



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.

September & October 2012: Mishap Summary

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

01 September 2012: A Marine aviator ejected from his aircraft after making several radio transmissions relative to a dual bleed warning. The aircraft crashed in an unpopulated range. The aviator was recovered and treated for a broken ankle and abrasions.

07 September 2012: A Marine while swimming with his family, was hit by multiple waves causing him to submerge and disappear. The tide washed him back onto the beach minutes later. EMS were unable to revive the Marine.

11 September 2012: While turning at a corner on his motorcycle, a Marine was struck by another vehicle. The Marine was pronounced dead at the hospital.

13 September 2012: A Marine was traveling at a high rate speed, when his vehicle left the highway ran into the ditch, hit a tree, and flipped; finally coming to a stop 94 feet from the tree he struck. He was pronounced dead at the scene

15 September 2012: A Marine succumbed to injuries sustained after being struck by a vehicle while walking.



18 September 2012: A Marine returning from leave fell asleep at the wheel, crossed over the median and struck an oncoming tractor trailer. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

26 September 2012: A Marine on a motorcycle, lost control and skids into a ditch striking a concrete culvert. The Marine was pronounced dead at the scene.



28 September 2012: A Marine on a motorcycle was navigating a particularly difficult section of highway, when he ran off the road and down a steep embankment. The Marine suffered serious internal injuries and died at the hospital.

29 September 2012: A Marine on a motorcycle was estimated to be traveling at speeds in excess of 100 mph when he failed to negotiate a turn, and lost control of his motorcycle and slid into oncoming traffic. He was pronounced dead at the scene.



Did You Know: Driving in Inclement Weather

Winter is upon us, which means bad weather and dangerous driving conditions. It is more important than ever to practice safe driving techniques in typical winter weather conditions such as rain, wind, snow, ice, sleet and fog. It is even more important to be vigilant during extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes, tornados, torrential rain/snow and electrical storms. If possible, it is best to postpone a trip and stay home rather than drive if there is an extreme weather system moving through your area.

Here are some tips for driving in inclement weather:

Plan ahead - Driving in bad weather usually takes longer and is more stressful. If you did not leave more time to reach your destination and are consequently running late, this will only increase your stress level and could adversely affect your driving. Also, check the weather before you leave. If you can take an alternate route to avoid the brunt of a weather system, do so. You may also want to consider postponing your trip until the weather has improved. If you decide not to postpone, carry a map with you to prevent getting lost when visibility is low, and to show you alternate routes if necessary.

Leave Room In Front - Many experts recommend tripling the "cushion" between your car and the car in front of you when you are driving in rain, snow, sleet, etc. Braking distance is greater in these conditions, and you must allow yourself more room.

Make Sure Your Vehicle is in Working Order - Have your tires and brakes checked more frequently in the winter months. Make sure your windshield wipers are in working order and that your headlights are clean. Dirty headlights can significantly reduce visibility, especially in bad weather. Clear your windshield and mirrors of ice or frost before leaving, and keep them clear with your wipers and wiper fluid during the trip. If you need to pull over to scrape ice or snow, be sure to do so in a safe place.

Drive Slowly - This accompanies the above item; you should drive more slowly than usual in bad weather. This decreases the chance of skids and accidents.

Buckle Up! - Be sure you and your passenger's wear seatbelts at all times.

Listen To The Radio - Listen to a radio station that offers road condition information at a low volume during your trip. The station may offer alternate routes or inform you of road closures.

Use Your Low Beams in Fog - Turn on your headlights (make sure to use your low beams, not your high beams) in fog, whether you are driving through it at night OR during the day. Your low beam headlights not only help you to see, but also help others cars to see you. It is also very important to maintain a large following distance in fog and to drive slowly, as you may not see things like another car or a traffic light until it is nearly upon you. Stay close to the right hand side of the road in fog to avoid going over the center line into oncoming traffic.

Pull Over if You Need to - If you are getting tired, pull over (to a safe location completely off the road) and rest your eyes. Don't be afraid of the time you may "waste" by pulling over, it's much safer than trying to go just a "little further." Also, if the weather suddenly turns particularly bad, it may be a good idea to wait out the bad spell. If the poor weather involves deep snow or heavy rain, be sure you are not pulling over into a deep puddle or snow bank.

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared, and that you know how to handle road conditions.



For more information on bad weather driving check out at the [OSHA Website](#).



Driving safely on icy roads:

1. Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop.
2. Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
3. Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
4. Keep your lights and windshield clean.
5. Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
6. Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
7. Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
8. Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.
9. Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

If your front wheels skid...

1. Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
2. As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

If your rear wheels skid...

1. Take your foot off the accelerator.
2. Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
3. If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
4. If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.
5. If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse — this is normal.

If you get stuck...

1. Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
2. Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
3. Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.
4. Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
5. Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction.
6. Try rocking the vehicle. (Check your owner's manual first — it can damage the transmission on some vehicles.) Shift from forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.
7. If you do get stuck, stay in your vehicle. Stay warm and wait for assistance. Make sure that your exhaust pipe is clear of any obstructions, including snow and ice; if you don't, carbon monoxide gas can build up inside the vehicle.

Your Car

Prepare your car for winter. Start with a checkup that includes:

- Checking the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Changing and adjusting the spark plugs.
- Checking the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspecting the distributor.
- Checking the battery.
- Checking the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Checking antifreeze levels and the freeze line.

Basic Winter Travel Kit

This kit is intended to aid you in getting help, signaling your car's presence to other motorists, and tackling simple challenges.

- Warning light, hazard triangle, or flares
- Tire gauge
- Jack and lug wrench
- Foam tire sealant or a portable compressor and plug kit
- Spare fuses
- Jumper cables or a portable battery booster
- Flashlight
- Gloves, hand cleaner, and clean rags
- Blanket and winter hat
- Chemical hand warmers
- Small folding shovel
- Bag of cat litter
- Extra clothes and small tarpaulin
- Water and nonperishable emergency food
- Windshield scraper
- Tire chains and tow strap

