



Safety Gram

Protecting Resources Through Better Risk Management

Safety Division's Monthly *Safety Gram* is provided to senior leaders to maintain awareness of mishap trends that directly affect the operational readiness of the Corps. This information should also be disseminated at every level of your command to assist high-risk Marines and Sailors in understanding the impact of the decisions they make every day both on and off-duty.

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December 2013: Mishap Summary

The Mishaps below occurred throughout the USMC from December 1 - 31, 2013, causing serious injury or death to Marines, and/or damage to equipment.

13 December 2013. SNM was involved in a sky-diving accident while on leave and was reported deceased by local emergency medical personnel.

13 December 2013. A Marine lost control of his vehicle due to ice and impacted a telephone pole. He was transported to a nearby medical center and was pronounced deceased by the medical examiner. It is unknown if alcohol was involved and the command is investigating.

Industrial Hygiene Surveys: Why They're Important

Every Marine Corps command is required to have a baseline industrial hygiene (IH) survey to recognize and evaluate potential occupational health hazards and make recommendations to control them.

The IH survey documents the occupational environment, i.e. monitors occupational health hazards to documents exposure levels, assesses the ventilation systems used for the control of contaminants, and provides a basis for medical-surveillance examinations. The survey identifies operations that require personal protective equipment (respirators and hearing protection) and personnel for inclusion in medical-surveillance programs such as noise, respirator, welders and forklift operator physicals.

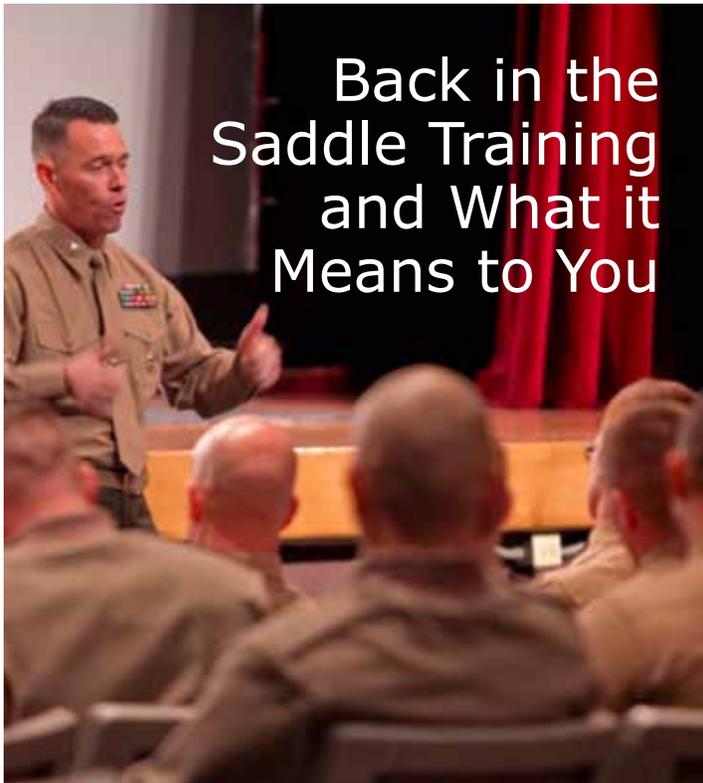
Periodic IH surveys are required whenever changes occur such as new or modified equipment or processes, new hazardous chemicals and/or harmful physical agents, and deterioration of existing controls (e.g., ventilation) which degrade over time to update the baseline IH survey.

Schedule IH surveys through your local medical treatment facilities IH departments.

Questions? Contact CMC SD IH program manager, Rufus Godwin at (703) 604-4387 or rufus.godwin@usmc.mil



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Back in the Saddle Training and What it Means to You

Welcome to the year 2014. The holidays have passed, and we ascend into a new calendar. At this stage, 12 months of work, social experiences, learning opportunities, and growth lie before us. Much like many individuals set resolutions for themselves to improve their lifestyle, the Marine Corps resolves to make each year more safe and healthy for its members.

In order to achieve this goal, USMC units typically offer what's commonly known as Back-in-the-Saddle (BITS) training. To kick off the new year, commands and their safety managers/experts will take some time to educate Marines on safety best practices, lessons learned, and changes in mishap prevention protocol. These scheduled sessions serve to establish the proper mindset for Marines and civilians, in order to achieve a healthy and mishap-free new year.

While the format of BITS training varies from unit to unit, the importance of this preparation remains constant. Some commands gather personnel and present safety information through speakers, slideshows, and engaging presentations. Others employ hands-on train-

ing, using simulators and exercises to convey important safety topics. Certain units even distribute training materials through their SharePoint sites and require Marines to survey the information presented through that medium.

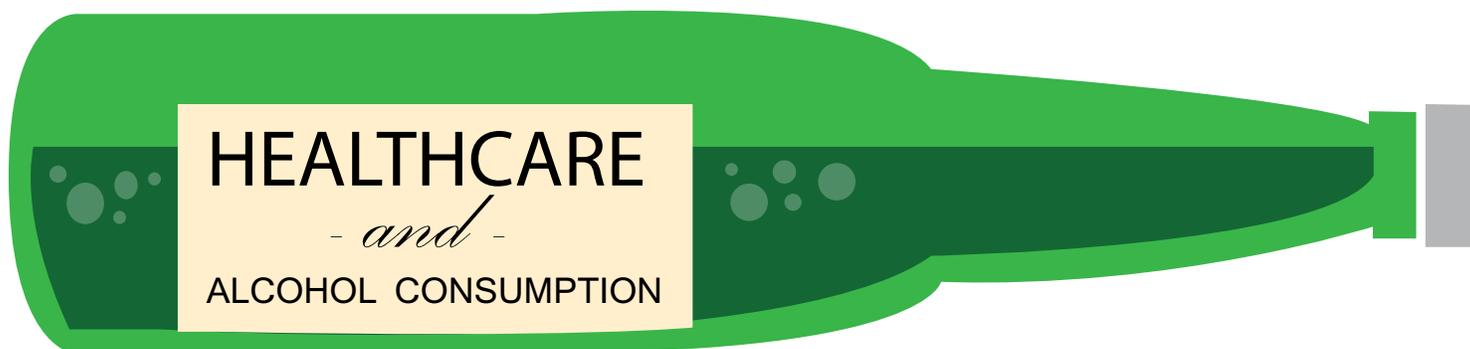
Whichever method is utilized, it's important to stress the value of BITS training for all members in a unit. With a string of recently successive holidays and common use of annual leave around this time of year, the significance of reintegration to the workplace cannot be overstated. This is a prime opportunity for leadership and safety professionals to access all of the Marines and civilians for which they are responsible, and recount standard information, while introducing any new policies or protocol which may have recently been established.

Just as it is imperative for leadership to take an active role in presenting safety information to its staff, it's just as crucial for Marines to actively participate in BITS training to take advantage of the education provided. In the Commandant's Safety & Force Preservation Policy, he implores "all Marines to ensure risk mitigation strategies are included in the planning and execution of all on-duty and liberty activities." One of the key terms in that quote is "all," emphasizing that force preservation is the responsibility of leadership and of the individual Marine. All of the training and preparation in the world amount to very little if the trainee doesn't appreciate the material presented. Therefore, safety managers should strive to provide information in an engaging manner, and Marines should heed the risk mitigation training accordingly.

Whether BITS training has already taken place for you, or you are awaiting the scheduled session, this opportunity should not go underappreciated. So, for safety experts managing these operational stand-downs, and Marines who attend them – take advantage of the opportunity to improve yourself as a member of the USMC. Your safety, your awareness, and your diligence will be the deciding factor on whether the Corps is bolstered and strengthened. Best of luck in this fresh – and hopefully safer – New Year!



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Editor's Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put out Volume 63 of Early Release on January 7, 2014, titled "Vital Signs: Communication Between Healthcare Professionals and Their Patients." To read the entire report, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6301a4.htm?s_cid=mm6301a4_w.

Alcohol is often colloquially referenced as a "social lubricant" -- referring to the fact that individuals tend to lower their inhibitions and demonstrate a more friendly, outgoing disposition. Perhaps more appropriately, it should be labeled as a "risk lubricant." As we all know, overconsumption is hazardous to awareness, reaction times, and general safety. Along with the tangential dangers that arise from alcohol, the impacts that it has on your general, physical well-being should not be understated. With an estimated 88,000 deaths and \$224 billion of economic damage between 2006 and 2010 due to excessive alcohol use, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force endorses the use of alcohol screenings and brief intervention (ASBI) as a method to address excessive alcohol consumption. Despite this being a notable solution for many cases, studies indicate that a disturbingly low percentage of individuals discuss alcohol use with their doctors.

A 2011 study by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reached the conclusion that a distressingly low number of individuals surveyed

(approximately 16%) in Washington, DC discuss alcohol consumption with their healthcare professionals. That estimation considers long-standing doctor-patient interactions, with only 7.6% of individuals surveyed indicating such conversations within a year of late 2011. Amongst the threats that excessive consumption pose are increased probability of heart disease, breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, sudden infant death syndrome, motor-vehicle crashes, violence, suicide, and others.

In this review, the CDC notes that the National Commission on Prevention Priorities recommends ASBI as a crucial preventative service, along with blood pressure control, healthy cholesterol, breast cancer screenings, and the flu shot. With most healthcare providers now allowing for ASBI under coverage, it could be important for medical services to prioritize ASBI and work to negate the dire impacts of binge drinking and excessive alcohol consumption. The format of ASBI typically revolves around a discussion

between a healthcare professional and the patient to determine whether excessive alcohol consumption is present in that person's lifestyle. If that's deemed to be the case, the individual is engaged in intervention dialogue in order to gauge motivations and methods to limit drinking. From the cases studied, presenting individuals with ASBI has indicated success in reducing peak alcohol consumption by 25% among binge drinkers surveyed.

The ultimate message to consider from these studies and reports is that alcohol consumption -- particularly in large quantities -- is an important risk factor to discuss with doctors and other healthcare professionals. As Marines who place the utmost priority on your physical well-being, CMC(SD) hopes that you will be emboldened to breach the subject of alcohol consumption with your doctor. While your drinking habits may seem normal or under control, getting feedback from a healthcare professional may be a vital step in preventing present or future damage.



Winter Storms & Extreme Cold

The following information is graciously supplied by FEMA, and further resources can be located at www.ready.gov/winter-weather.

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the "Deceptive Killers" because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.

BEFORE

- Before winter approaches, add the following supplies to your emergency kit:
 - Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways.
 - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
 - Sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace.
 - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.
- Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS). Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Minimize travel. If necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

DURING

- Stay indoors during the storm. Walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways, if you go outside.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible.
- Let someone know your destination, route, and expected arrival time. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.
- If pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspapers and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold (or where the cold was most likely to penetrate).
- Maintain ventilation with kerosene heaters use to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms. Keep temperatures above 55°F.

AFTER

- Go to a designated public shelter if you lose power or heat. Text SHELTER + your ZIP code to 43362 (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area.
- Continue to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.

