

The Naval Safety Center's Official Magazine for Shore Safety

Ashore

Riptides, Currents and Waves. **Oh My!**

Sailors Take Warning

My First DUI

Kids and Pickup Trucks

SHARK!



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A Naval Safety Center Publication

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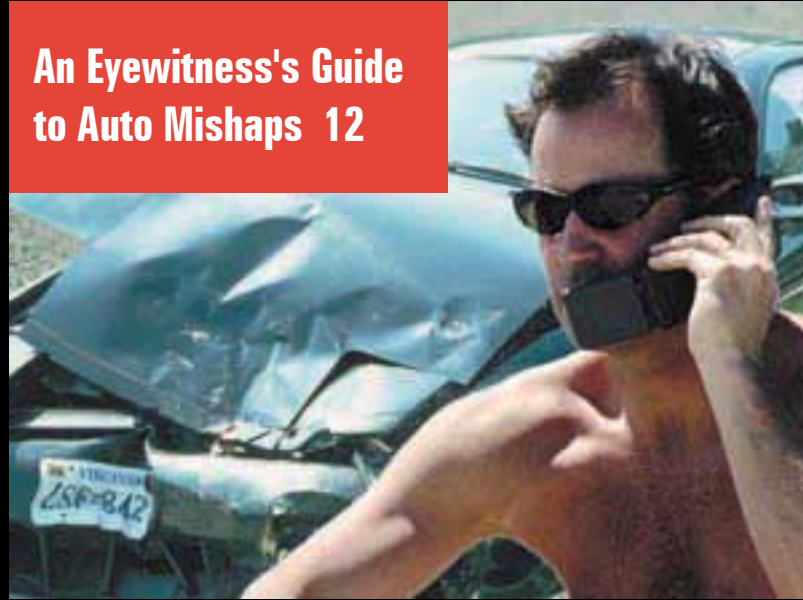
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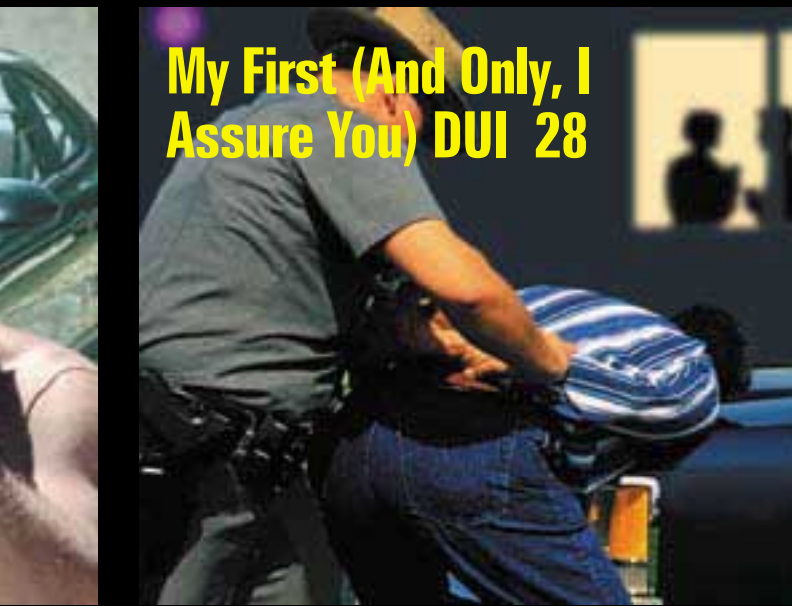


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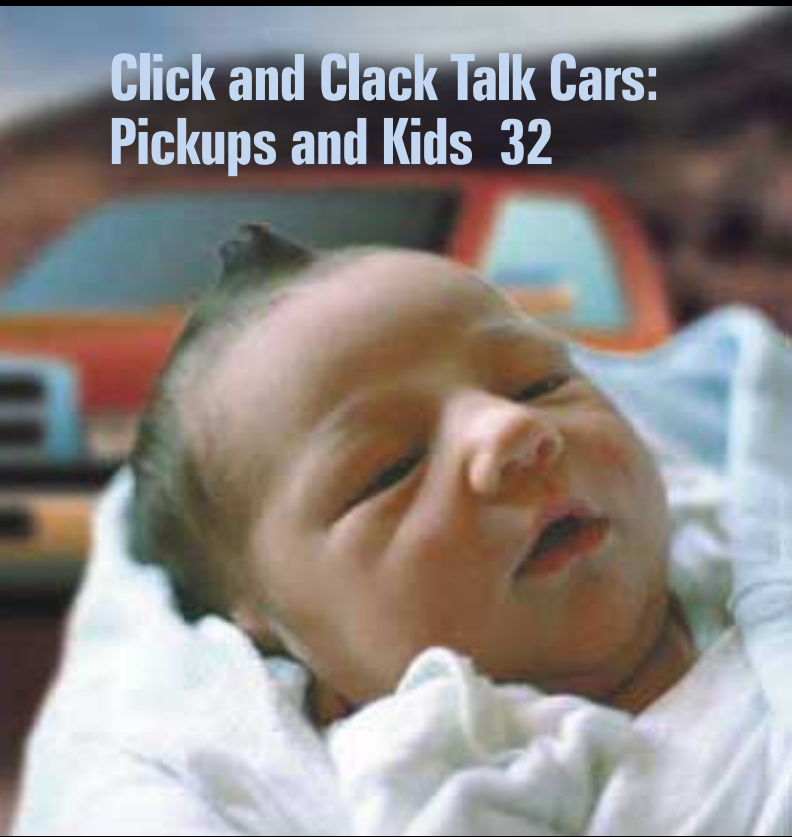




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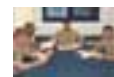
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From Our Readers...

Dear Editor:

The fact that the fire-alarm system described in "No More Monday Morning" (Winter 1998-99) was out of service was mentioned only once, but raises several questions. Who was responsible for inspecting and maintaining this system? How long had it been out of service?

When someone discovers a fire and sets off the building's alarm system, he should follow up with a call to the fire department. That way, firefighters can get a better idea of the situation and location. The failure of occupants to call the fire department delayed response by 17 minutes. This may be why the room was a total loss.

Many Navy buildings don't meet current fire-protection criteria. Building fire-alarm systems are becoming more complex and subject to failure. It is in every occupant's best interest to read and follow posted fire bills and evacuation plans.

Martin P. Clark
Safety Manager
LANTDIV, Norfolk, VA

According to Vince Lisa, head of the Safety Center's fire data analysis division, people from the Public Works Center are responsible for maintaining fire-protection systems. Fire inspectors check the systems, but don't activate them. That is done only during a fire drill, which is held once a year. In this case, the system was working, according to the display board,

and after the fire, technicians tested other pull stations in the building, and they worked. The occupants of the building had no way of knowing that the pull stations hadn't sent the signal to the fire department. They pulled the first one, and when firefighters didn't show up in a reasonable time, they pulled another one. That signal didn't go through either.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I just finished reading "You Still Think Drunks Are Funny?" (Spring 1999). The article was very informative and eye-opening for people who don't have personal experiences to draw from. However, when you start discussing what to do for a friend who has a drinking problem, you refer to the friend as "he," not "he or she" or "a person." This may leave the impression that females never have drinking problems. As both the personal stories show, women have just as many problems as men. I know, because I am married to a woman with a drinking problem.

Name Withheld

In this magazine, we sometimes use the generic term "he" instead of the awkward "he/she" or "him or her" as a method of editorial expediency. The use of the editorial "he" in no way implies that women don't have drinking problems.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

Just read your *Ashore* magazine. The articles are short enough that they don't take me away from my job for too long, and they have value for both civilians and military. The colors were bright, and the headlines grabbed my attention. I enjoyed the humor in the articles. I'm glad you changed the name. *Safetyline* was such a boring name that I automatically transferred that attitude to the articles. Now I look forward to the next issue.

Pat Huston
Accounting Technician
Naval Hospital Bremerton

Dear Editor:

I just wanted to write to say how much I enjoyed your first issues of *Ashore*. I posted several of the articles on our unit's safety bulletin board and have had many favorable comments. Keep up the good work. This is the best publication for non-flyers in DoD.

C. Fenimore
Air National Guard
Phoenix, AZ

Dear Editor:

I was wondering if there is a web site for *Ashore*.

SK2 David T. Turrell
USCG Marine Safety Office
Charleston, SC

The Naval Safety Center has a web site. Look on page 15 to see more information.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

I read PN2 McAdory's letter in the Spring issue of *Ashore* and want to make this comment about automatic shoulder harnesses. I think they are the most dangerous things that have been put in automobiles since engines. I bought my first car with seatbelts in 1963 and haven't driven more than 100 miles since then without one fastened. However, I have the hardest time remembering to connect the lap belt when I am in a car with those automatic shoulder harnesses. When that harness touches your body, it makes you believe the system is on and gives a false sense of security. It's an effort to remember to buckle up, but after

reading what happened to PN2 McAdory's friend, it's a step you don't want to skip.

Cdr. Floyd English
Head, Explosive and Weapons Systems
Division
Shore Safety Programs
Naval Safety Center

Dear Editor:

We just received our first copies of *Ashore*. I distributed the magazines to our department heads, and they were very pleased to have new and pertinent issues to discuss at their safety meetings with their employees. We would like more case studies on using ORM if possible.

Nancy Fallin
Military Sealift Command Far East
Yokohama, Japan

We try to incorporate ORM lessons in as many articles as we can. The article on page 27 should be of interest to you.—Ed.

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.

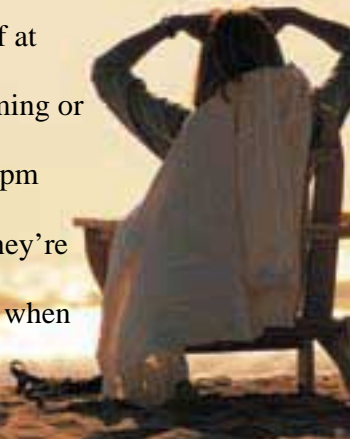
We welcome your comments about the articles in this magazine or about any safety issue. Send letters to the editor, with your name, address and work phone number to:

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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.

Make Summer Safety a Family Affair

- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15—even on cloudy days.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming or excessive perspiring.
- Avoid the sun from 10 am to 3 pm when its rays are strongest.
- Always watch children when they're in or near water.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy when using gas grills.



SHARK!

By Rae Mack

When you're diving in open water, you're invading the home of sea creatures—some not very hospitable. A Navy chief and his dive buddy ran into one of them last summer off the coast of Virginia Beach.

MMC(SW) Dan McGrath, 3M Coordinator aboard USS *Trenton* (LPD 14) in Norfolk, was diving with three other people on Aug. 22. Dan had made many dives before with his friend, Bob Finney from Toms River, N.J. Bob's brother, Kevin, from North Carolina, and his neighbor, Donnie Phillips, were eager to take up the sport. Kevin and Donnie had just passed their certification. This dive was their first.

The four men aboard Dan's boat, the *Corie Ault*, were 22 miles southeast of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach to do some spear fishing on a wrecked drydock 60 feet below the surface. The divers paired off, with Bob and Donnie making the first dive. Bob took Donnie exploring on the wreck, then they speared a couple of fish. Their dive was short—only 20 minutes. When they surfaced, Dan and Kevin were already suited up ready for their turn.

Dan and Kevin made an uneventful descent to the wreck. Kevin shot at a fish and missed. Dan had better luck; he speared a tautog. Kevin watched

intently as Dan retrieved the fish to remove the spear. "We were paying so much attention to the fish I had just speared that we weren't really looking around," said Dan. "All of a sudden, I saw a shark just inches from Kevin's face."

Kevin saw it at the same time. He put up his hand in front of his face as a defensive gesture. The shark must have taken it as an aggressive one and grabbed Kevin's hand.

According to Dan, the shark was a tiger, about 12 feet long.

"Kevin was trying to pull his arm away, and I grabbed him to keep the shark from carrying him off," said Dan. "I started beating the shark with the butt of my spear gun. After about 20 seconds, it let go of Kevin."

"We retreated back to the wreck and tried to make ourselves almost part of it, all the while keeping a watch on the shark. Kevin was bleeding and holding his arm as the shark swam slowly out of sight."

Kevin and Dan did a controlled ascent to the surface. When they got to the top, they yelled to Bob and Donnie to help them aboard.

While the *Corie Ault* was heading for shore, Dan got on the radio and called the Coast Guard. He and others watched Kevin for signs of shock

and gave him first aid to stop the bleeding. Within 20 minutes, the Coast Guard met the *Corie Ault*, loaded Kevin and Bob onto a boat and rushed them to Virginia Beach General Hospital.

Kevin was in surgery for three hours. It took 60 stitches to close his wounds. Except for having no feeling in his little finger on his left hand, he is OK.

Looking back on the incident, Dan is glad he did some things right. He didn't panic, and he had a radio and first-aid kit on board. However, he realizes there were some things he shouldn't have done.

"When we got to the dive spot, I noticed about six or seven fishing boats. By the time we suited up to dive, there was only one," he said. "I realize now that with that many boats, there was either chum in the water or small, wounded fish being thrown back in. Also, something must have spooked the fish and made them move on, because the boats soon followed."

Dan says he never dives alone. But he will be more aware of his surroundings. "If we had been 20 feet apart, I never would have noticed that a shark was on Kevin," said Dan. "But we were so engrossed in getting that tautog off the spear, we weren't paying any attention to the shark swimming up to us. If we had seen him sooner, we probably could have pressed up against the wreck, and the shark may have passed us by."

This dive wasn't the first time Dan had seen a shark in the waters off the Virginia coast. "I've seen about four, usually when I'm coming down the anchor line," he said. "But usually they leave you alone."

Dan has been questioned by television crews, reporters, game officials, and people who have heard about the incident. One question he was asked still has him puzzled. "Someone told me that sharks use certain wrecks as mating grounds, and maybe this one was there for that purpose. They wanted to know if I knew if this was a male or female shark." As he tells that, Dan just smiles and shrugs. "I was beating on its snout, not the other end."

10 Ways to Avoid a Shark Attack

1. Swim, surf or dive with other people, and don't move too far away from help.
2. Stay out of the water at dawn, dusk and night when some species of sharks move inshore to feed.
3. Don't enter the water if you have open wounds or are bleeding in any way. Sharks can detect blood and body fluids in very small concentrations.
4. Avoid murky waters, harbor entrances and other areas near stream mouths (especially after heavy rains), channels or steep drop offs. These types of waters are known to be frequented by sharks.
5. Do not wear high-contrast clothing or shiny jewelry. Sharks see contrast very well.
6. Don't splash around. Keep pets that swim erratically out of the water. Sharks can be attracted to such activity.
7. Don't enter the water if you know sharks are present. Leave the water quickly and calmly if you see one. Don't provoke or harass a shark, not even a small one.
8. Be alert to the activities of fish or turtles. If they start to behave erratically, leave the water. A shark may be present.
9. Remove speared fish from the water or tow them a safe distance from you. Don't swim near people fishing or spear fishing. Stay away from dead animals in the water.
10. Swim or surf at beaches patrolled by lifeguards, and follow their advice.

(Provided by the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association)

Why Sharks Attack

There are almost 400 species of sharks, but only a few have ever been known to attack a human. Commonly seen sand, nurse, dogfish, and leopard sharks are relatively docile. However, an article in *Alert Diver*, a publication of the Divers Alert Network, gives some theories as to why sharks attack humans.

One cause for a shark attack may simply be mistaken identity. For example, a surfer paddling on the surface might look like a tasty seal, sea lion or sea turtle. Sharks have been known to follow their prey into shallow water, where the flash of a pale human leg might easily be mistaken for the white belly of a fish or ray.

Another theory suggests that a swimmer or snorkeler splashing on the surface might send vibrations through the water similar to those of a sick or injured fish. Researchers on shark behavior have performed experiments that demonstrate sharks are attracted to thrashing and splashing on the surface.

Sometimes, sharks may just be protecting their “turf.” Divers often note that the gray reef shark found in the Pacific gets visibly agitated in human encounters, arching its back, dropping its pectoral fins, raising its snout, and swimming with exaggerated weaving and rolling motions. Researchers interpret these patterns as territorial behavior toward the bubble-blowing intruders. 📌



MMC (SW) Dan McGrath suits up for a day of diving off the **Corie Ault**.

Who Gets Bitten?

According to a report by Dr. George Burgess with the International Shark Attack File at the University of Florida, most shark attacks do not involve scuba divers.

He studied 78 documented shark attacks that happened in the waters of the continental U.S., the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and Hawaii between 1990 and 1993. Most of these attacks occurred at the surface and involved surfers, snorkelers and swimmers. Only four percent (three attacks) happened to submerged scuba divers, and an equal number involved free-divers beneath the surface. Roughly 13 percent of the attacks took place in shallow water; the victims were wading or sitting. 📌

I Was Ready

By Cdr. Kevin Mattonen, USN (Ret.)

For the two years that I lived in my apartment complex, I knew I could depend on my neighbor, Dwight, to be a “watchdog” for our families. Then, suddenly, Dwight was gone.

A 31-year-old former Marine, Dwight had suffered a stroke seven years ago and was confined to a wheelchair. With time on his hands, he had appointed himself as a one-man neighborhood watch. He would wave people into open parking spaces. He knew everyone by name. Most of all, he had an ever-ready smile and never complained about his lot in life.

One afternoon, I headed down the stairs to run an errand. As I rounded a landing to the last floor, I saw Dwight’s wheelchair in the garage, with Dwight splayed on the ground. I ran to his side as

fast as I could. After going through CPR class twice in the past four years, everything I did after that was by instinct.

I yelled to him, “Are you OK?” Dwight’s breathing was labored, and he was unresponsive. I ran upstairs and got a friend of mine (a Navy nurse) for help. As she was looking over Dwight, I called 911. I told the dispatcher the address and what little I knew of Dwight’s medical history. She asked me to go to Dwight and call her with an update that she could pass on to the paramedics. Then she told me to go to the highway and flag down the ambulance and direct the crew.

As the ambulance rolled up, Dwight continued to breathe on his own. However, within minutes he stopped breathing, and paramedics couldn’t find a pulse. They loaded him into the ambulance, where they continued life-saving efforts as they took him to the nearest hospital.

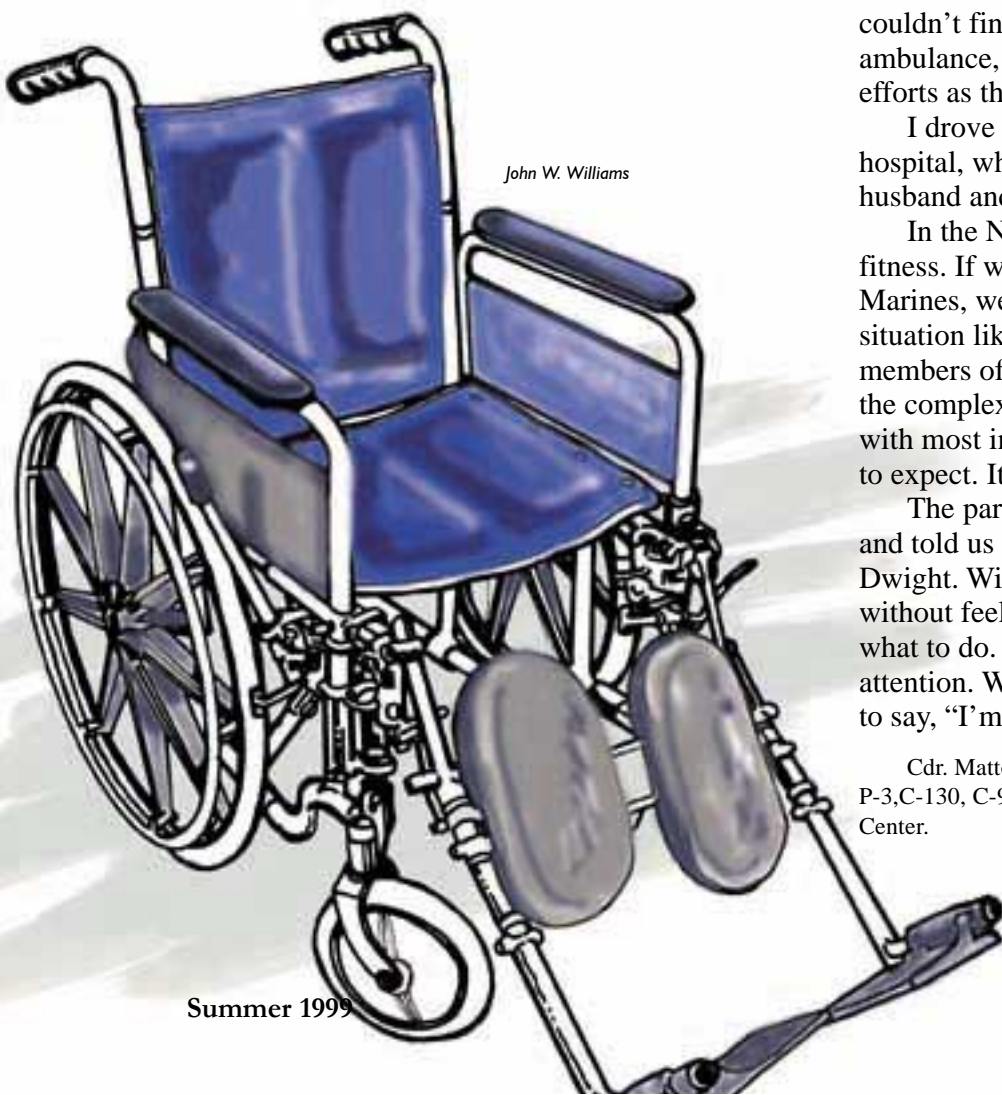
I drove Dwight’s wife and children to the hospital, where they learned they had lost a husband and father.

In the Navy and Marine Corps, we stress fitness. If we hang around with only Sailors and Marines, we probably would never encounter a situation like Dwight’s. However, we are also members of a greater community. Even though the complex I lived in is full of young families, with most in good health, you never know what to expect. It’s good to be prepared.

The paramedics thanked the nurse and me and told us we had done all we could for Dwight. With that in mind, I can sleep at night without feeling guilty because I didn’t know what to do. So, take those CPR classes and pay attention. When you are called upon, you’ll want to say, “I’m ready.”

Cdr. Mattonen was head of the multi-engine branch for P-3, C-130, C-9, E-6, and C-20 aircraft at the Naval Safety Center.

John W. Williams



Sailors Take Warning

If a hurricane hits back home while you're deployed, you have to know what precautions you need to take before you leave, and what your family needs to do while you're gone.



Major hurricanes are rare events in any location. Coastal residents from Brownsville, Texas, to Eastport, Maine, have a good chance of living many years without having their roofs blown off. But none of our coastal areas are immune. “We haven’t had a hurricane in years!” could be the most dangerous words you’ll ever hear. It’s best to be prepared. Who knows, this could be the year.

The season for hurricanes (or typhoons, as they are called on the West Coast) starts May 1 and ends November 30. The peak months are July through September. Hurricanes are nothing to take lightly. Imagine storms with a diameter ranging from 60 miles to more than 1,000 miles. They produce winds from 74 mph to 200 mph, with flooding rains and tornadoes.

When hurricanes head for land, especially places where there are Navy ports, ships head out to sea to avoid being damaged at piers, slamming into other ships, or destroying the piers themselves. Aircraft fly to safe havens. Spouses and children are left home, on their own during a storm. It’s important for you to know what precautions to take before you leave and what your family needs to do while you’re gone.

Before You Go

1. Find out your neighborhood’s history of storm surges. Know the safest and quickest routes inland, and the location of official shelters. Share this information with your family.
2. Trim back dead wood from trees.
3. Check for loose gutters and down spouts.
4. If you don’t have shutters to protect windows, stock up on plywood to cover glass.

5. Stock up on canned food and bottled water.
6. Check supplies of special medicines or drugs.
7. Make sure you have batteries for radios and flashlights.
8. Fill your car's gas tank.
9. Talk to your family about whether they want to stay or evacuate during the storm.
10. If you live in a mobile home, check the tie-downs.

Should Your Family Stay or Leave?

You and your family have to decide whether to ride out a storm at home or to evacuate. If local authorities recommend evacuation, make sure your family follows their advice. Evacuation may be the only answer if you live on a coastline or offshore island, if you live in a mobile home, or if you live near a river or in a flood plain.

Right Before the Storm Hits

If you're staying home, here are some things you should do:

1. Stay tuned to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins.
2. Board up garage and porch doors.
3. Move valuables to upper floors.
4. Bring in pets.
5. Turn up your refrigerator to maximum cold and avoid opening it.
6. Stay indoors on the downwind side of the house away from windows.

If you're planning to evacuate, do the following:

1. Leave as early in the morning as possible.
2. Shut off your water, electricity and gas.
3. Take small valuables and papers, but travel light.
4. Leave food and water for your pets. (Most shelters won't take them.)
5. Lock your house.

After the Storm


If you're driving back home, watch for dangling electrical wires, undermined roads, or flooded low spots. Even 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock you off your feet, and a depth of 2 feet will float your car. Never try to walk, swim or drive through swift water. Turn around and go another way.


Note any damaged water, sewer and electrical lines and report them as soon as possible.


When you enter your home, check for gas leaks. Check your food and water for spoilage.


Is It Going To Be a Big One?



Once a hurricane has formed, forecasters assign categories to gauge the type of damage it can produce when it makes landfall. This classification is known as the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale. Weather forecasters use these categories when giving warnings. Pay attention. What category the storm is assigned may make your decision or stay or evacuate a real easy one.

 Category 1 hurricanes produce winds of 74 to 95 mph and generate a 4-to-5-foot storm surge. (The surge is the wall of water at the center of the hurricane as it makes landfall. Most deaths from hurricanes are because of drowning in the storm surge, not from the winds.) Category 1 storms cause minimal damage to coastal areas but can produce tremendous rains that generate flooding.

 Category 2 hurricanes produce winds of 96 to 110 mph and generate a storm surge of 6 to 8 feet. Coastal damage is usually moderate.

 Category 3 storms are considered major, producing winds of 111 to 130 mph and a storm surge of 9 to 12 feet. They can produce extensive damage to coastlines, especially if they make landfall on a high tide. Hurricane Gloria, which struck New England in 1985 and Hurricane Bob, which also struck New England in 1991, were category 3 storms.

 Category 4 hurricanes are extremely dangerous, producing winds of 131 to 155 mph and a storm surge between 12 and 18 feet. Damage to coastal areas is normally extreme when it makes landfall. Hurricane Andrew, which devastated south Florida in 1992, was a category 4.

 Category 5 hurricanes produce winds of 156 mph or higher and generate a storm surge of 18 feet or greater. They cause catastrophic damage. Hurricane Camille is the only category-5 storm to strike the United States mainland. It did so in August 1969. Top winds of 200 mph and a 20-foot storm surge wiped out much of Mississippi's coastline. 

Drinking Your Way To Dehydration

It's hot outside, so you quench your thirst with a couple of tall glasses of iced tea. Later you reach for some soft drinks, and end the day with a few cold beers. You probably don't realize it, but you could literally be drinking yourself into a state of dehydration.

While most people drink an average of eight cups of water and other hydrating beverages (milk, juice and caffeine-free carbonated drinks) each day, they counter the positive effects by drinking five servings of caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, according to a survey of the drinking habits of 3,000 people.

The survey was sponsored by the International Bottled Water Association and the Nutrition Information Center at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center.


Coffee, tea and alcoholic beverages are diuretics, which cause a person to urinate more than normal, resulting in a net loss of water.

Not drinking enough water can cost you. People who drink three or fewer glasses a day are more likely to suffer symptoms like grogginess upon waking and dry skin. The benefits of adequate hydration are many.

Water helps suppress appetite. It's also economical, aids digestion and helps prevent headaches.

Even if you do drink eight glasses of water a day, you may need to drink more to offset the loss of fluids if you drink coffee or other caffeinated drink.

Our Own Body of Water

- An average adult's body is 50 to 65 percent water—roughly 45 quarts.
- Men are more watery than women. A man's body is 60 to 65 percent water, compared to 50 to 60 percent for women. Men have more water in their bodies because they generally have more muscle mass than women. Fat doesn't contain water, and women generally have a higher percentage of body fat than men.
- Infants are 70 percent water.
- Water content differs throughout the body. Blood is made up of 83 percent water, bones are 22 percent, and muscle is 75 percent water.
- Water plays several crucial roles in the body. It helps regulate temperature, carries nutrients and oxygen, and removes waste. It also cushions joints and organs.
- While sleeping, people lose as much water as they do during waking hours, so it's helpful to start and end the day with a glass of water.
- The body needs as much water in cold weather as it does in hot weather.
- When it's warm outside, cool water is the best thirst quencher. It's absorbed more readily than warm fluids and helps cool the body. 

"You
Want Me
To Do
What?"

By Rae Mack

That's what three Public Works Department employees should have said to their supervisor when he told them to go inside a burning building to secure water and electricity. One worker tried to enter the building three times, and three times smoke forced him out again.

The fire happened last fall in a building used to test aircraft systems. An engineer was testing an EA-6B control panel in an anechoic test chamber (one that absorbs sound waves or radar signals) when he heard a fire alarm sound. He opened the chamber door and saw flames 3 to 4 feet high rising from the center of the chamber. He closed the door, evacuated the building, and called 911.

The fire department arrived and heard the sound of rushing water. Water also was flowing out of the building. As soon as firefighters had an attack team with a hose inside the building, they ordered the building's deluge system shut down.

The supervisor of one of the PWD employees who had come on-scene ordered him to go inside the burning building and secure the water. Instead of questioning those orders, he did as he was told—three times. Two other employees were sent in the building also, one to secure the electrical power. If the smoke didn't drive the employees back out, the firefighters ordered them to leave. All were treated and released for smoke inhalation and released.

The civilian employees weren't wearing protective equipment when they went inside the building. The whole time they were trying to get inside the building, flashbacks were happening right after firefighters thought they had the fire contained.

Going inside a burning building is foolish; going inside without protective equipment is even more so. No firefighter would think of entering a burning building without wearing complete turnout gear.

Leave rescue or salvage efforts to the people who are trained to do them. Once you have left a burning building, don't return. And if someone tells you to go inside a smoke- or flame-filled building, remember the title of this story. ■

AN EYEWITNE GUIDE *TO AUTO*

By Rafaela Ellis

You're driving down the highway when something goes terribly wrong: The car in front of you clips the one beside it, and both cars slam into the guardrail. At first, you're stunned, and then your mind starts racing. Do you have to stop? And if you do stop, what sort of help should you offer?

Many people respond instinctively when they see another person in trouble. But in these litigious times, instinct can be costly. In the past few years, some good Samaritans have found themselves on the wrong side of the law when their attempts to help others inadvertently injured someone or damaged property.

Still, you can help a crash victim without harming yourself. The first step is know your rights and responsibilities under the law. Although many people believe they have a legal duty to stop when they witness a crash, the opposite is true. Unless your actions caused the mishap (for example, if something you were transporting fell into a traffic lane) or you have a legal relationship to the victim (such as bus driver-passenger or parent-child), under U.S. law, you have no legal obligation to help victims.

Does that mean you should keep on driving when you've witnessed a wreck? Not at all.

Most states have so-called "good Samaritan laws" that protect those who try to aid strangers in distress. Although these laws vary, they usually offer limited legal protection to those who help others in situations that can reasonably be deemed emergencies.

What's more, many simple actions can help victims without exposing you to risk. Experts generally recommend the following:

If you're in a bad neighborhood or on a dark,

deserted highway, you may wish to drive on and report the wreck when you've reached a safer location. Otherwise, park your car well off the roadway. Never approach a car that's leaking fuel or is in flames, and don't try to direct traffic around the scene. Playing traffic cop could put you in legal jeopardy if your instructions aggravate the situation or cause a second collision.

If you have a car phone, use it to call the authorities. Tell the police your exact location, and give any facts you know.

Check for injuries, and offer reassurance. Unless you are trained in first aid, it's best to avoid giving medical help. If people are seriously injured, try to keep them warm, comfortable and, above all, calm until help arrives. In a dire emergency, you can apply pressure to stop bleeding and, if you're trained, use CPR to help someone who has stopped breathing. Never move mishap victims unless they are in immediate danger of further physical harm. If you must move a victim out of harm's way, follow the National Safety Council's recommendation: Place the injured person on a blanket or coat, and pull him by his shoulders or arms.

Most importantly, never drive a victim anywhere—even if the person needs immediate hospital treatment. Those who transport victims have no legal protection if further injuries or complications occur en route.

Never violate the expressed instructions of someone who has been involved in an accident. For example, if the victim says, "Don't touch me," don't—even if you believe you can help. If a victim asks for any help that you don't feel competent to give, decline and wait for police or medical help to arrive.

SS'S

0 MISHAPS

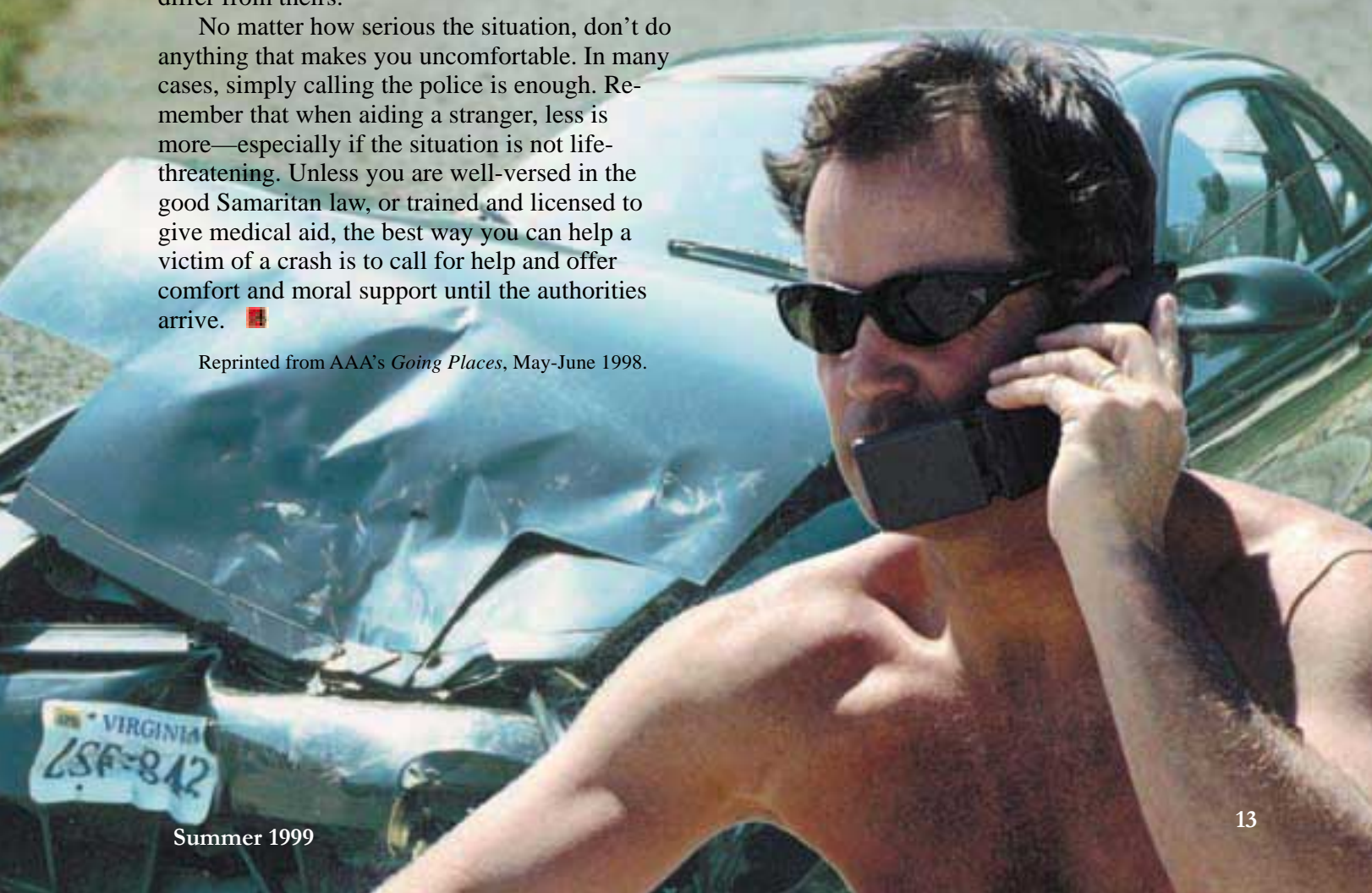
Leave the vehicles alone. Moving a vehicle can expose you to liability (the owner could say you caused further damage) and hamper police attempts to assess the circumstances of the crash. (Although vehicle owners may move their own cars if they're able, police and legal experts agree that witnesses never should.)

Avoid talking to victims about what or who caused the crash. Drivers have been known to get confrontational with witnesses whose accounts differ from theirs.

No matter how serious the situation, don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable. In many cases, simply calling the police is enough. Remember that when aiding a stranger, less is more—especially if the situation is not life-threatening. Unless you are well-versed in the good Samaritan law, or trained and licensed to give medical aid, the best way you can help a victim of a crash is to call for help and offer comfort and moral support until the authorities arrive. ■

Reprinted from AAA's *Going Places*, May-June 1998.

...never drive a victim anywhere—even if the person needs immediate hospital treatment.



Airbag Switches Not Always a Good Idea

Should you get an on-off switch for your passenger airbag? The most likely answer is no, according to crash experts at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The federal government has established procedures and criteria for permitting people to get the switches, which are needed in only a few cases when airbags may present a risk of serious injury.

Before you consider getting a switch, remember the best way to keep your children safer is to make sure they ride in back.

However, there may be times when you would use a switch. For example, if you have an infant with medical problems who requires observation, and you're the only other person in the car, then the baby would need to ride in front, and a passenger airbag would present a risk. Of course, paying attention to a baby is distracting and involves its own risks.

Another example is parents who often transport too many small children to put them all in back. Even in this case, an on-off switch isn't necessarily the best option. An older child may ride up front if the seat is all the way back, and the child is securely buckled in a lap-shoulder belt and sitting back in the seat. Leaning forward to fiddle with a radio dial or look in a glove box can put a child at risk from an inflating airbag. If you feel you can't rely on your child to sit back in the seat, then you should consider getting an on-off switch for the airbag.



Why Flight Attendants Tell You To Turn Off Your Electronic Equipment

Before every flight on a commercial airliner, the flight attendants give a safety brief. A few people actually pay attention, but most are reading, snoozing or fiddling with their laptop computers or hand-held electronic games. These days, one announcement tells people to turn off all electronic equipment.

On each flight, there is someone who doesn't pay attention. After these briefs, attendants go up and down the aisle and have to tell those people to shut off their computers, radios or games.

Here's why they worry about that seemingly harmless "Game Boy" or cellular phone:

Recently, after a Boeing 767 took off, the air-traffic controller told the pilot to turn right onto a heading of 090. After the aircraft was on the correct heading, the crew engaged the autopilot. The aircraft immediately started banking back to the right. The crew disconnected the autopilot and corrected the plane's heading manually. The captain suspected electronic interference was the culprit and asked attendants to check the cabin. They found a hand-held computer being used by a passenger in a front-row seat. After he turned off the device, the autopilot responded correctly.

While descending to land, that same aircraft (with a different crew) reported receiving interference with its radio and intercom reception. Suspecting electronic interference, the crew told passengers to switch off any electronic devices. All radios returned to normal operation within a few seconds of the announcement.

Information courtesy of Directorate of Flying Safety, Australian Defence Force.

No Bike Helmets on Playground Equipment

After a 3-year-old Pennsylvania boy strangled to death, the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) warned that children should not wear bike helmets on playground equipment. The boy died Feb. 4 when his bicycle helmet became wedged as he apparently tried to slide through a small opening on the playground equipment near his home. CPSC is aware of another child who strangled in 1997, when a 7-year-old girl in Canada got trapped in an opening on a playground structure. She also was wearing a bicycle helmet. In both instances, the children died because of hanging from the strap.

CPSC chairman Ann Brown says, "Children should always wear a helmet while riding their bikes. Helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent in the event of a crash. But when a child gets off the bike, make sure he takes off his helmet."

In addition to the deaths, CPSC also has reports of four cases in the United States where there were no injuries. In two of these cases, the children were climbing trees, and the other two were on playground equipment.

You can get a copies of CPSC's bike-helmet safety alert by calling their hotline at (800) 638-2772 or by visiting their web site at www.cpsc.gov.

Safety managers and officers, please see that housing managers get a copy of this for distribution to family-housing residents. Make sure child-care centers and recreation directors see this information. You might also want to have this printed in your base newspapers.—Ed



Ten Ways To Keep Stress in Check

Stress is your body's response to pressure, tension and change. A little stress can sharpen your senses and your performance. But too much stress harms your body and your mind. You can manage stress if you take positive action as a matter of routine. Here are 10 ways to do this.

1. Eat well, exercise regularly and get enough sleep.
2. Plan and prioritize. Stay in control of your time by deciding what has to get done, then doing the most important things first.
3. Recognize your limits, and don't commit yourself to more than you can handle. Try to delegate responsibilities instead.
4. Talk out your problems with a trusted friend, co-worker or relative.
5. When things get tense, close your eyes, relax and breathe deeply several times. You may be surprised at how much it helps.
6. Seek solutions. Use your resources to work out a difficult problem.
7. Schedule time to relax and have fun.
8. Learn to trust yourself. If you've met deadlines or succeeded at difficult tasks in the past, you will again.
9. Be flexible. Go with the flow, and learn to accept what you can't change.
10. If you have persistent stress-related emotional or physical problems, see a doctor.



Summer 1999

Have You Visited
The Naval Safety Center's
Web Site?



www.safetycenter.navy.mil

It has everything a high-speed, low-drag safety program could possibly need: risk-management presentations, magazines, hazardous-activity checklists, and the latest safety posters. Surf on in and check it out today.

Riptides, Currents and

By Rae Mack

Lome, on the island of Togo, is a high-surf beach, where huge masses of water in breaking waves can hold a person underwater for long periods of time, tumble them against rocks and reef bottoms, or hurl them against a sand bottom. Because the water is so rough, locals are terrified of swimming there. Not so the tourists. A few years ago, a tourist reported his buddy was missing in the surf, and when rescue workers started looking for the victim, they found 13 bodies.

Beaches are built and maintained by surf. High-surf beaches, from the Wedge at Newport Beach, in Calif., to North Shore, Hawaii, are for experienced surfers and bodysurfers only. These beaches, as well as the one at Lome, have earned their reputations as killer beaches.

While shark attacks get the most publicity, the primary beach hazard is rip currents (also known as rip tides or undertows). According to the International Lifesaving Federation, at least 100 times more people die every year from rip currents than from shark bites. The United States Lifesaving Association estimates that 80 percent of surf rescues are because of rip currents. These currents are fast, seaward-moving gravity currents caused by waves that push water up the slope of a beach above mean sea level. A mass of water builds up. With the first lull in the wave sets, gravity pulls the water seaward through a trough in the sand or along a jetty.

Drowning is the fourth leading cause of mishap deaths in the United States, following automobile crashes, poisoning, and falls. And it's

a death that shouldn't happen, according to Bob Gabriel, director of Lifeguard Beach Service, one of two lifeguard services responsible for beaches on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

In 10 days last August, Gabriel's service rescued 716 people from currents. Only seven of these rescues were considered near-drownings, but the rest involved swimmers in enough distress to need help getting back to shore. During the month of July the previous year, lifeguards went after swimmers only 865 times.

Last August, there was a low-pressure system with northeast winds hovering off the coast of the Carolinas, creating rip currents that tore at sandbars and repeatedly sucked swimmers away from shore. Because the system brought little rain, tourists flocked to the beach.

"People just didn't pay attention to the red flags we put up, warning of rough conditions," said Gabriel. "This was a freak of nature. It was unlike anything we had ever had here."

Gabriel continued to say that when people rent a beach cottage for a week, they want their money's worth. They don't like sitting on the beaches just watching the surf; they want to jump into it and get wet. That's when the trouble begins.

On Aug. 13, a group of five young people got caught in a rip current while just offshore. Three of the swimmers were able to make their way safely back to shore. One of the three ran 250 yards to get a lifeguard. They started searching for the two missing swimmers. Their bodies surfaced hours later.

Waves, Oh My!

Another problem the lifeguards face is people removing red flags. Last year, they prosecuted a person for doing just that. “We wanted to make an example of him,” Gabriel said. “After he took those flags, two families went into the water because they thought swimming conditions were OK. If anyone had died, we would have prosecuted him for their deaths, too.”

North Carolina beaches aren’t the only ones with dangerous rip currents. San Francisco’s Ocean Beach has been deemed by ocean-safety experts as the most perilous city beach in the United States—because of its killer rip currents.

Last August, on a quiet Saturday, a particularly potent rip current cut a deceptively calm gray swath in the rolling surf.

According to Chris Brewster, president of the Americas Region of the International Life Saving Federation, “There are no breaking waves—it seems like a nice place to swim. But it will pull you off shore.” That’s what it did to two women and a 13-year-old boy.

The women, in their 30s, were wading in shallow water. The boy was knocked down by a wave. Fire officials said that when rescuers swam out 40 feet, the women were already out 80 feet. When the rescuers were 80 feet out, the victims were already out 120 feet. “Unless you’re there in seconds,” said one of the rescuers, “it’s too late.”

Currents can flow a meter a second—faster than any Olympic swimmer. Swimming against one is like trying to run up a down escalator. So, how do you avoid getting caught in a current, and if you do, how do you escape one?

First, pay attention to any warning signs on beaches. If a red danger flag is flying, stay out of the water.

If there are no life guards at a beach, don’t use it. U.S. Park Service officials have never posted life guards at Ocean beach, even though people have died there. They feel that if they do post lifeguards, they would be implying that the area is safe for swimming and giving visitors a false sense of security.

Don’t overestimate your swimming ability, especially early in the summer when the water is still cold. It is much harder to swim in cold water.

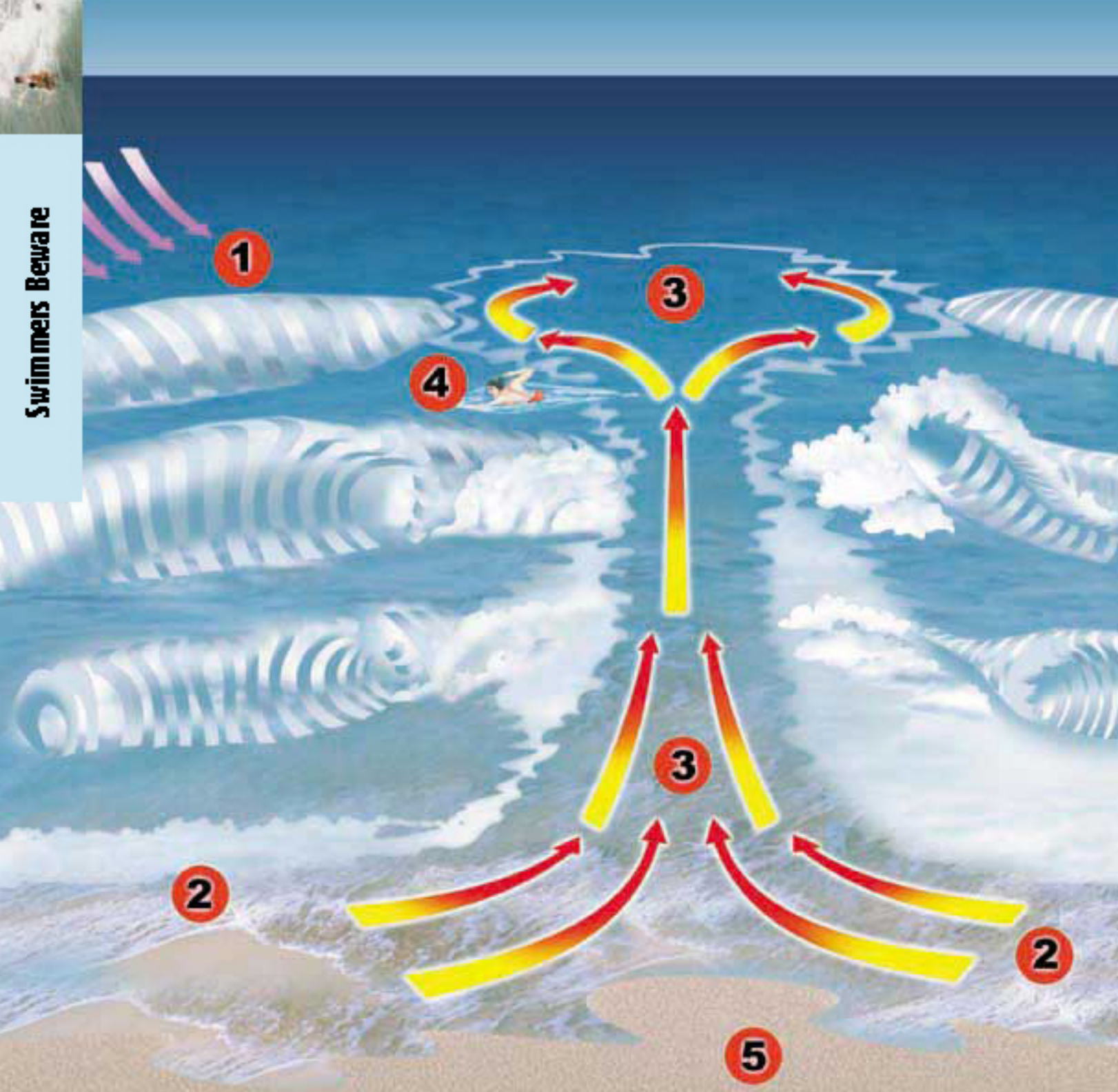
Swim during daylight only.

Make sure someone knows where you are, and is nearby, watching you.

If you get in any kind of trouble in the water, signal for help by raising one arm. Don’t panic—struggling will only exhaust you. Tread water or float until help arrives.

If you get caught in a rip current, relax and swim toward shore at a 45-degree angle until you are free of the current. If the rip currents are strong, swim parallel with the shoreline in the same direction as the littoral current (one that flows parallel to the beach). If you aren’t able to swim out of the currents, call or wave for help.

When body surfing, don’t ride waves in a straight line toward shore. Instead, surf at an angle to the waves. Stay away from the white water in the wave center to avoid going “over the falls” and be driven into the sandy or, even worse, rocky bottom. ■




How Riptides Are Formed

1 Waves are caused by the winds in storms at sea. The waves from different storms in the ocean combine to make surf on the beach. Waves come in groups called sets. During winter, storms are usually in the North Pacific, and during summer, many storms are near the equator or Southern Hemisphere.

2 Waves hit the beach at angles. As a result, this energy creates a current called the long-shore current, which flows along the coastline. You can recognize one by watching foam, swimmers or debris near shore drift into it. During summer, long shore current usually flows north; in the winter, it moves south.

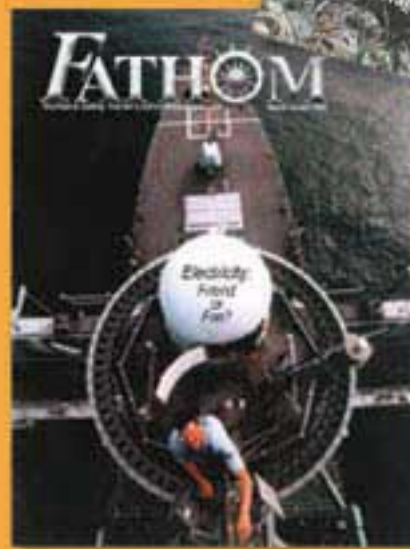
3 After a set of waves break, water and energy is pushed toward the shoreline. This displaced water will move along the beach with the long shore current until it finds its way back out to sea; this causes a rip current. Rip currents are narrow, river-like currents that have been fed by the long-shore current and sets of waves. Rip currents are between 50 feet and 50 yards wide and can flow up to a hundred yards past the surfline. You can easily spot a rip current by its foamy and choppy surface. The water in a rip current can be dirty brown (from the churned-up sand) and moves rapidly out to sea.

4 If you are caught in a rip current, don't panic. It will not pull you under, but it can pull you out to sea. People who drown in rip currents usually don't have the strength to swim to shore against the current or are too far out of reach of rescuers. Call or wave for help or swim parallel to shore with the long current until you are out of the rip, then swim directly toward shore.

5 If you cannot recognize a long-shore current or rip current, talk to the lifeguard. If you can't swim an overhand stroke for 15 minutes, you should not be in the ocean. Stay on the beach, or take swimming lessons. 



YOU CAN'T SPEND ALL YOUR TIME OFF DUTY. WHEN YOU'RE ABOARD SHIP, AT YOUR SQUADRON, OR WITH YOUR UNIT, *APPROACH*, *MECH*, *FATHOM*, OR *GROUND WARRIOR* CAN HELP YOU SURVIVE YOUR WORKDAY.



One Friday morning, a smoke detector in a submariners' transient barracks sounded and awoke a Sailor. He found his pillow in flames. The fire had started when his pillow got shoved against a lit candle on his nightstand. He beat at the fire with his bedding to smother it. It worked, but he suffered second- and third-degree burns to his hands. He then asked a buddy to take him to the hospital. While all this was going on, the quarterdeck watch notified the Sailor's command. Someone at the command called the fire department but sent them to the wrong building.

A roving watch for the facility had heard the smoke detector and headed to the room to investigate. By the time he got there, the Sailor was already on his way to the hospital.

The injured Sailor missed 45 days of work before being placed on light duty. His burns caused him a lot of pain for such a small fire. The people involved in this mishap made enough mistakes that if the fire had been more serious, it could have killed many people and destroyed the building.

When the detector went off, no one left the building. People don't seem to realize that if a detector sounds, it's time to get out. This barracks didn't have a central smoke-detector system,

No one called the fire department immediately. Upon finding out the smoke detector had gone off, the quarterdeck watch should have sounded the fire alarm for the whole building, then called the fire department. Instead he called everyone on the notification list and had a third party make the call. According to National Fire Protection Association research, two out of five people believe a fire could become life-threatening in two minutes or less. This view is realistic. However, one-quarter of all people believe it takes about 10 minutes for a fire to be dangerous to life. This is an unrealistic expectation. Fires in bedrooms can spread fast enough to kill the occupants in just a few minutes.

A buddy took the burned Sailor to the hospital. Leave the transporting of injured people to the professionals. Just getting the person out of the building and to the hospital while not treating the burns can cause serious infection. Because of the severe pain of his burns, the victim could have gone into shock. Then the driver of the car would have to deal with traffic and treat the victim at the same time. I know of a case where a driver sped up to get to the hospital faster and had a wreck. Two people needed emergency treatment instead of just one.

The Sailor used his bedding to smother the fire. Fighting a fire with a combustible is not a good idea. Fire extinguishers are throughout barracks. If a fire is small, grab an extinguisher to put it out, but call the fire department first. Fires can flare up again or may be larger than they appear.

A candle was on a table beside a sleeping person. If a candle is left burning for a long period, it can burn down into the container and melt a wax shell or crack a glass holder. If that happens, you no longer have a contained fire. Besides, candles aren't allowed in barracks on this base.

The fire department holds fire drills for the occupants of this building on a regular basis, but since the occupants are transients, the drills rarely involve the same people. That's why it's important for anyone who is staying in a transient barracks to read and follow the posted fire bill. ■

Mr. McDonald is a fire inspector at Naval Submarine Base Fire Department, Groton, Conn.

When the Smoke Detector Blares

By John F. McDonald, III

where if there is smoke in a room, an alarm alerts the whole building. This detector sounded only in the room. Investigating, fighting the fire, or gathering personal belongings are dangerous actions that may waste the early-warning time smoke detectors give.

Blowing Sand, Blazing Sun and a Bucking Mule

By AME2 Timothy Goette

I was part of the Navy's first expeditionary EA-6B squadron deployment to Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia for Operation Southern Watch. This deployment was like no other I had ever been on. Instead of wind and salt spray blowing in my face, sand and unbearable heat were the order of the day.

Our aircraft were parked on a line that was about a mile away from our workspaces. We had trucks, vans and Air Force "mules" to ferry us back and forth on a wooden ramp. I'm not referring to the type of mule you see at the Army-Navy football games, but something that resembles a golf cart with a top speed of slightly more than 25 mph.

Driving those mules was as close as we got to entertainment on that trip, so I drove one every chance I got. It was like riding a motorcycle on a warm summer evening. The cool breeze across my face offered relief from the stagnant desert air. I usually didn't bother buckling up in a mule because the trip between the line and the hangar was short, and I felt safe in the enclosed cage. Besides, the cart didn't go that fast, and there was very little traffic.

One day, after recovering the last launch, a shipmate and I headed back to the shop. My trusty mule and I were following a 4-wheel-drive pickup driven by someone in my squadron. We were cruising along at max ramp speed (or close to it), leaving a couple of mule lengths between us and the pickup. I turned my head to look at a few other shipmates walking back to the hangar, then started to wave and laugh at them because they had a long walk ahead. When I looked ahead, I realized the truck had stopped to pick up the people.

Closing fast, I jammed the brake pedal to the floor, but it was too late. With my heart in my throat and my passenger looking at me in panic, the mule smashed into the truck.

My passenger and I proved the rule that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The mule stopped; we didn't. The airman next to me hadn't fastened his seat belt and was catapulted through the mule's "launch window." (Mules don't have windshields.) On his way out, he grabbed a vertical bar on the frame and spun around like a kid on a fire pole until he slammed into the side of the mule and dropped to the ramp. What stopped me was the steering wheel, which I can testify is a poor substitute for a seat belt.

It only stands to reason that if I buckle up in my car in traffic that is moving as slowly as 20 mph, then I should have fastened my seat belt when I got into the mule. My passenger is still mad at me for not doing so and insisting that he do the same. And my buddies at whom I was going to laugh for walking—guess who had the last laugh. ■

AME2 Goette is assigned to VAQ-142.



Whoa, Mule!

Catting Around PERDIDO KEY

By Lt. Craig Newton

My roommate, Chris, said the winds were strong and perfect, and he had to get out on the water with the catamaran he had bought four months earlier. He wanted me to go along to experience the thrill of gliding on the warm waters of Pensacola's Perdido Key.

He knew I wasn't a big fan of sailing, but he was determined. "I can't sail it alone," he said, and I couldn't find an excuse. At the beach, we rigged the sail and pushed the boat across the sand into the tepid Gulf water. We strapped on our life vests, slathered on the sun block, and away we went.

Even though Chris was an experienced sailor, he didn't feel comfortable enough to skipper his new vessel out of sight of land. We watched the homes, condos and weekly-rental apartments glide by in rapid succession as we criss-crossed the waves.

Then we hit a trough, and the cat took a dive. I think Chris saw it coming. "Hold on!" was all he had time to yell. The boat capsized, and we were both in the water. "You all right?" he asked.

"No sweat," I replied. "Let's get this thing righted and head back."

That's when the real "fun" began. Our momentum and the waves had driven the mast underwater. The sail was mostly submerged and held a large pocket of water—which weighed a

lot. Trying to right the cat was not going to be easy. A half-hour later, we were still struggling.

We didn't panic or do anything stupid like diving under the submerged sail, which could have trapped us. The Gulf was like bath water—no fear of hypothermia. We were both strong swimmers. We were wearing life vests. Besides, the beach was a short distance away, right? Well, not exactly.

After trying to right the cat, I looked back at the shore. The buildings weren't as close to us as they had been. We had been drifting. Another 30 minutes, and we would probably lose sight of land.

All I could think about was righting that boat. Rocking our weight on the elevated pontoon of the cat was not enough. Trying to raise the mast (with its submerged sail) out of the water was futile. With nothing but water beneath our feet, pushing up on the mast just drove us into the water.

After 10 more minutes, we gave up. Chris decided to leave his prized boat drifting slowly toward the Caribbean. We began the long swim to shore.

Ironically, abandoning the catamaran is what let us recover it. As we swam, we came across a pair of vacationers testing their sea legs in a small sailboat. They had not spotted our capsized cat, and probably wouldn't have at the course they were on. We climbed aboard, and the four of us sailed back to the cat. We righted it in about two minutes. The combination of more weight for leverage on the elevated pontoon, plus standing on the solid base of the sailboat while we were raising the mast and sail, made short work of the problem. We all hopped back into the sailboat and towed the wounded cat to shore.

While Chris treated our rescuers to pizza and a tour of the Naval Aviation Museum, I sat on the porch and thought about our day. Chris was an experienced boater; the weather was perfect; we were strong swimmers. Nothing should have gone wrong—yet, something did.

The precautions we took, just in case something went wrong, were what saved our lives.

We wore life vests. For Chris, life jackets for everyone is as much a part of sailing as the mast and the sail. He never lets anyone get on his boat without one.

We knew our limits. Yes, Chris was a veteran sailor. He was experienced in several kinds of small sailing craft and had sailed them in all kinds of weather and waters. But the catamaran was relatively new to him. He'd taken it out maybe 20 times before that day. He also knew enough about his hobby to know that this was a fast boat with less margin for error than others he had sailed. So we had stayed close to shore—an excellent decision that guaranteed a visual reference for navigation and a safe “out” should things get ugly.

We continually assessed the situation. Maybe it was luck, fatigue or instinct that made us look up from our efforts of righting the boat. When we did, we realized the situation had changed and could change again. We recognized the potential hazard that our boat's drift presented. We recognized the hazard when we found we were drifting, implemented controls (“Hey, keep an eye on that blue building. When it disappears, we've gotta get out of here!”) and supervised our progress (“The building's gone. We're outta here!”) We were using ORM before we even knew what ORM was.

If only one or two things had changed in this story, we might not have made it back alive. For instance, if we had been in Newport instead of Pensacola, the water temperature would have been very cold. Imagine if we had been drinking. If we hadn't worn our life preservers, had lost sight of the coastline, and weren't sure which direction led back to the shore, we may have ended up in the Safety Center's mishap summary.

We did learn from our experience. Chris kept his boat out of the water on those “perfect” wind days until he'd gotten more experienced with it. He also never takes out his boat without a crew of three (giving him enough weight to overturn a capsized cat). And I learned that I prefer golf to sailing. ■

Lt. Newton flies with VAW-113

Shore Things



Head Over Heels in France

My life couldn't have been better. I was a new Hornet pilot on my first cruise. Six months of Mediterranean port-hopping with some flying thrown in—what a deal! Even better, I found a place on the ship to stow my bike. The opportunity to tour European towns and countryside on two wheels was too good to pass up.

Six weeks into the cruise, we entered our second port, Cannes, France. It was the perfect place to break out my bike. The July morning promised a wonderful day when I embarked on my first journey.

I was so excited to finally ride my bike again that I didn't even stop to consider the dangers of riding overseas. Racing through traffic in a foreign country by myself and not wearing any protective equipment were not the brightest things I had ever done.

When I crossed from a street to a downtown square at high speed, I lost control of the bike. I hadn't realized what a mixture of smooth stone, loose gravel, and a lack of recent experience on my bike would do. The result was a stay in a French hospital, 10 stitches to my face, and three pins in my wrist.

The cruise that I had looked forward to for so long came to an abrupt end. Within a week, I was on a flight back to the States. Three months of flying a desk gave me a lot of time to think about what I had done wrong that day. For starters, if I had been riding with another person, we could have watched out for each other and helped each other keep our speed under control. Second, if I had worn a helmet, I may not have cut my forehead as badly as I did.

Even though my injuries were enough to make me leave the cruise early, they could have been worse. I just wish that I had taken time to think about the hazards before I started out.

When I finally made it back to the ship for the last month of the cruise, my bike stayed locked up. As the cruise wound down, all I could do was dream of

the next cruise when I could finally enjoy the fabled summer Med cruise—on foot.

Lt. Steve Kiggins
VFA-83

Why My Dad, the Cop, Started Buckling Up

My dad was a police officer for Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office in Utah. He drove a patrol car, wore the standard police uniform, and carried a gun. When we were in our family car, he would always buckle up, but never in his patrol car. His reason was if the belt got hooked on his badge, it would slow him down if he had to get out of the car in a hurry. He did this for years and years.

One night, my dad got a call reporting a school break-in. When he pulled into the parking lot, he slowly drove around, using his searchlight to look for suspects. Being so intent on finding the burglars, he didn't notice a fire hydrant surrounded by concrete blocks in the middle of the lot. He drove right into it at about 15 mph.

His head slammed into the windshield and his chest into the steering wheel. He wasn't seriously hurt, but he did have a big lump and cuts on his head. He also had pains in his chest and back for a few weeks.

Dad took my sisters and me to see the car. The windshield was cracked and bulging where his head had hit it. My dad said that being so hard-headed was what kept him from being hurt more. Even though he continued to joke and make light of his crash, from that time, he always wore his seat belt whenever he got in **any** car.

Ltjg. Mark Neff
VAW-113

Cycling on **Autopilot**

My morning began as all mornings do—with the alarm going off at 0500. By 0515, I had begun my daily bicycle commute to work. Ten minutes later and halfway to my destination, I was lying on the asphalt in the middle of a crosswalk.

I'm an avid cyclist, racking up 50 miles per week commuting, and riding an additional 20 to 30 miles for fun. I've been riding for more than 25 years. My bike is well maintained by the MWR bicycle repair shop here on base and by me. I thoroughly check my bike every evening, so when I start out the next morning, I don't have any surprises.

This morning, it was raining, but I didn't let it hamper me. I put on my yellow rain suit over my riding gear, strapped my helmet to my head, turned on my head and tail lights, slipped my feet into the toe clips, and took off.

I was traveling in the left lane of traffic when I stopped for a red light. My next move was to turn right at the crosswalk at this intersection. I balanced

myself against a light pole, so I didn't have to take my feet out from the clips. I stood up on the pedals to get started, turned the wheel slightly, and started pedaling. My tires skidded on the wet pavement, and I toppled over. My helmeted head slammed into the pavement. Sitting there slightly stunned, I checked myself out. I had no major damage to me (hurt shoulder, bruised knee and ribs) or to my bike (handle-bars off center and brake lever knocked loose). The next day, my head did start hurting, but not nearly as much as it would if I hadn't worn a helmet.

This route was the same one I had taken every day to work. It was so familiar that I was biking on autopilot. Even though I was aware it was raining, I had never taken into consideration just how slick the road was.

My bike went to the MWR shop for a once-over. I donated my helmet to the safety office for display and bought a new one. I moved slowly for a few days until my chest and shoulder healed. The next time I come to any crosswalk, I'll remember this incident and start off with less oomph, especially if it's raining.

YN1(SW) Timothy Hagey
Flag Writer
U.S. Naval Forces, Japan.

Did you know that traffic-death rates are three times higher at night than during the day? According to the National Safety Council, 90 percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, which is significantly limited at night.

Powers of depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision, in particular, are diminished after sunset. And if you're over the age of 50, you may need twice as much light to see well as you did at age 30. Also, keep in mind that twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive because the light is constantly changing.

The National Safety Council recommends that as soon as the sun goes down, you observe the following tips for night driving:

- Switch on your headlights. They won't help you see better in early twilight, but they will help other drivers see you.
- Don't smoke and drive. Nicotine and carbon monoxide weaken night vision.
- Don't "outdrive" your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the lighted area.



Advice
for
Night
Owls



A DIFFERENT SORT OF HUNTING SEASON

It isn't the hunting season when you go into the woods with your buddies, sit around a campfire and swap lies. That season lasts only a short time; this hunting season is open all year long. And it's a hunt you can involve your whole family in.

Take this list home and hunt for hazards. Get your spouse and children involved. To get children interested, you can make a game of finding hazards by scoring points for each hazard found. The one who finds the most gets a prize or special treat. When you're finished, look over the list. Then give your whole family the prize of well-being when you correct the hazards you've found.

Kitchen

- Matches within easy reach of children.
- Overloaded outlets or extension cords.
- Curtains or towel racks close to range.
- Flammable liquids (cleaning fluids, contact adhesives, etc.) or aerosols stored near the range or other heat source. *Remember, even a pilot light can ignite vapors. Dispose of outdated or empty cans properly. Also, many families store cooking oils in the small cabinet above the stove. If you have a grease fire, do you really want those oils there?*
- Snacks or frequently used items stored above the range where someone could get burned reaching for them (especially small children in search of cookies or other goodies).
- Worn or frayed appliance or extension cords.

Living Room, Family, Den, Bedrooms

- Matches and lighters within reach of children.
- Too-small or too-full ashtrays. *Ashtrays should*

be large, deep and emptied frequently, but only when you're sure all fire is extinguished.

- Unscreened fireplaces or dirty flues. *If you don't have your chimney swept and inspected at least once a year, you may as well automatically place a check mark here.*
- Worn or frayed extension cords or other electrical cords.
- Extension cords run under rugs and carpets or looped over nails or other sharp objects that could cause them to fray.
- Insufficient space around TVs and stereos that could cause them to overheat.
- Curtains, furniture or papers near a space heater.
- Overloaded outlets or extension cords.

Basement, Garage, Storage Areas

- Piles of stored newspapers or other rubbish. *Newspapers stored in a damp, warm space may spontaneously ignite.*
- Oily, greasy rags. *If you must store these, keep them in a labeled, sealed container, preferably metal. Do not store them in a glass container, which can explode and throw glass shards.*
- Flammable liquids (varnish, paint remover, paint thinner, contact adhesives, cleaning fluids) stored near workbenches or pilot light and in anything other than labeled, sealed metal containers. *Dispose of outdated or empty cans properly.*
- Gasoline stored in the house or basement. *It should be stored away from the house (in an outbuilding) and only in cans that have flame arresters and pressure-release valves.*
- Overloaded outlets or extension cords.
- Wrong size fuses or overloaded circuit breakers. ■



Just How Important Is This ORM Process?

By Donald Weightman

The military always touts the need for bold, risk-taking leaders, who can reasonably predict the results of their decisions and are satisfied with those results. But too often, we have “gambler” leaders, who not only take unnecessary risks with equipment, but with the lives of their troops. These people have no idea of the outcome of their decisions.

The old attitudes of “Can do,” “We’ve always done it this way,” and “I’d rather be lucky than good,” are still part of the Marine Corps. People with these attitudes are behind the times. Every asset, whether people or equipment, in the Marine Corps is precious, and with right-sizing, you must consider any risks associated with using these assets. That’s where operational risk management (ORM) comes in.

I’ve learned four things about ORM since I started teaching courses to military groups two years ago:

First, early planning helps identify any problems. You can more easily identify risks and hazards and manage them when you’re planning an operation or mission. Trying to tack on control measures as an afterthought can result in deaths, injuries or major losses of equipment. Mishaps I have investigated prove this.

Second, you shouldn’t accept unnecessary risks or hazards. Any risk taken that doesn’t contribute meaningfully to the mission is not necessary. Leaders who accept unnecessary risks or hazards are gambling with the lives of their troops.

Third, you must make risk decisions at the proper level. Normally, decision-making is the leader’s direct responsibility for the mission. Decisions should be made by people at the lowest possible level, because they are the Marines who will come face-to-face with the risks or hazards. Having junior leaders use ORM to make decisions

in the planning phase and in the field during training develops leadership skills that will pay off in combat.

Fourth, we force leaders to take risks.

Nothing humans do is risk-free, especially when it involves combat. Our goal is to become more lethal to our adversaries, and at the same time, make sure our troops survive.

Before any mission or training, leaders should ask themselves these questions:

- Do I have Marines with enough self-discipline to do their jobs to the standards I have set?
- Does the unit have leaders who are ready, willing, and able to enforce these standards?
- Has our training given people the skills to meet these standards?
- Are the standards clear and practical?
- Do we have the necessary support for doing our jobs, including equipment, maintenance, facilities, and services?

From my own experiences with ORM and from conversations with others in the classroom as well as those in the field, I’ve discovered a basic law of human nature: Never underestimate a person’s capacity for self-deception. At times, we are so mission-oriented that we become our own worst enemies. We take shortcuts, skip procedures and ignore known hazards to get the job done, because that’s what the boss wants. This is gambling, and leaders do it every day. You and I are as subject to that law as anybody else. We both want to get our jobs done and look good. It helps our credibility, our careers and our promotions, all of which could halt if we kill a Marine during training.

Using ORM may be painful at first, but as with any new tool, practice will ease the pain. Soon, you naturally will make ORM part of everything you do, on and off duty. ■

Mr. Weightman is the OSH and Ground Safety Manager for Fleet Marine Force Pacific.



In Sacramento, Calif., brewers and distillers are circulating a pamphlet to bars and restaurants that cautions people against drinking and driving. It was written by a person after he got his first DUI and tells of the consequences. Here's that pamphlet in story form.

I thought I'd be able to drive home. I convinced myself it wasn't that late; it wasn't far to my house, and I certainly wasn't that drunk. I'd be OK.

I believed this alcohol-induced fairy tale right until a huge blue light filled my rear-view mirror. I pulled over to the shoulder and started to open the door when the cruisers' public-announcement system announced in God-like tones, "Stay in the car."

The officer walked up to my car and, standing slightly behind the door, asked for my license and registration. He inspected the documents, shined his flashlight in my face, and asked me to get out of the car. He told me to close my eyes and touch my nose, walk 10 steps heel-to-toe, turn around and come back, and then to recite the alphabet.

I had been relatively calm, but now I started to get nervous. The officer read me my rights, cuffed me and unceremoniously parked me in the back of his cruiser.

I half-sat, half-lay on the cold plastic seat for about a half hour, thinking how I could really use a bathroom right about then. After a tow truck showed up, my car went one way, and the officer and I went another.

He took me to a police station where another officer gave me two breath tests for alcohol. The news wasn't good either time. According to the machine, I was drunk. The police photographed and fingerprinted me and confiscated all my personal belongings. What really humiliated me was taking away my shoelaces.

I was put in a holding cell with drug addicts, alcoholics and other assorted petty criminals—enough scary people to last me a lifetime.

Several hours later, I was standing in front of a judge, who asked, "Do you know why you're here?" I responded, "For driving drunk," which, by the way, turned out to be the winning answer.

My First

(And Only, I Assure You)

DUI

(One of my cellmates told the judge that he had no idea why he was there. He stayed in jail.) The police gave my stuff back to me, plus a citation that said in a month, I'd be losing my license for four months, I had a court date in two weeks, and I would be issued a temporary license so I could drive for 30 days. I also got a receipt for my car. Then they let me go.

It was 0530 on Tuesday, the first day of my DUI. My troubles were just starting.

I was late getting to work that morning and used the excuse that I had car trouble. I figured I would get my car from the impound lot during lunch, but it took more than two hours and cost me \$187. My boss was really mad at me for taking such a long lunch. I told him I was sorry and sensed that from now on, I would be saying that a lot.

I spent all day Saturday at the DMV, applying for a restricted license. It cost \$100 and proof of insurance. Since the proof had to be a letter from my insurance company, there was no avoiding telling them about my DUI. My premiums immediately jumped from \$1,400 a year to \$4,100.

My restricted license allowed me to drive to and from work and to my DUI classes. (An aside:

if you are caught driving anywhere else, they immediately take your car.) The DUI classes lasted 15 weeks and cost \$550. The classes consisted of group and individual counseling and culminated with several personal interviews with the people running the program to see if I had gotten the message. If I hadn't, I would have even more counseling.

Then there was the trial—a criminal trial. This was my first DUI offense, and coupled with my guilty plea, it cost me \$480 in fines, plus another \$816 as a special assessment for the county court system. I was sentenced to 48 hours in jail, which was waived by the judge when I agreed to spend two Saturdays picking up trash along the highway. For the privilege of picking up trash, I had to pay \$22 a day.

I had to pay the court \$156 for booking me, \$100 for a slush fund for victims of drunk drivers, \$50 for an alcohol-abuse-education fund, a dollar fee to support the night court, and another \$20 for two nights of listening to the families of DUI drivers.

Since I didn't have the money to pay the entire fee, I arranged to pay in installments. That cost me another \$35.

Just when I thought I was through with the DMV, I got their bill for \$10 to update my file. They also served me notice that my DUI had cost me two points on my driving record (points that would stay there for seven years), and oh, by the way, I was on probation for three years.

After all this, my boss told me that he thought I should start looking for other career opportunities. I wanted to argue with him, but there wasn't much point to it.

How much did my DUI cost me? My job and fees, fines and assessments that

added up to \$5,249, not including the cost of my lawyer. Mine couldn't do much, but she still charged me two thousand bucks.

Safety managers and DAPAs may want to copy this article and use it in their alcohol-awareness training. Or they may want to post it or give it to their people before they go on liberty to encourage them to use a designated driver. Tell them to choose that designated driver before they go out. When people get to a bar, it's often too late to find who is not going to drink, and the designated driver ends up being the person who is "just a little bit loaded," like the person who told this story. ■





Straight Talk About

Are you still having trouble convincing motor cycle riders that wearing a helmet is not only the law, but that wearing one can save their lives? If so, here is some material to use at your next stand-down, put in your PODs or in family-grams, or use as fillers in your unit's newsletter.

- **Motorcycle helmets don't make it hard to hear.** Wearing a properly fitted helmet can actually improve hearing by streamlining the head and ear, thus reducing wind noise and allowing the rider to more easily hear other sounds. It's true that the helmet



Motorcycle Helmets



reduces the intensity of sounds—but it reduces equally all sounds. If the sound of an emergency vehicle, a car horn or a running automobile is louder than background noise (a combination of the motorcycle's exhaust, wind noise and general traffic), then it will still be louder when the rider is wearing a helmet.

- *Four out of five motorcyclists studied who died were not wearing helmets (Texas Department of Public Safety study).*

- **Motorcycle helmets don't cause neck injuries.** The actual cause of neck injuries is the crash itself, not the helmet. Researchers have shown that helmeted riders suffer fewer neck injuries than those who ride without a helmet. In 40 years of studies of helmet use, findings show that a neck injury of any type happened in less than two percent of the motorcycle crashes investigated. The incidence of neck injuries in crashes is very low compared to critical or fatal head injuries, which helmets are designed to prevent.

- *Helmeted riders had fatality rates that were 28 percent to 73 percent lower than riders without helmets (United States Government Accounting Office evaluation).*

- **Helmets don't cause overheating.** Helmets need not be uncomfortable when the temperature soars, especially a properly fitted one that has ventilation. Motorcyclists should realize that in certain climates, it can be too hot to ride or be involved in any kind of physical activity comfortably, from walking, yard work or riding a motorcycle.

- *The average hospital stay for riders with helmets, 5.8 days; for riders without helmets, 11.8 days (Tulane University School of Medicine medical journal).*


- **Experienced riders need helmets.** "When someone's skill, experience, and every other

precaution fails...a helmet is the only thing between his head and a violent collision," states officials of the Snell Memorial Foundation, which certifies helmets. In the study "Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures" (more commonly known to motorcyclists as "The Hurt Report"), researchers found that about half of all motorcycle mishaps are caused by other motorists. Even highly experienced riders are involved in motorcycle crashes. A rider may feel like skipping the helmet one day, but no one can predict when or where a crash will happen. The only way to be prepared is to wear protective equipment, including a helmet, every time you ride a motorcycle, scooter, moped, or ATV.

- *Of 213 victims of motorcycle crashes during a two-year period, seven out of eight people who died weren't wearing helmets (Journal of Emergency Nursing).*

- **Repealing helmet laws increases death rates.** Between 1975 and 1984, more than half the states either repealed or weakened their helmet-use laws. A study by the National Technical Information Service obtained a national estimate of the effect of these legislative changes on the motorcycle fatality rate (per motorcycle mishap) over 10 years. The repeal was associated with a 1.4 percent to 33.3 percent increase in the fatality rate per crash.

Information courtesy of Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

OPNAVINST 5100.12F, Navy Traffic Safety Program, includes a section on violations, which says if you don't wear a helmet and are injured in a motorcycle crash, you would be responsible for paying your own medical bills. Violations of this section are also punishable under the UCMJ.—Ed 



Click and Clack Talk Cars: Pickup Trucks & Kids

The debate rages on about putting kids in pickup trucks. Now, Tom and Ray Magliozzi of “Click and Clack Talk Cars” have put their two (or more) cents worth of words on the subject. Here is a question put to them by one of their readers:

Dear Tom and Ray:

I have a brand-new baby, and I’m looking for a new car. I’ve always wanted a truck, maybe a

Ray: The bottom line is that kids, and especially kids in child seats, should always be in the back seat. There are two reasons for this. One is that there’s no air bag in the back seat that can blow up in an crash and snap the little kid’s neck (and yes, we know that some trucks now have the on-off switches for the passenger air bag—if you remember to use them.)

Tom: But as important, if you’re in the back seat in an accident, you’ll hit...the front seat. If you’re in the front seat, you’re closer to the windshield, the dashboard, the engine compartment, and whatever you’ve crashed into. So the back seat is intrinsically a safer place than the front seat.

Ray: And since pickup trucks don’t have back seats (and the cargo space behind the seats in extended-cab pickups doesn’t count when you’re talking about children’s safety seats), they’re not really safe vehicles for kids. So go with a car, Susan. Or at the very least, a

truck with a real back seat, like a sport utility vehicle.

Click and Clack Talk Cars is a syndicated column that appears in community and base newspapers, in the automotive section, of course. You can also access their web site at <http://cartalk.cars.com>. ■

Ford Ranger. The trouble is, I can’t find any info on kids and trucks. Are they safe? Can you put an infant car seat in them? Should I forget the idea and go with a car? In other words, would I be a sporty, ’90s-style mom or a killer mom risking my child’s life in a deathtrap on wheels? - Susan

Tom: Unfortunately, the latter, Susan. Pickup trucks are not safe for little kids.





8:00 PM



10:00 PM



1:00 AM

Do you really need more proof that drinking impairs your judgment?

Poster Provided by Mothers Against Drunk Driving