



NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND

SAFETY AWARENESS DISPATCH



SA 24-29

101 Critical Days of Summer Wrap Up

Before we start our autumn-related activity dispatches, the Naval Safety Command will wrap up the 101 Critical Days of Summer with a recap of things that hurt (and, in some cases, killed) us the most. As is the tragic reality every year, motorcycles and four-wheeled vehicles topped the list. This summer was particularly tragic, with 12 service members lost on motorcycles and 6 in 4-wheeled motor vehicle accidents. We also lost 5 Sailors in other off-duty activities, including 2 drownings and 3 jumping, climbing, and falling accidents. How else did Sailors and Marines get hurt this summer? Here's a quick rundown. We'll spare you the numbers:

- Individual Physical Training (PT), including cardio and weight training, topped the injury list as #3 after motor vehicles.
- Team sports closely followed PT as #4 (soccer and basketball were the top 2 in the category).
- Stairs and a handful each of swimming, biking, and animal mishaps rounded out the top injuries.



As is our custom in Safety Awareness Dispatches, here are some examples from this summer's 101 critical days to give real-life context to the numbers and provoke thought on the decisions (*good and bad*) we made in your off-duty time.

- A Pop-ular Sport. While playing soccer, a Sailor jumped to intercept the ball. When he came down, he heard a "Pop," followed by immediate pain and swelling. The Sailor tore his Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL), requiring surgery followed by 4 days SIQ, weeks of physical therapy and restricted duty. —*Injuries like this can be difficult to avoid in team sports, especially soccer. The best advice we can give is to stay in condition for the sport and play within your skill level.*
- Leap of Fate. A Marine dove (unknowingly) into the shallow end of the base pool, fracturing his left ring and middle fingers on the bottom. The fractures required surgery, earning the Marine 4 days in quarters and 42 days of restricted duty. —*He didn't verify if he was diving into the deep end (he wasn't), which is a way-too-common mistake. He's lucky to have not broken his neck. We may not see the need to remember algebra from grade school, but learning not to dive into the shallow end was a practical and enduring lesson. Please don't forget it. And if it's not a pool you're jumping into, remember "Feet First, First Time".*
- Mayhem in the A.M. A Sailor arrived at the base athletic field at 0430 and began slow jogging for 5 minutes to warm up (well done!). After the warmup, he started 100-meter sprints with a set of 5 "burpees" at the end of each sprint. On the third sprint, the Sailor tripped and fell, extending his arms to catch himself (*if you've followed our off-duty mishap dispatches, you know what comes next*). He caught himself...by his wrist, which he sprained and was placed on 14 days of restricted duty. Fatigue was deemed a factor in the fall. —*We understand people use high-intensity workouts to get in better shape, but a sprained wrist doesn't exactly make you fit. So, temper your workout a bit and learn how to fall if the need arises. Yes, there's a "correct" falling technique we've mentioned before, like landing on your side. A good web search will show you how, and putting your arms out isn't it.*
- Running on Empty. In another common PT-related mishap, a Sailor was running near her home and started to feel lightheaded. She tripped, fell, hit her head on the concrete, and was knocked out. She regained consciousness a short time later. The next day (*no! not good to wait*), the Sailor went to the ER, was diagnosed with a concussion and released. The report noted dehydration as the cause of the Sailor's lightheadedness. —*This type of injury is so common we have to release a dispatch on heat-related mishaps every spring. Besides not hydrating, this Sailor opted to wait until the next day to seek medical treatment (even after being knocked unconscious!). Never wait to get treatment. Traumatic brain injuries can cause irreparable damage or even kill you if left untreated.*

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- **Dash for the Door.** A Marine ordered food from a local restaurant. When the chow arrived, the famished Marine ran down the stairs to greet the delivery person. During his descent, the Marine missed a step, rolled his ankle and broke his fibula (lower leg). The report doesn't detail the lost time, but with a broken leg, we're certain it's going to be several weeks. —*We hope the food order was worth it, but our hungry Marine probably lost his appetite after the fall. Most of the time, being in a hurry only gets you to the ER faster. Take your time on the stairs so you can enjoy the kung pao shrimp rather than 6 weeks in a cast.*



- **Not A Big Fan.** A Sailor was transporting air fans on his bicycle (*that just doesn't sound right, and you'll see why shortly*). As he rode over an uneven patch of road covered in sand, his tire slipped, causing him to crash and suffer serious head injuries. Why? Because he wasn't wearing a helmet. The Sailor was airlifted to the hospital, where he was treated for multiple lacerations and released with several follow-up appointments. —*This Sailor was lucky to escape with only lacerations to his head. If he'd worn his helmet, he likely would've had no injuries and no follow-up appointments for a serious head injury. Wear the d@&n helmet!*

- **What Happened to the Buddy System?** A Sailor was out drinking and, for unknown reasons, decided to run. As you might have guessed, he eventually fell on his face, causing multiple lacerations to his knee, elbow, head and hand, and knocking out a tooth. He also somehow fractured his foot in the fall. The Sailor was initially placed on 60 days of light duty, but we bet he'll be out of the game for longer than that with a broken foot. —*Add running to our ever-growing list of things not to drink and do. Even more importantly, use the buddy system and don't drink to the point where you lose your rational decision-making ability. It could get you hurt or killed.*

Key Takeaways

While some of our stories are lighthearted, we also remember the naval services lost 23 Sailors and Marines in off-duty mishaps between Memorial Day and Labor Day. One fatality is too many, so as we transition into fall, remember the hazards around us don't disappear. They only change with the seasons.

1. **Make good decisions.** Most mishaps result from decisions made without thinking about the risks and hazards involved. Whether we exceed our athletic skill level, don't wear PPE or disregard basic safety principles, lapses in safety mindfulness usually lead to the ER, or sometimes, worse. The next time you're faced with a decision between the "fun" or the "safe" action, ask yourself, "What would Grandma think?" (*or "Is this going to put me in one of those Safety Awareness Dispatches?"*)

2. **Take care of yourself, your shipmates, fellow Marines, and coworkers.** In many mishaps, there were opportunities to break the error chain or to check dangerous behavior, especially when alcohol was involved.

3. **Go easy on the drinks.** Building on takeaways 1 and 2, alcohol is often a causal factor in off-duty mishaps because "too much" hinders us from making the right choices. Whatever activities you enjoy while off duty, do them responsibly. A good start is to limit your alcohol consumption, so you keep your wits about you. Make Grandma proud.

And remember, "Let's be careful out there."