12F (Navy Traffic Safety Program) and MCO 5100.19D (Marine Corps Traffic Safety Program) specify the required training for all emergency-vehicle operators. Any driver of an emergency vehicle must be trained and certified before being assigned to drive. They can do this by attending the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's EVOC. The course is 40 hours long. You can have your own EVOC instructor on your base by having someone attend this course and EVOC instructor courses, which are scheduled throughout the year.

Many commands are not getting their personnel certified in operating emergency vehicles because they think it costs too much or causes too much wear and tear on their first-line vehicles. Compare the cost of the crash we discussed with the cost of sending two people to become EVOC instructors.

EVOC-qualified drivers may be able to prevent these crashes. The course teaches all aspects of responsible driving, including what legal liabilities the command, department head, supervisors, and drivers have.

Think about these situations: an untrained police officer handling a 9mm handgun; an uncertified paramedic handling a cardiac-drug box; or an untrained, uncertified and inexperienced firefighter

grabbing an inch-and-a-half fire hose and rushing into a burning building wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus. Those scenarios would be unthinkable to most of you. However, every day, untrained drivers are racing through town in emergency vehicles, either rushing to disaster scenes or carrying sick and injured people.

We can no longer let people drive emergency vehicles under stressful, sometimes confusing, situations with no more skill or experience than operating a private car or truck. You need to have your people trained. You can find out about EVOC locations and fill out applications on our web site at www.safetycenter.navy.mil/ashore. **A**

Mr. Johnston is a traffic safety specialist in the Motor Vehicle Safety Division at the Naval Safety Center.

Why Is This Training Critical?

How about 37 mishaps involving emergency vehicles since 1996? Five in 1996, 15 in 1997, another 15 in 1998, and three so far this year.

Here are some of the things drivers did:

- A driver rolled a security car (Jeep Cherokee) while doing 35 mph in reverse.
- While transporting a patient to a hospital, a Navy ambulance hit and killed a 15-year-old dependent. Poor visibility because of blowing sand contributed to this mishap.
- A security guard thought he had the brake on when he bent down to retrieve a flashlight. He didn't.
- An ambulance driver didn't slow down or yield to a flashing red traffic light and ran into another car. Damages to the ambulance—\$3,500.
- The driver of a fire truck backed into another vehicle, causing \$7,000 damage. He didn't use a spotter.
- A security driver swerved to avoid an animal and ran into a ditch. Not only was he driving too fast, he didn't have a license.
- A security officer was chasing a fleeing suspect. When the suspect drove over an embankment and into a ditch, the officer followed right behind him.
- While following another police car, a police officer dropped his microphone on the floor. He bent down to pick it up and ran into the rear of the other car.
- A security officer was trying to straighten up in a parking space when he hit the accelerator instead of the brake. He drove over a curb and hit a light pole. He was removed from roving patrol for a year.
- While patrolling a pier at 45 mph (speed limit—10 mph), a security officer bottomed out his pickup truck, causing more than \$3,000 damage.
- A firefighter parked his fire truck on an incline, got out and watched it roll into another fire truck. He never bothered to set the air brake.
- A roving patrol fell asleep at the wheel and ran into a flight-line perimeter fence.
- A security officer pulled out in front of a car he thought was turning onto the road he was pulling out of.
- A security officer started coughing and sneezing and passed out. When he awoke, he realized he had driven into a house.
- A security officer was driving without headlights and drove into a drainage ditch. **A**

Listen to

By Ens. J.F. Montes

My whole life, I have been a hands-on type of guy. My father always told me, “The world is an easier place to live in if you understand how things work.” He was the kind of guy who had gloves, goggles and jack-stands in his garage. I never thought that one day I would ignore the respect for hand tools he had emphasized so much.

But I did—on a gloomy Saturday morning in Queens, New York. I was 17 years old and had finally managed to save enough money to buy my dream car. It was a rusty Mustang convertible. I had only driven the car for a couple of weeks, and I realized it needed a brake job. Just as any teenager with his first car, I was pretty much penniless, so I decided to change the brake pads and shoes myself. My father had rented a two-car garage that was about five miles from the house. That was where he kept his tools and the family’s 1968 Mustang coupe.

Eager to get the job started, I grabbed my car keys and left in a hurry without any plans on how to tackle this project. I bought the parts I needed on the way. When I got to the garage, I realized I didn’t have the keys to my parents’ Mustang and wouldn’t be able to take it out of the garage. I didn’t feel like driving back home to get the keys, so I squeezed my car between the garage wall and the car already inside. Not only was it a tight fit, but because of an air compressor and a tool chest, half the car was sticking into a narrow road that led to the main street.

I jacked up
the car and



placed the jack-stands underneath it (probably the only thing I did right that day). Then I removed all four tires at one time, completely forgetting that my dad had always told me to do one spindle at a time.

Blinded by my false sense of security and haste, I kept thinking, “I know what I’m doing.” Then I did something that took me out of action.

I couldn’t find the tool my dad and I had designed to remove the rear springs that held the brake shoes in place, so I opted for the universal pry bar/chisel/punch tool also known as a screwdriver. At that time, a little bell should have gone off in my head but it didn’t. If it did, I didn’t hear it. I should have remembered all those times I heard my dad tell me to use the proper tool for the job. I guess I was determined to learn the hard way.

Five minutes into the job, I had trouble with the screwdriver getting jammed between the spring end and the stud that held it in place. As I kneeled to take a closer look—of course without goggles—the spring released, and the screwdriver flew into my face.

I jumped up and felt blood running down my face. My right eye was so full of tears that I couldn’t see. I was disoriented, and the right side of my face was going numb. I fought to stay calm as I looked for a mirror so I could see my face, but I couldn’t find one. The right side of my face started to swell and ache, I knew I should probably head for the nearest hospital. Since there was nobody around, and my car had no wheels and no brakes, I had to get help.

I knocked on the door of the lady who rented the garage to my father. The shocked expression on her face when she saw me was enough to send anyone into a panic. She gave me a mirror, and I saw a one-inch gash between

the Bell



the bridge of my nose and my right eye. I saw that only with my left eye; I couldn't see out of my right one. The injury was so deep that my tear duct was exposed and hanging down like a piece of thread. I couldn't drive my car, and I couldn't close the garage door because half my car was sticking into the street. All I needed now was for a piano to fall on my head.

It took me about two hours to get to a hospital. As I waited in the emergency room for hours, I remember my pride hurting more than my injury. The doctor told me if the screwdriver had hit me just a bit higher, I would have probably lost my right eye.

In the year that followed, I joined the Navy and became a jet-engine mechanic. I got to know people who had interesting stories about how they got injured at some time in their life. I have seen everything from broken hands and fingers to black eyes on innocent bystanders. The story was the same 99 percent of the time—the injury was caused because the person was using the wrong tool for the job or he wasn't following the rules.

Twelve years have passed, and every time I see that sporty one-inch scar under my right eye, it reminds me of my mistake. After that experience, I have always listened for that little bell in the back of my head. It's kept me from injury more than once, and I hope it continues to do so for the rest of my life. ■

Ens. Montes is assigned to VFA-83 as the material control officer.


You Don't Have To Live on the Coast To Be Flooded

Just because you live inland doesn't mean you may not be in an area that floods. The following places have had devastating floods.

- Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A dam broke on May 31, 1889, causing the worst flood in U.S. history. A 36-to-40 foot high wall of water killed 2,200 people.
- Cheyenne, Wyoming. On Aug. 1, 1985, 6 inches of rain in three hours left 12 people dead and \$61 million in damages.
- South-Central Texas. During December 1991 and January 1992, 17 inches of rain triggered wide-spread river flooding on the Guadalupe, Brazos, Trinity, and Colorado River basins. Damages were set at \$100 million, and 15 people died.
- Shadyside, Ohio. On June 14, 1990, 4 inches of rain in less than two hours produced a 30-foot high wall of water. Property loss was set at \$6 to \$8 million. Twenty-six people died.

Even 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock you off your feet, and a depth of 2 feet will float your car. How, you wonder?

Water weighs 62.4 pounds per cubic foot and typically flows downstream at six to 12 miles per hour. When a car stalls in the water, the water's momentum is transferred to the car. For each foot the water rises, 500 pounds of lateral force are applied to the car. But the biggest factor is buoyancy. For each foot the water rises up the side of the car, the car displaces 1,500 pounds of water. In effect, the car weighs 1,500 pounds less for each foot the water rises.


Therefore, never try to walk, swim or drive through such swift water. If you come upon flood waters, stop, turn around, and go the other way. 

How To Fill Your Gas Can

By now, most people know it is dangerous to smoke when they put gasoline in their cars. Vapors can ignite and blow up in their faces. However not too many people know that when they fill a portable gas can—particularly one in the back of a pickup truck—they could also go up in flames, even if they aren't smoking.

The most dangerous place to put a gas container while you are filling one is on the bed of a pickup truck—especially one that has a bed liner. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, when a truck is equipped with a bed liner, static electricity can build up and cause a fire or explosion.


Here's the way to fill your cans:

- * Use containers with an UL label.
- * Remove the container from the vehicle and put it on the ground, away from the vehicle, other people and traffic.
- * Keep the nozzle in contact with the can during filling.
- * Extinguish smoking materials before pumping gasoline. 

What To Do When a Mishap Occurs

If you witness a mishap, send someone for help if necessary. Try to reassure the victim, but do not move an injured person unless he or she is in danger of further injury. Be careful to avoid hurting yourself or exposing yourself to blood-borne pathogens.

If possible, don't move anything in the area of the mishap. Report to the appropriate person quickly and clearly. Offer to help in any way you can. Prompt action on your part can help protect you or a co-worker.

Certainly, you know to report a mishap where someone is injured. But it is just as important to report near misses to your safety office. If an unsafe condition caused someone to almost get hurt, the next time, it may not be an almost. Your safety office can take steps to eliminate the hazardous condition. A few moments of attention now can prevent future injuries. 

A Hunting Trip That Almost Killed the Hunters

AE2 Terry Cook sent us this story when he was with VAQ 139 at Whidbey Island, Washington.

While hunting during buck season in northeast Washington, two Sailors had hiked into the wilderness and found the spot they wanted to set up camp. The temperature was close to freezing, and 3 inches of snow was already on the ground. They built a campfire to stave off the bitter cold.

As the sky darkened into night, the temperature continued to drop. Because they couldn't find dry firewood, they added charcoal briquettes to their fire. After dinner, they turned in for the night.

During the night, one of the hunters woke up extremely cold. He remembered that he had packed a portable BBQ grill in case they were unable to build a fire. He put hot coals from the fire into the grill and dragged it into the tent. Soon the inside of the tent was warm, and he went back to sleep.

About four hours later, he woke up with a terrible headache. A few seconds later, he was standing

barefoot in the snow, throwing up. The thought of food poisoning crossed his mind. However, when his partner stumbled out of the tent, holding his head and complaining of a headache, he remembered they had eaten different foods.

After gathering his thoughts and taking a few aspirin, his partner asked when the grill was put in the tent and where the coals came from. His buddy told him about being cold and getting coals from the fire. His partner grabbed the empty charcoal bag and shoved it in his buddy's face.

"Read this," he bellowed. There, in big bold letters, was this warning: "Caution, do not use indoors, may cause carbon-monoxide poisoning."

Both hunters agree they're lucky to be able to tell this story. However, it wasn't all luck. Fortunately for them, the tent they were in wasn't made for winter use and was quite drafty. Otherwise, they may have died that night because of one hunter's ignorance. **A**

Air Bags May Be Hazardous After a Crash For Rescue Workers, Firefighters and Security Guards

Did you know air-bag-equipped cars and trucks may be hazardous to you after a crash?

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration has published a handbook giving guidance for rescue procedures with such vehicles. It tells what precautions to take with the powder if the air bag is deployed, how to tell if there is an undeployed air bag, and tells you what to do to protect an occupant and yourself from a bag that may deploy while you're trying to rescue the person.

It also tells you what to do in case of a fire in a vehicle with an air bag, and gives guidance about side air bags.

Before cars had air bags, serious injuries, such as bleeding, facial cuts, or broken bones, were visible to rescuers. Now, air bags may hide those injuries, which need immediate medical attention. Even with the air bag covering the victim, there are tell-tale signs of injury:

Bent steering wheel. This could indicate internal injuries.

The driver being close to the steering wheel. Small people or extremely large people sitting close to the steering wheel are more at risk of internal injuries.

Energy of the crash. Twenty or more inches of the vehicle crushed indicates high crash forces that can cause serious internal injuries.

No use of safety belts. An unbuckled occupant who has an air bag will submarine under the bag until his knees hit the dash. Also, arms can be broken if they're caught between the air bag and the person's body.

To see the complete book, contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and ask for DOT HS 808 719. You can call them at (800) 424-2393 or e-mail them at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>. **A**

Hats off to...

The Softball Team From Twentynine Palms

By Dan Barber

The intramural softball team from Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms returned from the Southwest Region Navy Softball Intramural Championship tournament in heroic fashion: as champions and lifesavers.

The team was representing the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms in the SOPAC softball tournament in San Diego on June 26-27. They were warming up before a game on Saturday on a field next to Interstate 5 near the San Diego Naval Station's Main Street exit, when they saw two cars collide on the freeway.

A speeding car hit another one carrying two adults and three toddlers. The second car cartwheeled across traffic and landed on its roof, straddling the two right lanes of traffic.

The hospital's team (made up of medical and dental personnel along with the hospital's chaplain) sprang into action. Dropping their softball equipment and grabbing the team's first-aid kit, they scaled a 6-foot fence topped with barbed wire, dodged traffic traveling at 70 miles per hour and ran to the rescue of the injured people. HM3 Ricky J. Kaebisch ran into the lanes of traffic and scooped up one of the children who had been thrown from the car, saving him from the oncoming traffic.

Instinctively remembering their medical training, the team split into groups of two to three to attend the different victims. According to Capt. Joan M. Huber, commanding officer of the naval hospital, the team quickly evaluated all six victims' airways, breathing, and circulation. Capt. Huber also said they stopped the bleeding, immobilized injuries, and took precautions to avoid spinal injuries.

With Chaplain Daniel Dudley's help, the team secured the accident site, diverted traffic and protected the victims until the California Highway Patrol arrived. They continued to comfort and help the victims until the fire department and paramedics arrived. Lt. Robert Cunard, a family-practice doctor



Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms Champion Softball Team. From left to right are: HN Gene Santos; Lt. Robert Cunard; HM3 Ricky Krebisch; Lt. Jeff Sperring; HN Dwight Ayres, HM2 Anthony Guzman; HMC Randy Husted; HN Mario Gonzales; HN William Avery; DT2 Joseph Esteves; DT3 Chad Bagwell. Not shown are Lt. Dan Dudley and HM3 Chad Johnson

at the hospital, moved from one victim to another, directing the first aid and working with the paramedics when they arrived.

Once paramedics began to move the victims out of the roadway, the hospital's softball team helped get everyone from the vehicles, stabilized, on backboards, and carried to waiting ambulances. Within 20 minutes, all the victims had been evaluated and taken to hospitals. "Without a doubt, these professionals saved people's lives that day," said Capt. Huber.

When the final patient was loaded into an ambulance, the team returned to the softball field to an ovation from their opponents, the crew of the USS *Milius*. "The team was a little slower getting back over the fence and the barbed wire, probably because they didn't have the benefit of adrenaline on the return trip," Capt. Huber said. The hospital team was undefeated during the weekend, becoming the Southwestern Region Navy Intramural Softball Champions for 1999. ■

Mr. Barber is PAO for Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms.

The image features a warm, golden sunset background. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of four people are seated on a wooden pier or dock. The pier's railing is visible, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow. The top of the image is framed by the dark, hanging silhouettes of palm fronds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

When the Budd

By Rae Mack

In October 1994, FN Jason Knecht was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the death of his buddy, FN Carl L. Hall. Both were out on the town together, just like the buddy system demands. The system is designed to make shipmates look out for each other and keep each other out of trouble, not to increase the number of people who can get into trouble together. When the buddy system is misused, as it was in this case, the result can be tragic.

There were more than two buddies involved. Besides Jason and Carl, there were Brett, Sam and Joe. All of them lived in the same berthing area of their ship. *(Note: Since the facts in this article were taken from court and police files and are a matter of public record, we have used the real names of two of the Sailors involved in the mishap. We have changed the names of the others. Ed.)*

In April, Brett had gone on leave and left his motorcycle at a storage unit in the care of Joe. The bike had passed its annual inspection and was in good running condition. However, Brett had never registered it on base.

Jason, Carl, Sam, and Joe had finished work and were getting ready to go on liberty. Jason repeatedly asked Joe to let him use Brett's motorcycle. Finally, Joe gave in to Jason's badgering and gave him the keys to the storage shed and bike. He told Jason to leave the bike in the storage shed after he was finished with it.

Sam drove Jason to the storage facility to get the bike and then drove Carl to a motorcycle repair shop so Carl could get his bike out of the shop. Jason followed them on Brett's motorcycle. Sam dropped off Carl and then drove home.

Once at the cycle shop, Carl discovered the repair bill for his bike was more than he could pay. So he left his bike at the shop and rode with Jason to

a neighborhood bar. About an hour later, Jason and Carl dropped by Sam's apartment. Sam says that even though he smelled beer on Jason's breath, Jason didn't appear to be drunk. He didn't notice any alcohol on Carl's breath. After staying at Sam's for about an hour, Jason and Carl left, saying they were on their way to a bar in a neighboring city.

Almost four hours later, Carl arrived again at Sam's apartment, riding Brett's motorcycle. He said he had left Jason at the bar, but needed to go back to the ship to get Jason a jacket. Since Brett's motorcycle had no base sticker, he couldn't get it on base. Sam drove Carl to the ship.

While searching for Jason's jacket, Carl ran into Joe, who asked him where the motorcycle was. Carl told him the bike was outside with Jason and that they were going to a club to ride a mechanical bull. Joe told Carl to be sure he and Jason put gas in the motorcycle in the morning.

Driving back to his apartment, Sam noticed Carl still had no alcohol on his breath. Carl confided to Sam that Jason was drunk. Sam told Carl if that was the case, they should get a cab and not let Jason drive. Carl left Sam's to return to the bar and Jason. It was now midnight.


At 2 a.m., Jason, with a BAC of 0.16, was doing 90 mph on the motorcycle. Carl was a passenger. As Jason entered a left curve, he lost control of the bike. It hit a guardrail. Carl was ejected, flew over a guardrail and landed in a ravine. Jason stayed with the bike and slid about 350 feet before it stopped. When police arrived, Carl was dead. Jason was taken to the hospital with broken bones in his right thigh, shin and forearm.

That wasn't the end of Jason's troubles. He was convicted of involuntary manslaughter, received a five-year sentence (with four years and 11 months suspended), fined \$336.50, and was placed on five

dy System Fails

years unsupervised probation, as long as he remained in the Navy. Upon discharge, he was placed on supervised probation.

Sgt. J.J. Della Vecchio, of the Virginia State Police, investigated this mishap. He interviewed Jason's friends and patrons at the bar where he and Carl had been. Jason's friends described him as a bully, who intimidated people, which is what he did to Joe to let him use Brett's bike. Joe never checked to see if Jason was licensed to drive a motorcycle (which he wasn't) or had taken a motorcycle safety course (which he hadn't). Carl had told Sam that Jason was already drunk at least two hours before the mishap. Sam could have insisted the bike stay parked and then driven Carl to the bar to pick up Jason and take him and Carl back to the ship. The bar patrons said they heard Jason insisting that he drive back to the ship and that Carl be the passenger. Nobody at the bar, including the management, stepped in to prevent this from happening. Jason told Della Vecchio that he thought Carl was more messed up than he was, even though Carl's BAC was half his. According to Della Vecchio, it isn't uncommon for people who have been drinking to not realize how drunk they are. "They always say they thought they were OK; the other fella was the one who was drunk," he says.

During this whole evening, not one person came forward to stop the ominous chain of events, even though there was plenty of opportunity to do so. Neither man should have been operating a motorcycle, and neither man was in a condition to realize that. If two people had ever needed a responsible buddy, it was these two. Unfortunately, there wasn't one around. 

When going on liberty, go with at least one buddy, but choose that buddy wisely.





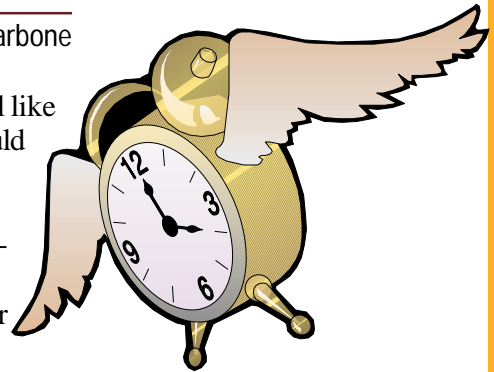
www.safetycenter.navy.mil

Share Them With a Responsible Buddy

How To Guarantee You'll Be Late

By Lt. Chris Carbone

Ever feel like you could use an extra five minutes, especially when you're late for work? Have



you ever tried to buy that time by “dropping the hammer” while you’re driving somewhere? I thought I could do that with the horsepower that came with my 900 cc motorcycle. It turned out to be one of the worst deals I ever tried to negotiate.

I was idling north (checking my watch) on a two-lane road behind five rental cars loaded with tourists who were fascinated by everything they saw. Afraid I was going to be 10 minutes late, I was patient only a short time. Then, spying an opening in oncoming traffic, I downshifted two gears, rolled on the throttle, and made my move. I shifted to third gear, and the speedometer hit 85 mph. I was going to make it on time.

When I looked up from checking my speed, I saw the lead car in the cavalcade was turning left—right in front of me. My bike ricocheted off the front fender of the car. I was airborne for what seemed like minutes. When I landed, I slid 140 feet across the pavement. My bike and I met at a water main on the left side of the street.

As it turned out, I was 10 weeks late for work—not 10 minutes. I had lost 40 percent of my skin, my motorcycle, my helmet, and my favorite pair of jeans. What I got in return was a trip to the operating room to have my tricep stuffed back into my arm, six weeks of physical therapy, a huge stack of bills, and worst of all, dozens of hours talking to lawyers.

Ask yourself how many times you’ve pushed the limits to make up lost time. Have you ever woven in and out of traffic to get ahead, then sat at a stop light next to the people you were hurrying to pass? It takes an incredibly stupid amount of speed to make up even a couple of minutes on the road. And, if things go wrong, you’ll lose time you can never buy back. **A**

Lt. Carbone is an ECMO with VAQ-134.

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Chainsaws — Quick, Efficient, and Th

By Carol V. Parks

From FY94 to FY98, eight Sailors and Marines were hurt using chainsaws. Because of these injuries, which included deep cuts to hands, knees, feet, and heads, the Sailors and Marines lost 114 days from work.

Kickback Causes Most Injuries

Kickbacks happen when the moving chain hits a solid object or when the wood pinches the chain and pushes the saw in the opposite direction, toward the operator. The area of a chainsaw most susceptible to kickback is the upper end of the bar. Never touch the end of the bar to any object while the chainsaw is running.

An AT3 found out about kickback the hard way when he cut into a log, and the chain hit a knot. He lost control of the saw, and it hit him on his face and neck. The cut on his face was superficial, but the slash on his neck was deep, just missing the jugular vein. Had this cut been just a little deeper, he would have died.

Another mishap involved a staff sergeant who was cutting up a tree for disposal. While trying to saw through a branch with a single cut, the chain was pinched between the joint of the branch and the trunk. The chain dislodged and wrapped around his leg, cutting it so badly that it took 19 stitches to close the wound. The sergeant spent three days in the hospital, 14 days on convalescent leave, and had to undergo physical therapy before he could return to full duty.

Let's take a closer look at the sergeant's mishap. He had inspected his saw before he used it and found it was in good condition. He had worked with a chainsaw many times and wore gloves, goggles, coveralls, and hard-sole boots. He had no distractions while cutting the branches.

So, what went wrong? The sergeant didn't consider the tension on the limb. By trying to remove the branch with one cut, the branch



Don't follow this person's example. While the deed is commendable (volunteer work cleaning yards of local residents), this person is not wearing protective equipment. We only hope the boots are steel-toed.

They'll Take Your Leg Off

closed in on the chain. If he had made two cuts from opposite ends, he could have avoided the pinching.

More Problems

Although the sergeant wore some protective equipment, it wasn't enough. The most important thing he was missing was chainsaw-resistant leg protection over his overalls.

Incidentally, chainsaws operate at higher than 100 decibels. Hearing protection is necessary at this level of noise.

A face shield in addition to the goggles would have given his face better protection—not just from the chainsaw, but from flying wood chips and debris.

Overkill?

For the weekend user of a chainsaw, all this equipment may sound like overkill. After all, all you're going to do is cut one or two small branches, and you may think that "safety stuff" is just for the professionals. But think again. The two people in this article were cutting firewood and cleaning their yards, something most of you do if you're living off base.

Read the instruction booklet that came with your chainsaw. See what protective equipment the manufacturer recommends. It isn't a bad idea to review the booklet before each time you use your chainsaw—especially if you're an occasional user. ❏

Ms. Parks is a recreation specialist in the Shore Safety Programs Directorate at the Naval Safety Center.

Bless Those Leather Gloves

By CW04 Terry Long

It was a bright autumn day in the great Northwest. I had just bought a brand-new, 20-inch, high-speed (almost the speed of sound) chain saw and had studied the owner's manual. Ready for action, I felt qualified to use it. This was the perfect day for my mission, which was to cut and split wood to heat my home and that of my elderly neighbor.

I did my daily and turnaround inspection in accordance with the manual and maintenance cards. After topping off fuel and oil, I was almost ready to go. Following the directions in the manual, I added oil to the chain, checked the flow tube, put on my goggles, rolled down my sleeves, and pulled on my leather gloves. Since this was my first solo flight, I was a little on edge, but I was ready to show my stuff.

I hit the ignition switch, and the huge 26 cc engine began to spool up. What a sound—smooth as silk. All indications were normal. Before I launched, I even excited the throttle so I could watch that massive exhaust smoke bellow out. Man, this was it!

I approached the first log and pulled back on the throttle. I cut through that log like cutting butter with a steak knife. As I continued the mission of scoring on those log "bogeys" (I was now an ace), I started thinking about how simple this operation was. I couldn't understand the reason for all the dire warnings in the manual.

I started on my next log when suddenly it happened—the reason for all those warnings. The saw started vibrating (so did my heart and pulse rate). Within a micro-second, the drive clutch exploded. The chain snapped and wrapped itself around my left hand.

Good thing I had on those thick, leather gloves. Because of them, all I suffered were a few minor scratches around my wrist.

This mishap reminded me that even with state-of-the-art equipment, hazards never go away. I quickly started to get almost too comfortable with my new equipment. That level of comfort could have been enough for a real tragedy to strike. ❏

CW04 Long is the quality assurance officer at VAQ-142.

Drowning Out the Whistle

By Wanda M. Walters

The worst experience my friend, Ray, lived through was the death of Will, his younger brother. The two brothers were very close, and Will idolized his older brother.

Ray had a part-time job after high school. On occasion, Will would persuade his school-bus driver to let him off at his brother's workplace. He would hang around until Ray got off work. Then Ray would drive to a local hangout, where the two would get a soda before heading home.

One afternoon, Ray, Will and a guy who worked with Ray were on their way to the restaurant. It was a beautiful afternoon, and they had the radio blasting a Stones tune. As Ray approached an unmarked railroad crossing, Ray heard the train's whistle blasting over the music. Ray didn't see any train because of the trees and shrubs along the track. It was less than 25 feet away when Ray drove onto the track.

When the train plowed into the car, Will and Ray's co-worker were killed instantly. Ray was injured seriously.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, in 1998, there were 3,508 collisions at railroad crossings. The death toll in these collisions was 431, and 1,303 people were injured. The nine states with the dubious honor of having the most collisions were (in order) Texas, Louisiana, Illinois, Indiana, California, Ohio, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi. Arkansas and Minnesota tied for tenth place.

The Deerfield, Ill., police department examined the reasons for drivers and pedestrians colliding with trains and came up with the following top eight causes of those crashes:

1. The person sees a train coming, but misjudges its speed and distance.
2. The person races the train to the crossing and is either struck by the train or runs into the side of it.
3. As the train clears the crossing, the person immediately starts to cross the tracks without looking for other trains and either strikes or is struck by a train running on an adjacent track.
4. A person becomes "too familiar" with a crossing and grows careless.
5. A person doesn't observe or obey warning signs and signals.
6. A person is either drunk or high on drugs.
7. With air conditioning and radio on, a motorist cannot hear the approaching train and fails to look.
8. A pedestrian wearing headphones cannot hear the approaching train and also doesn't look.

Mishaps at railroad crossings are a long-recognized problem. In 1978, a national organization—Operation Lifesaver—was created to educate drivers and pedestrians about the dangers of trains. Here are some tips to follow:



What looks like innocent fun could quickly turn tragic if a train came along. In 1998, 536 people walking on or near railroad tracks were killed; 513 were injured. (Operation Lifesaver)

Drivers

- ☛ Cross only at designated crossings.
- ☛ Never drive around lowered gates. It's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, report it to the police.
- ☛ Never race a train to a crossing—even if you tie, you lose.
- ☛ Don't get trapped on a crossing. Only go across a track if you're sure you can cross the entire track.
- ☛ Abandon your car or truck if it stalls on a crossing. Try to start it only if you can post lookouts to warn of approaching trains. No car is worth a life.
- ☛ Don't stop once you start across. If lights start flashing or gates start coming down, keep going. The warning signals allow enough time for you to drive over the tracks before the train comes.

- ☛ Watch out for a second train when crossing multiple tracks.
- ☛ Trains can't stop quickly. It can take more than a mile to stop once the engineer hits the brakes. By the time the engineer can see you, it is probably too late to stop.

Pedestrians

- ☛ Don't walk, run, cycle, or drive ATVs on railroad tracks, especially through tunnels.
- ☛ Don't hunt, fish or bungee jump from railroad trestles. There is only enough clearance on tracks for a train to pass.
- ☛ Don't try to hop aboard. That "free" ride may cost you your life. ❌

Ms. Walters is OSH Manager at the naval hospital in Rota, Spain.



How I Became a Real Grease Monkey

Not a day goes by at work that someone doesn't ping on us about personal protective equipment. Seems like everybody has a hand in seeing that we not only wear it, but that we wear it right and at the right time. But what about wearing our PPE at home?

The at-home jobs seem mindless because we do them so often. We learned how to do chores like cooking, changing filters, or even working on our cars from family and friends. After all, have you even seen a manual on washing a car like you have on washing a plane? Ever seen a sign in your own garage that reminded you to wear PPE? I can honestly say that until last weekend, I never even considered wearing PPE at home. However, my attitude has changed dramatically.

It was almost lunchtime, and I was covered in grease from changing a wheel bearing. I was hungry and trying to get the job done so I could grab a bite to eat before starting on the next item of my "honey-do" list.

I still had to bleed the brakes before the job would be done. As my son pumped the brake in the car, I groped blindly to find the bleed valve. When I finally put a wrench on it, it was tight. I had my helper turn the steering wheel so I could put my head between the tire and fender to get a better look at the valve. I wanted to make sure the wrench was well seated before I applied a lot of pressure to break the valve loose (a trick I learned after busting my knuckles several times). After a few hard tugs, the valve still wouldn't budge. I couldn't seem to get the right leverage.

After repeatedly shifting my body, I finally got in just the right position. I pulled on the wrench, and as the bleed valve broke loose, the brake fluid did exactly what I wanted it to do. It squirted out—but right in my face.

After wiping the fluid off my glasses, I realized that I had gotten off easy. The fluid could have easily splashed into my eyes.

I had learned my lesson. I washed my face and went into the garage where I found an unused pair of safety goggles. The crazy thing is, I've had those goggles for years, and had never worn them. Now, putting on them or any other protective equipment I need is the first thing I do.

AE1(AW) Larry Denman
VAQ-128

A Hair-Brained Idea

I was sitting at the kitchen table, enjoying my cup of morning coffee, when I heard a loud bang from my bathroom. After wiping coffee off my lap, I raced in to see what had happened.

My wife was standing in front of the mirror, with a pained look on her face, inspecting her hair. Her hair dryer was lying on the floor.

I picked it up and found that the power cord near the handle had frayed from years of use. When it finally shorted, it not only gave my wife a spectacular show of sparks, but it had actually set some of her hair on fire.

Being an aviation safety officer, I asked her if she had pre-flighted her gear before she used it. Her answer was a quick jab in my rib cage. Pre-flight her gear? What a hair-brained idea, she thought.

But it really isn't. We need to inspect the equipment we use at home just as we do the equipment at work. Take the time to check electrical cords, the batteries in smoke and CO detectors, lawn and garden equipment, and kitchen appliances.

Lt. Thomas Adams
VP-10

Why I Ride Like a Pro

For four years, I have been an avid triathlete. As part of my training, I ride my bicycle on my 22-mile commute to work each day.

Last June, I was on my way to work about 0600, going at 25 mph, when I swerved to avoid a pothole. The bike's front tire hit a puddle, and the bike slid out from under me.

I was launched forward, landed on my left side and hit the edge of the concrete curb, with my helmet taking the full force of the blow. When I examined my helmet later, I saw a large break in the part of the helmet that protected my left temple.

The force of my head falling from about 5 feet, at 25 mph, may not have killed me, but I sure would have been hurt badly. As it was, I was able to get up, brush myself off, get back on the bike, and continue on to work. My only injuries were cuts and bruises (road rash) down the left side of my body. I used to think that wearing a helmet was a nuisance and uncomfortable. Then I noticed all the pros wore helmets. Once I started training to race, I saw why and gained a new respect for the way they can prevent injuries. Now, after my fall, I wouldn't get on a bicycle without one.

Ens. Daniel C. Kidd
USS *Russell* (DDG 59)
Pearl Harbor, HI

Chokin' and Coughin' in the Wardroom

It was just another dinner in the wardroom. Two of my squadronmates, Phil and Mark, and I were eating ribs and yukking it up about cruise, going home and sports.

Phil started talking about his routine while watching football games. He started animatedly with the Thursday night game on ESPN. He just about finished covering Sunday when he seemed to have difficulty swallowing his food. He tried to drink a little water, and I was about to ask him if he was choking. Just then, he put his hands around his neck, the international signal for choking.

I jumped up and positioned myself behind his chair. I told him to stand up, but he couldn't. After I helped him to his feet, I wrapped my arms around him and pushed my fist into Phil's stomach to do the abdominal-thrust maneuver. My first attempt was intentionally weak because I didn't want to hurt him. Then I followed that

feeble attempt with a much stronger one to dislodge the piece of food.

It didn't pop out of his mouth like it does in the movies. Instead, Phil coughed and heaved until he finally disgorged a stringy piece of fat from the ribs.

My part in this episode took about 15 seconds. It didn't seem like much, but to Phil, it was a lot. Paying attention in those life-saving classes paid off for me and my buddy.

Lt. David A. Pearce
VAW-117

A Horrible End to a Wonderful Evening

My wife and I had just finished enjoying a meal at a fancy restaurant. As the dinner ended, so did our relaxing evening.

We were seated near an elderly couple. We noticed them occasionally as we ate, and commented on them throughout dinner. They looked like one of those outstanding pairs who continue to enjoy each other's company even after many years together.

When the woman slumped out of her chair, I thought she had slipped. I saw her husband jump up right away to help her, so I wasn't too concerned. But my wife said there was something terribly wrong. By this time, other diners had gone to help her.

It was an amazing sight. In less than 10 seconds, five people rushed to the couple's table to help. One person checked the stricken woman's airway, two men started CPR, my wife checked her pulse, and another woman timed the whole job. The woman wasn't breathing and had no pulse. Someone called 911.

More people gathered, and all were willing to help. In a few moments, 12 people worked smoothly, as if trained together for the task. Thirteen minutes later, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) arrived. The crew continued CPR and used a defibrillator—still no response. They took the women to a hospital where doctors pronounced her dead.

Despite the sad ending, we all learned something that evening. We never know when we may need to use the CPR we have learned. Also, only quick action and teamwork can save a life.

If you're not already qualified to give CPR, you should be. If you do have the qualification, make sure it's current.

Ens. Ed Jensen
VAQ-134

Fork Truck Mishap Prompt OSHA To Require Train

By LCdr. John Jennings

I had finished my housekeeping tour of a warehouse and decided to swing by the shipping office to talk to the supervisor about any safety concerns she might have. As we began our talk, one of the fork-truck drivers entered the office to get his next loading assignment. Moments later, the glass door and window facing the warehouse exploded. Through the flying shards of glass appeared two forks, followed by the rest of the fork truck. Instinctively, the three of us grabbed each other in a group hug and pressed ourselves against the wall. As the truck came to a standstill in front of us, all we could hear were the idling engine and our heavy breathing. We wondered how this could have happened.

This mishap had started two days before, when an employee used the fork truck to break up some bales of material and didn't realize a piece of banding had wrapped around the brake cable. The material allowed the brake handle to set but kept it from having enough tension to hold the brake. The next

day, the operator didn't do the required daily inspection and, therefore, didn't notice the condition of the brake. The morning of the mishap, another operator didn't know how to inspect the truck. He looked it over but never noticed the band. Adding to this mixture was an uneven warehouse floor that sloped toward the shipping office.

Before military people get smug and think these types of mishaps happen only in civilian warehouses and factories, let me remind you that from 1994 through 1998, Sailors and Navy employees had more than 140 mishaps with fork trucks.

Two Sailors were killed in these mishaps. An EO2 was crushed between a parked fork truck and one that was moving a small building. An E-4 lost control of a fork truck and tipped over into a ditch. Also, five people have had limbs amputated while adjusting forks and during rollovers. Twenty-two people broke bones, 21 sprained their feet and ankles, legs or groins, and 17 strained their backs and

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necks. Not all people injured were operating the trucks: Thirty-two were hit by them, and 34 were jumping from the trucks without paying attention to where they were landing.

One injured non-driver was an ABH2 who was hurt when he was part of the fork truck's cargo. He and two other Sailors were sanding 20-foot-high garage doors at a cargo-handling battalion. The equipment officer had told the ABH2 to use a picnic table held up by two fork trucks as a scaffold. An active-duty Sailor told the equipment officer that what he was asking wasn't safe, but the officer never changed his orders. As the Sailors were finishing the task, one of the forks dropped, causing the table (with the Sailors still on it) to fall 15 feet. The ABH2 bruised his knee and elbow and dislocated his shoulder. He lost one drill day and seven days from his civilian job. The unit's CO counseled the officer-in-charge.

Because of the number of mishaps involving fork

trucks in the military, as well as in private industry, it is important to teach people the right way to operate these trucks. A number of safety organizations have been encouraging the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to implement a more comprehensive training program than the one in place. And that's just what they have done.

On March 1, 1999, OSHA issued a revision to 29 CFR 1910.178 (Powered Industrial Trucks) requiring a more intensive training program for fork-truck operators. Employers have until Dec. 1, 1999, to complete training for employees hired before that date. Employees hired after Dec. 1 are to be trained before being assigned to operate fork trucks.

The new standard has several key points:

- The employers must ensure the operator is competent (demonstrated by successful completion of a training program and subsequent evaluations).
- Operators are to be formally trained, including practical training and exercises in the workplace.
- Before a person is allowed to operate a fork truck, the employer must evaluate the operator's performance and certify the training requirements have been completed.

In addition to being evaluated on their performance during initial training, operators must be evaluated at least once every three years. Also, employers must give refresher training if any of the following happens:

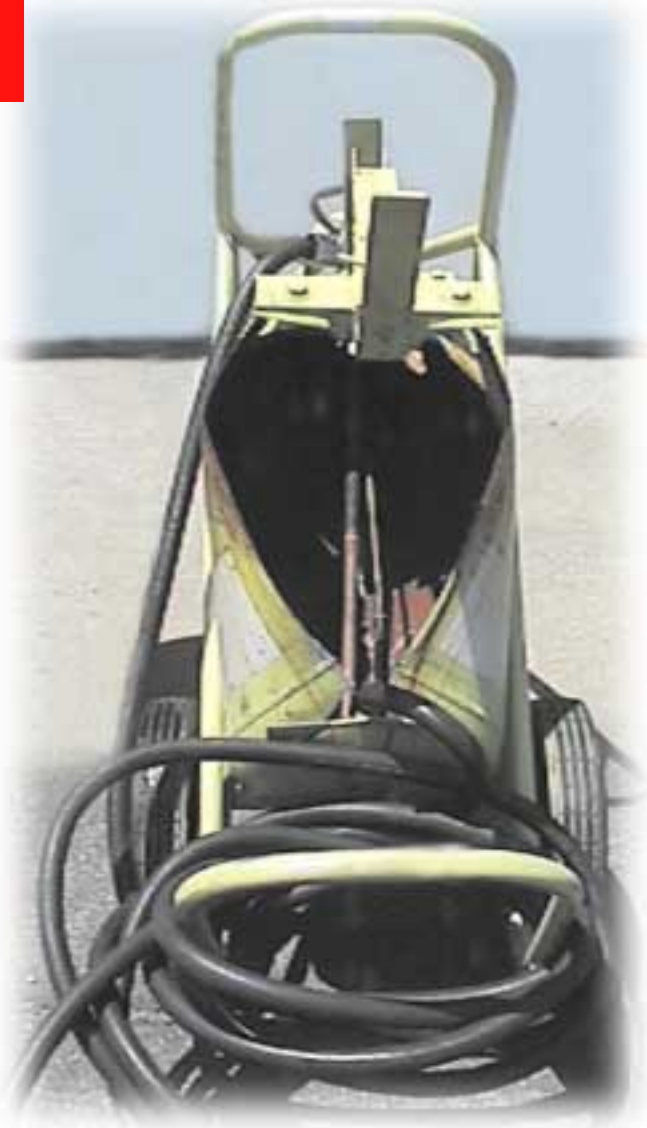
- The operator is involved in a mishap or near miss.
- Someone sees the operator driving recklessly.
- The operator asks for more training.
- Workplace changes are made that could affect fork-truck operators.
- The operator is assigned to an unfamiliar vehicle.

There are many places to go for training materials. OSHA has information on the revised standard and its training requirements on their web site at www.osha.gov. The Joint Service Manual for Storage and Materials Handling (NavSup Pub 572) tells how to set up a classroom curriculum and what mandatory topics to teach. To speak to someone here at the Safety Center, contact Jim Wilder. His phone number and addresses are on the inside front cover. ■

LCdr. Jennings is a reservist in the Naval Safety Center's augmentation unit. In civilian life, he is an industrial hygienist and safety specialist for a container corporation. Lt. Andrea Reid, also a reservist at the Safety Center, helped prepare this article.

Compressed Gas Cylinders

Potential Bom



When this Halon 1211 extinguisher ruptured, it blew a hole almost 2 feet wide and bent the hose-support assembly up almost 3 feet.

Many operations at DoD facilities use compressed-gas cylinders. And most of these cylinders have been around for a long time. They are used for welding, as propane tanks, and as fire extinguishers. You see them carried in the backs of pickups, wheeled around on dollies on flight lines, and secured aboard ships.

These cylinders are potentially hazardous because they can rupture if not handled or stored with special care. Labels on cylinders and material safety data sheets (MSDS) give information about the gases inside. Gases may be flammable, combustible, corrosive, oxidizing, poisonous, or inert. Depending on the properties of the gases and the pressure in the cylinder, there is always the potential for hazards or explosions, such as one that happened at a naval air station in August.

A firefighter was charging a wheeled Halon 1211 fire extinguisher with nitrogen to bring it up to operating pressure. Suddenly the extinguisher (an Amerex Model 600) ruptured and ripped a hole from the top to bottom weld in the front of the unit. The force of the rupture was so strong that it bent the assembly that supports the hose 3 feet upward.

Because the firefighter was standing behind the tank, he suffered only a minor injury to his right arm. If he had been standing in front of the extinguisher, the blast probably would have killed him.

People who inspected the extinguisher said the safety-relief valve, which should have vented, never did. The inside of the tank showed no corrosion.

The extinguisher was manufactured in 1986 and put into service a year later. It had been hydrostatically tested two years ago.

You must be cautious when handling these compressed-gas cylinders. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations on handling compressed-gas cylinders are found in 29 CFR 1910.101. Here are general procedures for handling and storing compressed-gas cylinders:

- ✓ You must identify and label the contents. Inspect to make sure cylinders are in good condition.
- ✓ Secure cylinders to prevent tipping, falling or rolling.
- ✓ Report all leaking cylinders to your hazmat manager and move them away from other cylinders.
- ✓ Periodically inspect cylinders in their storage areas, and fix any problems immediately.
- ✓ Store cylinders in areas specified for this purpose. The area must be well ventilated and away from heat sources.
- ✓ Store and move cylinders in an upright position, and secure them either with chains or cable.
- ✓ Use your hands to open and close valves. If you have difficulty doing so with your hands, contact the supplier or vendor.
- ✓ Label empty cylinders.
- ✓ Never smoke near cylinders. ❌

For more information about how to handle compressed-gas cylinders and findings on the mishap above, contact Vince Lisa, Head, Fire Data Analysis Division at the Naval Safety Center.



Hit the Deer — Don't Swerve To Avoid It

If a deer jumps into the path of your vehicle, and you can't brake in time, hit it.

That's the advice of Ohio wildlife officials.

"Killing the animal is better than endangering people by swerving to miss," says John Wisse, a spokesman for the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Drivers must avoid the instinctive response to veer away because they could lose control, Wisse said.

Deer collisions are rarely fatal for motorists or passengers, Wisse said. The most serious injuries occur when a driver swerves to avoid a deer and hits a fixed object or moving car.

Most deer collisions occur from October through December. During that time, motorists must take special care in deer-crossing areas and slow down so they have time to brake if they have to.

Deer movement peaks during breeding season in November. Hunters and recreational campers also contribute to increased movement by creating upheaval in the forest, according to Wisse. ❌

Make Yourself a

By Lt. John R. Long

With the holidays only a few months away, it's not too soon to start shopping for the people on your gift list. While you're searching for just the right present, criminals are searching for an easy target to rob or attack. Here are some precautions to take so your holiday season (and your bank account) isn't ruined.

Be Alert

Walk confidently, with your head up, and stay in well-lit and well-traveled areas. Pay attention to people walking in front of and behind you. Be cautious when you are in a crowded area, such as buses, trains, malls, and stores. Places with crowds are favorites for thieves and pickpockets.

If you carry a purse, keep it in front of you and close to your body. Cover the flap or clasp with your hand and forearm. Never leave your purse in a shopping cart or on a counter while you pay for purchases. If you do leave your purse in a shopping cart, keep an eye on it and fasten it in with the child safety straps.

When using public washrooms, don't hang your purse on the hooks on the door. Someone can

reach over the door and grab it. Instead, hang it on the tissue dispenser.

Don't carry a loosely woven, unlined purse or one without zippers or flaps. Those are easy marks for pickpockets. Keep your keys in your pocket, not your purse. If your purse is stolen, the thief has keys to your car and home, as well as your address on your driver's license.

If you carry a change purse or a wallet, keep it in your front pants pocket or in the inside breast pocket of your coat.

Shop with friends or relatives. There is safety in numbers.

Be Discreet

Never carry large amounts of money. Whenever possible, use credit cards, debit cards or checks instead of cash. When paying by credit card, make sure the clerk prints only one credit slip with your card. Also, be sure to tear up any carbons attached to the credit slips.

When you pay by check, some clerks may ask for a credit card as additional identification. You can show them the card, but don't allow them to write

your account number on the check. It's also not a good idea to have your social security number printed on your checks. If they are stolen, that information, along with your name and address, is enough for a person to steal your identity and open accounts in your name.


Don't draw attention to yourself while shopping. Thieves and pickpockets are attracted to expensive clothing and jewelry. Dress comfortably and casually.

Hard Target

Secure Your Car

Park as close as possible to your destination and in a well-lit area. Store packages in the trunk instead of the back seat where they will tempt someone. When returning to your car, have your keys in your hand, ready to open the door. Look under the car and check the front and rear seats for anyone who may be hiding there. If there is a large vehicle, such as a van, parked next to you, check under it also. You can also ask a security guard to escort you to your car. Some malls offer valet parking during busy holiday shopping periods. Take advantage of it. Immediately after you get in your car, lock the doors.

Secure Your Home

When you are out, leave at least one light on. You may also want to let a neighbor know you will be out of the house for a short time so they can watch your house for you. If you plan to be away for a longer period of time, tell a neighbor or friend who can keep an eye on your house. Have them check periodically to make sure packages that may be delivered while you're gone are not sitting on your porch. 

Lt. Long is attached to Tactical Support Center, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

Watch your back



Which Way to the Rain Forest?

By Ltjg. Jim Lamar

My first WestPac. After three weeks of heavy flying while transiting the Pacific, I was looking forward to seeing the countryside during our first port call in Singapore. According to a reliable source who had done some trekking on the last cruise, there were great places to hike in the area—mainly the Malaysian rain forests. Hiking would give me a good, day-long workout and let me distance myself from the rest of the air wing. I wanted some time alone to reenergize.

With no information at all about the area, except knowing there was a rain forest *somewhere*, I loaded a backpack with a few essentials (extra T-shirt, shorts, and socks) and headed north. I had no idea where I was going, but as luck would have it, I stumbled upon a subway station. In my best American English, I asked an attendant how to get to the rain forest. He looked at me like I had two heads. Undeterred, I asked how to get to Malaysia. Success! He gave me subway numbers, bus numbers and directions to the Singapore-Malaysia border. With passport in hand, I was well on my way to an enjoyable afternoon. Or so I thought!

Following the attendant's instructions, I boarded the subway and headed north. After 90 minutes, I was at the end of the line. I remember thinking the rain forest must be close. I found the Number 71 bus and tried to confirm the information I received from the subway attendant by asking the bus

driver if this was the bus to the rain forest. Either he didn't understand English, or he had never heard of the rain forest. However, many questions later, I found out I was indeed heading in the right direction.

I crossed into Malaysia without a hitch, still thinking the rain forest was just over the next hill. It wasn't. I was getting frustrated. I had been traveling four hours without seeing any semblance of a jungle. I was hot and sweaty, and now I was lost. With no knowledge of the language and local customs and culture, I had really backed myself into a corner.

Fifteen hours and 500 miles later, I made it to Tamen Nigara (one of two national parks in Malaysia). I saw monkeys, water buffalo and exotic birds. I even walked atop the jungle canopy on the world's longest rope bridge.

During those 15 hours, I had plenty of time to think about what I was doing and realized I had disregarded some important rules. I was traveling alone, with no buddy to count on if I had gotten into a tight spot (which I did). I had no idea where I was going or how I was going to get there. I hadn't told anyone on the ship where I was going. I also hadn't taken the time to know about local customs or conditions. If I had, I would have known that shorts aren't the right thing to wear in Muslim countries. ❌

Ltjg. Lamar is with VAW-113.

The Last Word . . .

Holding the Keys to the Future

By Winky White

I received a letter today from dear friends. Enclosed were two photos of their daughter's wedding. What lovely pictures—happy and proud faces. I've known this family for many years, and even though they moved to Europe, we keep in touch. As I read the letter, I couldn't help but think back to an incident that happened while their daughter was still in elementary school.

My friends were at a party at our home. There was lots of champagne, and my friends loved champagne. I was the designated non-drinker at that party so I could keep an eye on our guests. When the party was over, our friends stood at the door, ready to drive home. I was trying, without much success, to keep them from driving. They weren't buying that. When we got to the parking lot where they had parked their car, they found it had been blocked in, and the attendant wasn't returning until the next morning. Now, they had no choice.

I drove them home and picked them up the next morning so they could retrieve their car. A happy ending.

As I looked at the happy faces in the photos, I thought about what could have happened if they had driven home that night. Their daughter would still be getting married, but there might not have been a proud mother and father standing beside her.

Although it's impossible to see into the future, we can certainly anticipate what it will be like. We all want to be around to see our children grow up. ❏

Mr. White is the NavOsh director for ComNavForJapan.



Most of us
learned to
read in
first grade.

Some
didn't.