

Gun Safety

By Gunnery Sgt. Samuel Lee
Naval Safety Command



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GUN SAFETY

Being in the military, one might think we are all experts in weapons and weapons handling, but that is not true. Plenty of occupational specialties within the military do not require a service member to handle a firearm. Many military personnel don't even touch a weapon until their specific required training or qualification requirements are due.

With that said, it is no surprise that during fiscal year 2023, the Navy and Marine Corps had several negligent discharges, on and off duty, while handling small arms. Both services had members injured or even killed due to these negligent discharges, ranging from simple weapon handoff to weapon cleaning, to accidentally reaching for a weapon under the pillow while sleeping. Some contributing factors include handling a weapon while being impaired by alcohol, complacency and a simple lack and disregard of the general weapon safety rules. Military members have been trained in the safe and proper handling of firearms, yet mishap data shows that many members neglect their training when handling firearms at home – and some even while on duty.

Many military hunting enthusiasts are preparing for deer hunting season by pulling out their weapons, dusting them off and taking them to the range for practice. This season is a good time to reiterate the four firearm safety rules many trained military members have forgotten.

THE FOUR GENERAL FIREARM SAFETY RULES

1. Treat every weapon as if it is loaded. This rule is the base for all four safety rules. If you treat every weapon as if it is loaded, then the other three rules will come naturally.
2. Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot. This rule enforces the importance of maintaining awareness of the muzzle's direction and reinforces positive



Marines engage during firearms training and qualification at the station pistol range at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Reba James)

