



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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May 2015: Mishap Summary

The Mishaps below occurred throughout the USMC from 1 May to 31 May 2015, causing serious injury or death to Marines, and/or damage to equipment.

5 May 2015. After exiting the installation's main gate, a Marine driving a POV crossed the median, and was struck head on by a civilian vehicle. A fellow Marine passenger was killed, and the driver suffered injuries to the face, arms, neck, and back. The civilian driver was uninjured.

10 May 2015. SNM was involved in a motor vehicle accident and was pronounced deceased at the scene.

12 May 2015. Aircraft with six Marines, two Nepalese Army personnel, and five civilians aboard crashed en route between Tribhuvan International Airport and Charikot, Nepal. All crew and passengers were pronounced dead.

12 May 2015. SNC was inadvertently swept into the engine exhaust tube of an engine test cell during a high power run. SNC was transported to a nearby medical facility and was pronounced deceased upon arrival. NCIS is investigating.

17 May 2015. During a Long Range Vertical Assault a MV-22 crashed, resulting in total loss of aircraft and death of two Marines.

24 May 2015. SNS was discovered deceased at a campsite by a fellow service member and EMS personnel. SNS had previously been experiencing difficulty breathing. Local authorities are investigating.

31 May 2015. While riding a motorcycle, SNM sustained fatal injuries during a collision with another vehicle. SNM was pronounced deceased at the scene by EMS.



Boating Season Starts with a Splash

CDR Leslie A. Kindling

Memorial Day Weekend is traditionally when members of my extended family head to Lake Huron to open up the summer cabin. This involves several boat rides across a distance of more than a mile to haul the necessary gear, using two 14-foot aluminum boats with outboard motors.

This year the work party consisted of my older sister, her two, pre-teen kids (my niece and nephew), my father, one of my cousins, and his mother (my aunt). The six of them spent a productive, fun weekend getting the camp ready for the summer visitors. That Monday, in a light rain, they headed across the lake for the final time to pack up the cars and head home for a final week of school.

While the weather conditions weren't optimal, they didn't garner much concern. The rain broke as they were gathering and loading luggage onto the boats at the dock. Wind and waves were coming from the east, which would be moving in the direction they were heading. The conditions, while not ideal, seemed perfectly acceptable.

My sister, cousin, and niece were in the first boat, with my cousin managing to cast off slightly quicker than my dad. My dad gave the first boat a wave as they pulled away, with the first boat gaining a quarter-mile head start.

After unloading the boat, my sister and cousin realized too much time had passed for the second boat not to have arrived yet. My cousin wondered if the engine had stalled, and when they looked back for the boat, they saw something bobbing oddly in the water. When my cousin decided to double back to check it out, my sister – an aquatics director for the YMCA, teaching water safety and lifeguarding – insisted that she went as well. After a few cuss words, they quickly got the boat going back from whence it came. My niece was given strict directives to stay well back of the shore and dock until they returned.

As is the case in most stressful situations, the recollections vary a little. Here is what they pieced together: a wave came over the bow, filling the boat with 6-8 inches of water; this allowed a second wave to swamp the boat completely. The crew was either swept out or abandoned what appeared to be a sinking boat.

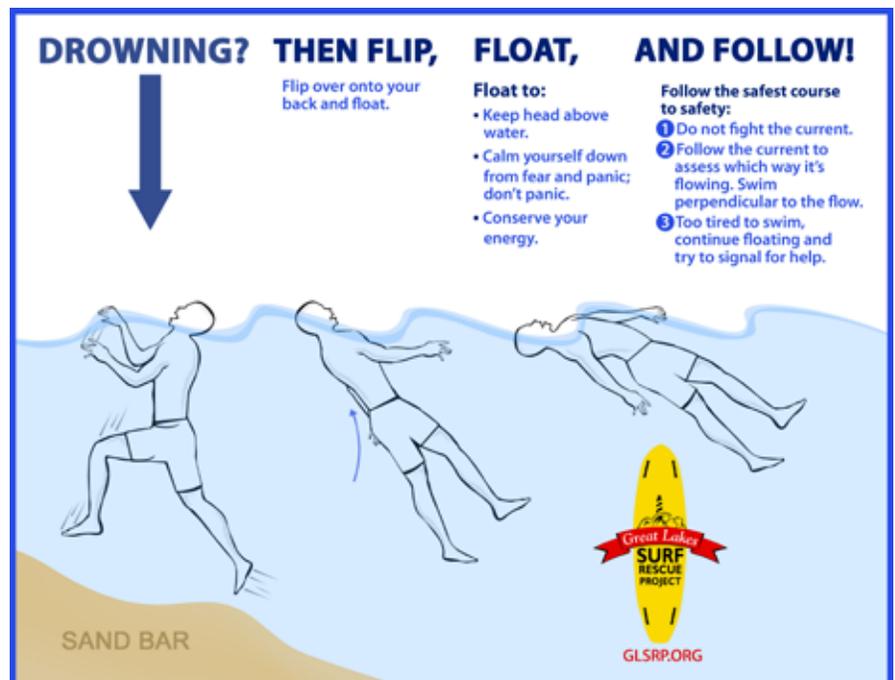
My nephew was wearing a lifejacket, and my aunt was able to cling to one, despite being unable to secure it to her body. My dad was able to get everyone holding on to the boat. Then, another wave came and flipped the boat over, separating my dad from the others, without a life preserver of his own.

After having found a second life jacket, my nephew offered to swim toward shore; but my aunt refused, voicing concern that the currents and waves could disorient him and they should remain together. He shouted for help several times, but found that they were too far out to be heard. They tried to remain calm, hoping the other three would head back to look for them.

When my sister and cousin approached the bobbing object to investigate, they found it to be the overturned boat. Luggage surrounded it in the water, and they initially couldn't see any people. They went around the wreckage and found my nephew and aunt clinging to the side of the boat. The rescue boat's engine was turned off and they hauled my nephew aboard. He was very cold, and was frantically asking about the whereabouts of his grandfather (my dad).

They next helped my aunt onto the boat. She was more difficult to retrieve, as she was heavier and lower in the water due to her waterlogged sweats and unworn lifejacket. My cousin and sister worked well together to pull her on board, and then they began looking for my dad. Unable to locate him, my cousin used his cell phone to call 911. He explained the location as best he could, that there was an overturned boat with three people in the water, and that they were in a different boat rescuing them, but could not find the third person. Still surveying the water while on the phone, my cousin spotted something he thought could be my dad. He restarted the motor, and drove toward it, confirming it was my dad. He was barely above the water – just his finger tips and the very top of his face – leaning back, so that just his nose, mouth, and maybe his eyes were out of the water. He was not moving at all. They got closer, and my sister kicked off her shoes and coat, and jumped in.

My dad had struggled to stay afloat and had shed his yellow rain jacket, thinking it was hindering him. At some point, he gave up struggling and laid back. Resigned, he later thought it was the giving up that saved him, allowing him to stop struggling and relax. Though the waves were breaking over his face causing him to aspirate water, he was no longer over exerting himself. He was resting. Emerging from the 46-degree water after 15 minutes, he was hypothermic, likely had a mild heart attack, and had aspirated water. Although conscious, he was unable to aid in his rescue. My



Boating Season Starts with a Splash (Cont.)

sister was able to position him by the boat so she could push while my cousin grabbed my dad's belt and pulled him from the water. My sister needed a moment to catch her breath after her efforts, sans life jacket, and gathered enough energy to climb back on board with my cousin's help.

Despite breathing shallowly and wheezing periodically, my dad asked at least once, softly, if the other two were safe. They told him they were fine, that he was safe, and encouraged him keep breathing and trying to talk.

The boat traveled back toward the dock, with luggage bobbing around it and momentary thoughts about car keys, clothes, electronics, and even the boat they left bobbing behind them. They had everyone and were heading back to land; that was the only thing that mattered. Once at the dock, they found a few towels and a sleeping bag that were part of the luggage from the first boat, using these to dry and warm my dad. Shortly after, the early responders arrived and provided aid. At this point, they felt like we were all safe. The emergency medical technicians worked on my dad, and my aunt and nephew warmed up in one responder's van.

The emergency medical response was excellent, as was the care my dad received at the hospital. After a few days in the intensive care unit, I am please to report that my dad is home and well. Lessons we learned will not be difficult to put into action moving forward. Here is our new list of what to do throughout our trips across and around the water.

1. Be aware of where everyone on the water is and their expected departure/return times. They knew my dad's boat should have been at the dock sooner.
2. Have a buddy. My cousin or my sister alone could not have

made this successful rescue. Also, my aunt encouraging my nephew and keeping him at the boat was important to his safety and gave her something to focus on and a reason to hang on.

3. Wear a life jacket. It does not limit you while boating and could have helped my aunt, my dad, and my sister conserve their energy.
4. Wear bright colors. My dad's black fleece was like camouflage in the water.
5. Call 911 early. Having the EMTs on their way to the dock at the same time my cousin was heading to the dock was critical to my dad's treatment and eventual recovery.
6. Take water safety and boating safety courses. While we all know STOP, DROP, and ROLL when we are on fire, many people (including my dad, prior to this mishap) don't know FLIP, FLOAT, and FOLLOW when we are drowning.

Despite their collective experience and training, they were susceptible to mishap. The years of mishap-free boat rides led to complacency. Please be safe out on the water.

CDR Kindling is a prior Navy Lifeguard and Assistant Naval Aviation Water Survival Instructor. She currently serves as the Aeromedical Safety Officer for CMC(SD) and is the proud owner (and wearer) of a new, bright yellow lifejacket equipped with space blanket and signal whistle.

Resources:

Health and Safety Institute Boating Safety Tip and Emergency Care
Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project

Bravo Zulu to MCLB Albany

Recognized as an OSHA VPP Star Site

Congratulations to Marine Corps Logistics Base - Albany in achieving recognition from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). With this nomination, MCLB Albany earned a VPP designation of Star Site. As a Star Site, the command receives noteworthy praise for exemplary performance in regard to the prevention and control of occupational safety and health hazards in the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of their safety and health management system.

The VPP promotes effective worksite-based safety and health. This program emphasizes management, labor, and OSHA establishing cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system. Approval into VPP is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health. Attaining the VPP labeling is an arduous process of review and rigorous onsite evaluations of performance-based criteria by a team of OSHA safety and health experts.

With that, CMC(SD) offers a hearty Bravo Zulu to MCLB Albany for this impressive achievement! The superb results of the final assessment validates the command's comprehensive grasp on force preservation. Congratulations and well done!

**STAR
WORKSITE**

