

DROP ZONE



EXPEDITIONARY & SPECIAL WARFARE JUMP SAFETY NEWSLETTER



A Special Operator from Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts a freefall water jump from a C-130 over the Chesapeake Bay. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of NSWG-3)

Operationalizing Safety in High-Risk Environments: LESSONS FROM THE EDGE

Whether executing a nighttime military freefall, conducting combat dive operations or managing high-risk training, the Department of War's approach to these inherently dangerous activities perfectly illustrates the core tenets of the Navy Risk Control System/Safety Management System (RCS/SMS). High-risk training does not succeed by hoping for good conditions; it succeeds through the rigorous, proactive application of risk control and strict adherence to policy (such as OPNAVINST 1500.75D). Just as a jumpmaster conducts an uncompromising physical inspection before anyone boards an aircraft, the Navy RCS/SMS requires commands to systematically identify hazards, assess risks and implement controls — like vetting for cadre or the mandatory presence of a drop zone safety officer.

By viewing every pre-jump rehearsal, equipment check and strict environmental wind limit as an essential element of safety assurance instead of an administrative burden, we ensure our personnel can push the limits of human performance while maintaining the highest levels of combat readiness and risk management.



U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Iyonna Fulton, an airborne and air delivery specialist with 1st Distribution Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, bundles parachute cord while conducting air delivery operations during Exercise Steel Knight 25 on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Dec. 5, 2025. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Ryan Ramsammy)

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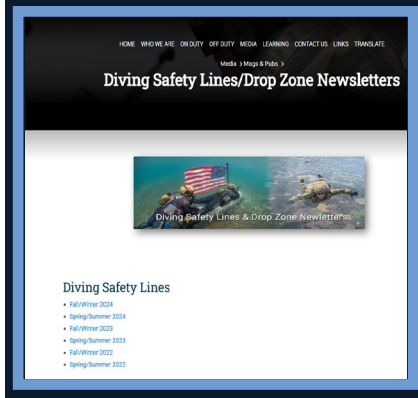
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To see our previous Drop Zone newsletters, copy and paste this web address:

<https://navalsafetycommand.navy.mil/Media/Mags-Pubs/Diving-Safety-Lines-Drop-Zone-Newsletters/>



SELF ASSESSMENT OF GRADING

Naval Safety Command Expeditionary and Special Warfare Directorate has established a percentage-based grading system for all assessments and includes grading a command's ability to self-assess. This grading system accounts for command size and total assets, the severity of any noted discrepancies and removes the perception of subjectivity throughout the inspection. This process is to ensure results are objective and

accurate when calculating the final assessment score and are supported by metrics and fleet performance data. Discrepancies are weighted based on severity and affect the final assessment score. Self-assessment grading rewards commands for honestly identifying and documenting their own shortfalls, encouraging units to "get real and get better" by fostering a culture of proactive self-correction.

WELCOME ABOARD



Special Warfare Unit ONE, Guam, from November 2013 to August 2017, Special Boat Team TWENTY, Virginia Beach, Virginia, from August 2017 to October 2020, CNATTU Norfolk Detachment Fort Lee, Virginia, from October 2020 to November 2023 and USS George Washington, Yokosuka, Japan, from November 2023 to December 2025, completing the ship's homeport change from Norfolk, Virginia to Yokosuka.

In December 2025, he reported to NAVSAFECOM as a Navy Airborne Operations Program analyst with Code 40.

We are excited to announce the addition of PRC (EXW/FPJ) Dustin Gardner to Expeditionary and Special Warfare Safety Directorate (Code 40), Naval Safety Command (NAVSAFECOM). He has taken over as the Navy Airborne Operations Program parachute safety data analyst.

Gardner enlisted in the Navy in February 2006 and completed PR "A" school in Pensacola, Florida, before heading to the fleet.

In December 2006, he reported to his first command, VAQ-140, in Whidbey Island, Washington. He completed two deployments aboard USS Eisenhower to the Persian Gulf in support of OIF and OEF operations. Gardner transferred to NAS Whidbey Island Search and Rescue (SAR) in March 2010 supporting local agencies in the Pacific Northwest with Inland SAR and MEDEVAC operations.

Follow-on assignments include Naval

EVENT REMINDER

The 178th Biannual Airdrop Malfunction Safety Analysis Review Board (AMSARB) will be held July 28-31, 2026, at ADFSD, Fort. Lee, Virginia.

Online registration is required at the following website:
<https://FORMS.OSI.APPS.MIDL/R/MNQANXP5BV?ORIGIN=LPRLINK>

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DROP ZONE

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ASSESSMENT ONE LINERS

1. Command did not maintain Deliberate Risk Assessments (DRA) on file.
2. Command did not maintain records of HRST manifest for three years.
3. No required reading board for all HRST-related messages.
4. Command did not track Jump and HRST/Cast currency.
5. Not Ready for Issue (NRFI) HRST gear not segregated from RFI equipment.
6. Air and HRST letters of designation in individual training records not on file.
7. Command not reporting mishaps through RMI to NAVSAFECOM within 30 days.
8. Command not maintaining last five years of malfunction reports on file.
9. Monthly parachute rigger training was not conducted or documented.
10. Individual training record for each person holding Air and HRST/C operation qualifications not maintained.
11. Air and HRST/Cast JQRs records were not kept on file.
12. HRST/Cast storage facility did not adhere to mandated requirements.
13. HRST/Cast storage locker had no restricted access notice signed by the CO.
14. NTPS were not being packed according to the original equipment manuals.
15. Command DJRS reports did not indicate the correct assigned jumpers.
16. Jump and HRST/Cast refresher records not placed in ITRs or last 3 years not kept on file.
17. Parachute disentanglement training was not documented and kept in individual training record.
18. No ISIC HRST/C assessment within the past 18 months.
19. Rappel ropes were not inspected by program manager.
20. Rappel ropes lacked appropriate end care to prevent unraveling.
21. Rope logs are not maintained or placed in service.
22. 35-foot black ladders exceeded their 3-year service life and lacked in-service documentation.
23. Corroded carabiners found within RFI storage areas.
24. HRST/Cast program manager was not a qualified HRST/C master.
25. Air operations library was not up to date with applicable manuals.
26. TFSSs were not properly documented in 3M/SKED.

FUTURE ASSESSMENTS

The NAOP assessment schedule lists the following commands due for inspection:

Oct 2026

- EODTEU TWO (Virginia Beach, VA)

Dec 2026

- NSWG ONE SEAL TEAM ONE (San Diego, CA)

- NSWG ONE LOGSU-ONE (San Diego, CA)

Jan 2027

- NSWG FOUR SPECIAL BOAT TEAM 20 (Virginia Beach, VA)

Feb 2027

- NSWG TWO LOGSU TWO (Virginia Beach, VA)

Jul 2027

- EOD MOBILE UNIT EIGHT (Rota, SPAIN)

Aug 2027

- NSWG ONE SEAL TEAM SEVEN (San Diego, CA)

- EODTEU ONE (San Diego, CA)

TBD 2027

NAVY PARACHUTE COURSE (Porterville, CA)

Do you have feedback or ideas? Let us know!



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