

DID YOU KNOW?

USMC SAFETY & FORCE PRESERVATION



JANUARY 2011

NEGLIGENT DISCHARGES ON THE RISE

The Marine Corps has recently experienced a rise in negligent discharge mishaps resulting in both serious injuries and loss of life. These mishaps often occur during weapons cleaning or during subsequent functional tests of a weapon after cleaning with live ammunition present. Complacency is also a primary causal factor in many of these mishaps, Marines must get “back to basics” and follow the simple rules of safe weapons handling.

Leaders and Marines at all levels should never consider any weapons-related activity to be low risk. Safe weapons handling procedures are critical at all times - on the range, in combat, and at home. If proper weapons handling procedures are not followed, a Marine potentially risks his or her own life and the safety of their fellow Marines and family members.

During combat, Marines must react quickly, safely, and be mentally prepared to engage targets. However, they must also utilize the same safe weapons handling procedures they are taught on the range at home when handling or cleaning weapons to avoid becoming one of the statistics below.



RECENT NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE

RECENT NEGLIGENT DISCHARGES

- Oct 2010: A Marine was injured from an accidental discharge while working on his shotgun.
- Oct 2010: While a passenger in a vehicle coming back from a sport lounge, a Marine was accidentally shot due to a negligent discharge when the vehicle driver was looking through the glove box and inadvertently pulled the trigger on a condition one weapon stored there.
- Aug 2010: A Marine was cleaning his .45 caliber pistol and received a self inflicted gunshot to his left hand.
- Aug 2010: A Marine picked up his friend's handgun off the kitchen counter and did not check the condition of the weapon. He proceeded to place his left hand in front of the barrel and the weapon discharged one round into his left hand.
- May 2010: A Marine died from a gunshot wound due to another Marine's accidental discharge. Alcohol was a contributing factor.
- Mar 2010: A Recruit and Range Coach received shrapnel wounds when the Recruit's M16A2 service rifle exploded due to a rare type of weapon malfunction.
- Feb 2010: A Marine sustained a self inflicted gunshot wound to his left foot while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Afghanistan.
- Aug 2009: A Marine shot herself in the foot while conducting combat marksmanship training with the M-4 rifle.

RULES TO LIVE BY

- Treat every weapon as if it were loaded at all times.
- Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you are ready to fire.
- Keep the weapon on safe until you intend to fire.
- Know how to operate your weapon and know its safety features.
- Keep guns unloaded, locked, and out of reach of children at home.
- Keep ammunition stored separately and secured in a locked container.

