



# Safety Gram

## Marine Corps Mishap Synopsis / & Lessons Learned

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.

## December 2012: Mishap Summary

*The Mishaps below occurred throughout the Marine Corps from December 1st—December 31st, 2012 causing serious injury or death to Marines, and/or damage to equipment.*

**01 December 2012:** A Marine suffered severe brain trauma and internal bleeding caused by a motorcycle accident. The Marine died at the hospital after life support was removed.

**02 December 2012:** A Marine died while participating in an instructor led dive. The Marine's body was discovered 99 feet below the surface, hours later.

**19 December 2012:** A Marine was ejected from his motorcycle after colliding with a driver traveling the wrong way. The Marine was pronounced dead at the scene.



**27 December 2012:** A Marine was riding his motorcycle to work, and was struck by a vehicle that swerved into his lane. The Marine was pronounced dead at the scene.

### Aviation Mishaps & Hazards:

5 Dec 12: UH-1Y bird strike. HAZREP.

5 Dec 12: CH-46E had dual engine over torque during rotor engagement on ground. Class C.

6 Dec 12: AH-1W bird strike. HAZREP.

11 Dec 12: AH-1W turning on deck had unsecured FARP equipment blown into rotor blades by wingman landing. Class C

21 Dec 12: F/A-18 experienced single engine fire in flight. A/C diverted to an alternative airfield and recovered uneventfully. Class A.

27 Dec 12: UC-35B experienced N1 engine over speed on maintenance flight. Class C.

**27 December 2012:** A Marine was killed while riding as a passenger in a vehicle. While attempting to pass another vehicle by using the shoulder the driver lost control and the vehicle flipped over after hitting a ditch. Both the Marine and the driver of the car were pronounced dead at the scene.



## Did You Know: Physical Fitness Injuries

Physical Fitness is a pivotal part of being a Marine. Every Marine must be physically fit, regardless of age, grade, or duty assignment. Fitness is essential to the day-to-day effectiveness and combat readiness of the Marine Corps. Furthermore, physical fitness is an indispensable aspect of leadership. The habits of self-discipline required to gain and maintain a high level of physical fitness are inherent to the Marine Corps way of life and must be a part of the character of every Marine. Marines who are not physically fit can be a detriment to the readiness and combat efficiency of their unit.

To prevent injury during exercise or physical activity, follow some easy tips. Wear appropriate protective gear, use correct techniques, drink adequate water, use sun protection, and exercise on well-prepared surfaces. Warming up and cooling down may help to reduce muscle soreness. Avoid exercise when in pain or fatigued.

### Physical Fitness Injury Prevention

- Gradually increase time and intensity
- Warm up before exercise
- Hydrate before and during exercise
- Listen to your body
- Take time for rest and recovery
- Avoid overtraining
- Use proper technique
- Wear appropriate shoes, clothing, & PPE

### Symptoms of Exercise Overexertion

Marines are expected to be in shape for the annual PFT and CFT. In order to be ready for these fitness tests, Marines are encouraged to maintain fitness standards. If certain standards are not maintained, Marines can easily overexert themselves training or “cramming” for the tests. This overexertion constitutes a large majority of PT related injuries within the Marine Corps. Watch for symptoms that you might be overexerting yourself when you work out, by keeping these 4 items in mind.

- **Overuse Injuries:** Overexerting certain muscles or body parts over a period of time can lead to a chronic injury, also called an overuse injury. Common overuse injuries include stress fractures and tendinitis. The first symptoms may be soreness or aching in a muscle or joint. If you continue to overwork the area, you can worsen the injury, along with your pain. Any pain warrants slowing down or discontinuing exercise temporarily. Report any worsening or persistent pain to your doctor.

- **Dehydration:** If you are exerting yourself and not drinking enough fluids, you might start to experience the symptoms of dehydration, which include a dry mouth, scant or dark urine, dizziness and fatigue. Dehydration can cause muscle cramps, as well. If you experience these symptoms, move to a cooler place and drink fluids. If muscle cramps occur frequently or persist, see a doctor to rule out more serious health conditions.
- **Shortness of Breath:** A common rule of thumb when gauging exercise intensity is to determine whether you can hold a conversation during your workout. If you are breathing too hard to speak comfortably, you probably are overexerting yourself, according to "Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise." At the point of the inability to talk comfortably, your breathing rate likely is to be disproportionately high in relation to how hard you are working, and it is a signal to slow down to avoid injury or other problems associated with overexertion.
- **Warning Signs:** Warning signs that you are dangerously overexerting yourself include chest pain, difficulty breathing or dizziness; these do not resolve after a few minutes of rest. Wheezing or persistent coughing may indicate exercise-induced asthma. This should be evaluated by your doctor, who might prescribe preventive medication. Crushing, squeezing or tightening chest pain may indicate a heart attack. If you experience these symptoms, call 911 immediately; do not wait to see if you get worse.



## Physical Fitness Issues

### Dangers of Over Training

When you push your muscles past the point where they can quickly recover, you may be overtraining. Other symptoms of overtraining include depression, greater frequency of illness, racing heart while inactive, fatigue, insomnia, decreased appetite and poor athletic performance. When you continue to exercise with these symptoms, you put yourself at greater risk of injury and a compromised immune system. Should you experience overtraining, take a few days off from your workout routine, and if your symptoms are severe, make an appointment with your doctor.

### Evaluating Your Soreness

If your soreness is mild enough that you retain a full range of motion, you can safely perform light resistance exercises or low-intensity cardio such as walking or biking. If you have any loss of coordination or range of motion from your muscle soreness, you may end up placing extra stress on your joints or compromising your technique. Should you experience sudden muscle pain while performing a physical activity, you may have pulled or strained your muscle and should stop right away.

### Take care and listen to your body

Injuries are more likely if you ignore your body's signals of fatigue, discomfort and pain. Suggestions include:

- See your doctor for a full medical check-up before embarking on any new fitness program.
- Cross-train with other sports and exercises to reduce the risk of overtraining.
- Make sure you have at least one recovery day, and preferably two, every week.
- Exercise at an appropriate intensity for your fitness level. It takes time to increase your overall level of fitness. Training too hard or too fast is a common cause of injury.
- Injuries need rest – trying to 'work through' the pain will cause more damage to soft muscle tissue and delay healing.
- If you have a pre-existing injury or an area that is prone to injury, consult your doctor or physiotherapist before starting. Rehabilitation exercises may help to strengthen the injured area or you may be advised to wrap or brace the area prior to exercising in order to provide support.

### Stop exercising immediately

If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop exercising and seek medical help:

- Feel discomfort or pain
- Have chest pain or other pain that could indicate a heart attack, including pain in the neck and jaw, pain travelling down the arm or pain between the shoulder blades
- Experience extreme breathlessness
- Develop a rapid or irregular heartbeat during exercise.

### Exercising in hot weather

Exercising in hot weather puts additional strain on your body. Heat related illnesses, such as heatstroke and sunstroke, occur when your body cannot keep itself cool. When sweating is not enough to cool your body, your body temperature rises, & you may become ill. Symptoms of heat illness can include:

- Irritability
- General discomfort
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Cramps

### Exercising in cold weather

In cold weather, muscles are more susceptible to injuries. Suggestions include:

- Wear appropriate warm clothing. Multiple layers of clothing trap more body heat than one bulky layer.
- Devote more time to warming up and stretching before exercising and make sure you undertake a thorough cool-down.
- Keep up your fluid intake, since cold weather prompts fluid loss.
- Do not forget sun protection – it is possible to be sunburnt even in cold weather, especially at high altitudes or on clear days.
- Wear appropriate winter sports PPE for snowboarding, skiing, snowmobiling, etc.

