



NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND

SAFETY AWARENESS DISPATCH



SA 23-10

The Importance of Training

Training deficiencies can lead to improper procedures, which can eventually lead to equipment damage, personal injury, or even death. In 2017, the Navy lost 17 Sailors when the USS John McCain and USS Fitzgerald collided with merchant vessels. Degraded training and qualifications were among the many human causal factors identified. These two tragic mishaps remind us why training our Sailors and Marines to the highest degree possible is vital to maintain individual and unit warfighting readiness.



Our database shows that mishaps are a culmination of factors, and most were avoidable if members were properly trained. The database reflects plenty of examples of members minimally trained, improperly trained, or not trained for the task leading to mishaps. As you read the following examples, consider the quality of training in your workplace. While we're on the subject, check out the Safety & Environmental Training Center's course catalog for a variety of safety-related courses here:

<https://navalsafetycommand.navy.mil/Learning/NAVSAFENVTRACEN/>

- Do shortcuts really save time? Two Sailors were working in the catapult accumulator space, installing the final gasket on the bottom side of a raised surface flange. Because of the lack of training and experience, one member grabbed a crowbar instead of the proper tool, thinking they would do the job faster. As the Sailor applied increasing pressure to the crowbar, it slipped out of their hands and struck the coworker in the hand, lacerating it bad enough to require five stitches. —*Don't just wing it. Learn your job, take your time, and use the correct tools.*
- Lack of training has consequences. A government employee was upgrading a load-bearing test machine. The guards for the chains were removed to aid in the upgrade. While greasing the chains, the machine was turned on for testing, catching the employee's right index finger between the chain and sprocket and severing the tip of the finger. The employee was rushed to the hospital by ambulance, where the tip of their finger was partially amputated. In this incident, the employee was neither trained nor authorized to perform the service on the machinery. —*Supervisors, set your employees up for success. Get them the training they need to do the job.*
- I thought it was easy. A Sailor was tasked to remove and replace a winch cable for the first time. Before starting maintenance, the Sailor reviewed the Interactive Electrical Technical Manual on the winch. With very little training and experience, they removed the old wire cable and positioned the winch drum so the new cable would feed in from the top of the drum by looping the wire cable. After a few attempts to install the winch cable from the top, the Sailor decided to rotate the drum so the cable would feed from the bottom of the drum. After many failed attempts to install the new cable, the Sailor looked closer to see what prevented the cable from feeding into the drum. Once the Sailor came within 6 inches of the looped wire, it partly fed into the drum causing the wire to snap back and strike the Sailor on the left side of the face. Anytime there is tension on a cable winch drum, all body parts must remain outside the high-tension area, as stated in the publications as a warning. The Sailor was not adequately trained for the job and suffered a facial laceration. —*The "can do attitude" can hurt you if you're not trained for the task. Ask for help. Supervisors, again, train your people.*

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- Knowing the procedures can prevent injury. A Medical tech was assisting with a procedure in the Vascular Clinic, transferring Sodium Tetradecyl Sulfate from one syringe to another. During the transfer process, pressure increased inside the syringe, causing the solution to squirt out and enter the medical tech's eye. The member was not trained on using Personal Protective Equipment, the location of the nearest eye washing station, or exposure procedures when handling chemicals. The nearest eyewash station was one floor up in the Operating Room. The member flushed their eyes for two minutes instead of the 15 minutes recommended on the Safety Data Sheet (SDS). After they flushed their eyes, the member was escorted to the ophthalmology clinic for evaluation and discharged with 24-hour SIQ. —*Knowledge is power; it can save you and others from a painful injury.*
- Drive home the point of training. The ship's port side Line Shaft Bearing (LSB) was operated without oil, causing it to seize, which required an \$11 million emergency dry dock to repair. The climate within the engineering department bred complacency that culminated in poor supervision, training, and procedural compliance accountability. The primary causal factor was a poorly written temporary standing order that did not include normal operating temperatures for the LSB. There were strong indications that new and junior crewmembers were told to "just figure it out." —*Train your team and your replacement. Maintain high standards and hold people accountable for their qualifications.* For the full report, see Sanitized Safety Investigation Report SSIR 22-13 Seized Ship's Line Shaft Bearing.

Key Takeaways

Training is critical to our success. We must explore every option to enhance training in the classroom and on the job. The challenge is ensuring your team receives high-quality, relevant training while still getting the job done. We owe it to our junior Sailors and Marines to rise to that challenge and provide the *proper* training they need to be successful. The goal should be to reduce work-related injuries, damage to equipment and loss of lives because of training deficiencies. Here are some areas to help focus your team.

1. **Invest in training.** Be committed to training others. Training has to be diverse to reach every Sailor's and Marine's full potential, e.g., the hands-on, classroom, and on-the-job. Take advantage of all training opportunities and allow adequate repetition to increase proficiency.
2. **Stress the importance of being qualified.** To improve the team, everyone has to strive for excellence, and that is through qualifications. With qualifications comes experience and knowledge over time, which spreads the workload among the team's talent. Leadership responsibility lies in qualified personnel to make decisions on behalf of the team.
3. **Get Real, Get Better...train better.** Get Real is about having the courage to self-assess, to build teams that embrace honest, hard, transparent looks at our performance to understand our actual strengths and shortcomings. Get Better is about a commitment to improving, to self-correct. It's about taking pride in high standards and fixing problems together when they're small before they grow large and complex. Take a hard look at how you train and assess the outcome to see if you meet the total objectives. Be your own toughest critic. Take pride in keeping high training and qualification standards for you and your team!

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