

SAFETY GRAM

Marine Corps Mishap Synopsis & Lessons Learned

Issue 5 - May 2011

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.

May 2011: Mishap Summary

The mishaps below occurred throughout the Marine Corps from May 1 - May 31, 2011 causing serious injury or death to Marines, and/or damage to equipment.

2 May 2011: Maintenance Marines discovered damage to an aircraft drive train of an MV-22 during post-flight inspection. The damage was enough to meet the Class C mishap threshold.

04 May 2011: A Marine lost control of his motorcycle while going around a curve and sustained severe lacerations to his arms.

07 May 2011: A Marine was involved in an automobile accident and sustained severe head injuries.

07 May 2011: A Marine suffered several broken ribs, a punctured lung, damaged spleen, internal bleeding, and several abrasions when he fell approximately fifty feet from a cliff he had climbed.

08 May 2011: A Marine was a passenger in a single vehicle rollover. He was wearing a seat belt, but his arm was caught under the roof and de-gloved from the elbow down.

09 May 2011: Two Marines were on a beach and witnessed a Sailor swimming in distress and tried to retrieve him from the water but were unsuccessful. The Marines called 911 and emergency personnel began searching for the individual in the water without success. Several days later a body was recovered from the water and was positively identified as the Sailor.

11 May 2011: A Marine was involved in a two car motor vehicle accident and was pronounced dead at the scene. It is currently unknown if he was wearing a seatbelt or if alcohol was involved.

11 May 2011: A Marine was driving on the highway when he passed a vehicle and overcorrected himself, lost control of his POV, and rolled his car into the median several times. He was ejected from his car and killed, while his spouse remained in the car suffering only minor injuries.

14 May 2011: An UH-1N experience a hard landing at MCAS Cherry Point. The landing damaged the laser designation system aboard the helicopter, which was Class C damage.

17 May 2011: A Marine fell asleep and lost control of his vehicle when driving home after training and collided with a telephone pole. He sustained a collapsed lung and a broken ankle.

17 May 2011: An F/A-18C departed the runway on landing rollout at MCAS Miramar, resulting in Class B damage to the airplane.

20 May 2011: A Marine was struck by a POV while crossing the street without using the crosswalk. He sustained multiple injuries to the spine, head, arms, and legs.

20 May 2011: A Sailor and his civilian companion were riding separate bicycles when the Sailor missed a turn and went over the side of a cliff, falling approximately 30 feet to his death.



21 May 2011: A Marine was decapitated in an in a single motorcycle mishap. According to witnesses he was driving at a high rate of speed when he lost control of his motorcycle and hit a power control box on the side of the road.

21 May 2011: A Marine was killed in an in a motorcycle mishap while he was traveling at a high rate of speed and lost control of his motorcycle impacting a ravine; all required PPE was worn at time of the mishap.

21 May 2011: An RQ-7B unmanned aerial vehicle in OEF suffered an engine failure on takeoff and crashed. The damage met the Class B mishap threshold.

23 May 2011: A Marine was riding his motorcycle to duty in the early morning hours and ran off the road due to slippery conditions. He sustained multiple injuries including broken ribs and collapsed lung, all prescribed PPE was worn at time of accident.

26 May 2011: A Marine was crossing the street while returning from liberty in New York City and was struck by a vehicle traveling along the roadway. He was declared dead at the scene.

26 May 2011: A Marine was participating in a climbing expedition when his climbing party fell approximately 1,000 feet. He was taken to the hospital for treatment of multiple contusions and exposure.

28 May 2011: A Marine sustained a fatal head injury after falling 17 stories from a hotel.

28 May 2011: While on leave a Marine lost control of his vehicle and struck a tree, killing him instantly. Emergency personnel confirmed that he was not wearing a seatbelt.

31 May 2011: A Marine slipped and fell off the second deck balcony of the barracks and was transported to the hospital for treatment.

31 May 2011: A Marine fell into a bonfire while on liberty sustaining 3rd degree burns throughout his body.

Lessons Learned: Recent Fatalities

Almost every mishap that occurs may have been avoided if just one or two things were done differently to break a chain of events. Learn from others, and don't become a statistic.

Alcohol Continues to be a Factor in Marine Injuries & Deaths:

The Marine Corps has suffered 7 off-duty/recreational fatalities so far in fiscal year 2011; alcohol was involved in 5 of the 7 deaths and also in 1 permanent disability. 3 of those fatalities occurred when the Marine involved literally drank to the point of passing out, and never woke up –which is also referred to as “drinking for sport” or “binge drinking”. Alcohol has also been a contributing factor in 8 of 29 (car/motorcycle/pedestrian) fatalities – totaling 13 confirmed alcohol related fatalities so far this fiscal year ranging from Marines hit by a car while crossing the highway, to falling from a building.

The dangers of abusing or mixing alcohol and other drugs should continue to be a focus for leaders at every level. It is critical that Marines lead by example and educate one another on the dangers involved in the recreational use of alcohol and drugs, and remain vigilant for the warning signs that Marines abusing these substances may exhibit. Know your Marines and don't let them become a statistic.

- Alcohol affects everyone. It does so, however, in different ways, depending on your mood, physical condition, personality and the company you keep.
- Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts.
- When alcohol is involved, make a plan and stick to it. Don't let your liberty buddy disappear or deviate from your original plans.
- Don't ever drink and drive, it's not worth it.

Seatbelt Usage is Key:

Not wearing a seatbelt has contributed to 8 of 18 PMV-4 fatalities so far this FY. Seatbelt use is still one of the single most effective thing we can do to save lives and reduce injuries in the Marine Corps. National data suggests that seatbelt education alone is not doing the job with young people, especially males ages 16 to 25 - the age group least likely to buckle up and also the majority of our Marines. They simply do not believe they will be injured or killed, yet they are our nation's highest-risk drivers. Neither education nor fear of injury or death is strong enough to motivate this hard-to-reach group.

- Failure to wear a seatbelt contributes to more fatalities than any other single traffic safety-related behavior.
- Seat belts are the most effective safety devices in vehicles today, estimated to save 9,500 lives each year.
- Leadership and high visibility seat belt enforcement campaigns are an effective tool to get Marines to buckle up.

Focus on Motorcycle Training:

One of the most common trends in our motorcycle mishaps is the lack of training, specifically non-compliance with MSRC completion. Every Marine that rides a bike, must also have the appropriate training.

- All Marine motorcycle riders must have a valid motorcycle endorsement or license to operate any motorcycle on all public roads or highways.
- Within 120 days of completing the BRC, all riders must attend the next level of training, (e.g. the MSRC) Ideally, advanced training should be completed immediately after the BRC – **the sooner the better!**
- All riders must complete follow on, continual education and training every 3 years.
- All motorcycle riders should become active members in a command sponsored motorcycle mentorship program or club.
- Off - Road Riders:
 - Use the MSF Dirt Bike course for beginners
 - Seek other advanced training as your skills develop
 - Appropriate PPE is required

Did You Know?

CMC Safety Division publishes “Did You Know” newsletters designed to capture and share critical information and highlight how our Marines are being injured and killed. The intent is to raise awareness, keep leadership informed of current trends and mishaps, and provide links to tips and tools that may assist in mishap reduction.

Check out the latest editions on Motorcycle Safety, Aviation Mishap Reporting, and more by visiting: www.marines.mil/unit/Safety/Pages/did_you_know.aspx

Marine Ground Climate Assessment Survey (GCASS) Issue Papers

The GCASS issue papers referenced below are published by Advanced Survey Design and available upon request by contacting ASD directly, or visiting www.semperfisurveys.org. Issue Papers are based on the anonymous input ASD receives from GCASS surveys taken throughout the Marine Corps. These issue papers identify trends without revealing individual inputs or unit specific data, and are effective tools for commanders, safety representatives, and higher headquarters staff, helping them to understand perceptions and attitudes expressed by their units and to open up unit safety dialogue. Read more about GCASS Issue Papers by clicking [here](#).

Leaders often rely upon traditional approaches, such as staff feedback, select performance measures, and personal observations to measure an organization's safety climate. However, another proven safety tool is available to assist you in this task – the Marine Ground Climate Assessment Survey System (GCASS). This tool provides a suite of surveys and issue papers that give key organizational leaders rapid access to their members' anonymous perceptions regarding operational and safety issues. This on-line survey process is invaluable to leaders who desire one-on-one personalized feedback, measurable results, and suggested intervention options.

Marine Ground Climate Assessment Surveys

Recent Issue Papers:

- [Issue Paper #38](#) - My Unit's Off Duty & Recreational Safety Program is Working Well to Reduce Injuries
- [Issue Paper #37](#) - Would You Buy Your Car?

Naval Aviation Climate Assessment Surveys

Recent Issue Papers:

- [Issue Paper #110](#) - Would You Buy Your Car?
- [Issue Paper #109](#) - QAR and CDI Billets are Desirable Assignments in our Unit
- [Issue Paper #108](#) - Naval Aviation Motorcycle Survey Feedback

Set up a survey and find more Issue Papers at: www.SemperFiSurveys.org

May Aviation Safety Grams

The Aviation Safety Grams referenced below are published on a monthly basis by the model managers with input from the squadron and released as messages. Use the Date-Time Group (DTG) referenced below in [AMHS](#) to view these messages in full.

+ HMMT-164 DTG: 062123Z Jun 11

Discusses ORM in time-critical situations and the need to apply its principles when planning timelines are limited.

+ VMU-1 DTG: 261733Z May 11

Discusses ORM as applied to weather forecasting and weather conditions while supporting combat operations in Afghanistan.crew.

+ HMHT-302 DTG: 231503Z May 11

Discusses implementing the ORM process in everyday flight operations.

+ VMAT-203 DTG: 310006Z May 11

Discusses the importance of applying the ORM and due diligence to operations in the V/STOL regime.

+ KC-130J ATU DTG: 161819Z May 11

Talks about maximizing the training value from the simulator, which is of special significance to the VMGR community during this time of high operational tempo and increasing overseas commitments.

+ VMMT-204 DTG: 231155Z May 11

Discusses recent incidents of MV-22s encountering icing and issues associated with the MV-22 de-icing system.

+ VMFAT-101 DTG: 191616Z May 11

Talks about three separate ground incidents that involved lack of attention to details, poor supervision and oversight, and lack of discipline among ground personnel.



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