

**mishap**

LESSONS LEARNED

MISHAP SUMMARY

Mishap
Drowning

Damage
N/A

Injury
Three (3) fatalities.

Operation
Recreational Swimming

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Recreational Swimming Fatalities

BACKGROUND

On 4 July 2010 a group of Marines were swimming in a restricted area of a base beach. There were no lifeguards on the beach to enforce the restricted area policy. Two of the Marines were jumping off of a rocky outcropping that posed limited threat of injury during low tide, but they lost track of time and did not notice the condition changes as the sea state increased, making the entry/exit point nearly impossible to use. A third Marine attempted to assist them exit the water and was washed into the water. All three drowned in the incident.



CAUSES

- Failure to follow regulations by going into an unauthorized area; mishap Marines #1, #2, #3, and non mishap Marines were not clearly aware that this portion of the beach was off limits.
- Overconfidence in swimming abilities; the sea state and wave action in this part of the beach made swimming a high risk activity and only for the most experienced master diver.

DISCUSSION

- Enhanced welcome aboard briefs that cover rip currents, seasonal weather trends, varying tidal and oceanic currents, dangerous marine life, and risk mitigation measures.
- Unit Liberty briefs should include water safety content and four day surf and weather forecast.
- Beach rules signs posted on the beach instead of the beach entrance.
- Prioritize beach rules on sign, placing the most critical rules at the top of list.
- Modify base instruction so that daily surf/current conditions must be posted at beach areas (flag system and/or signs).
- Post life guards for all opened beaches with restricted areas and prohibit swimming when a lifeguard is not on duty.
- Place large "off limits" sign near restricted areas.
- Increase frequency of safety patrols in restricted areas.
- Establish centralized 911 emergency dispatch center in lieu of ad hoc emergency dispatch network.