



Naval Safety Command

SAFETY AWARENESS DISPATCH



SA 22-21

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2022 — A DEBRIEF

With the “101 critical days of summer” behind us, it’s time for a debrief. We won’t grade our performance as we did in our mid-term report, SA 22-15 The 501/2 Critical Days of Summer — we’ll let you decide. This dispatch is akin to the debrief phase of the Plan, Brief, Execute, Debrief model. In this case, the operation is our off-duty summer activities with an eye toward how we can improve our safety-mindedness.



The stats: these are the top activities that hurt, and in some cases killed, Sailors and Marines. (also see figure 1).

- PMV-4 mishaps (Automobiles) totaled 76, including 17 fatalities. Two of the fatalities were pedestrians who were struck and killed by automobiles.
- PMV-2 (Motorcycles) also had 76 mishaps, including 8 fatalities. To put these numbers in perspective, only an estimated 10 percent of service members are motorcycle riders, yet they had the second highest number of fatalities.
- The third activity that hurt us most was team sports, with 34 mishaps. Basketball had the most at 15, followed by softball with 10.
- The mid-summer heat wave across the U.S. must have driven many people inside the home, e.g., cuts, tripping, falling, cooking, and lifting/moving objects, as there were 32 mishaps including 2 fatalities. General outdoor mishaps such as hiking, walking, swimming, camping, diving, and boating totaled 23 mishaps, including 4 fatalities.
- Individual Physical Fitness (PT) injuries were next, with 19 mishaps, mainly occurring during running and weightlifting.
- Bicycles accounted for 11 mishaps, followed by stairs and dogs with 8 each (yes, *dogs!*). One case was a combo of stairs **and** a dog.

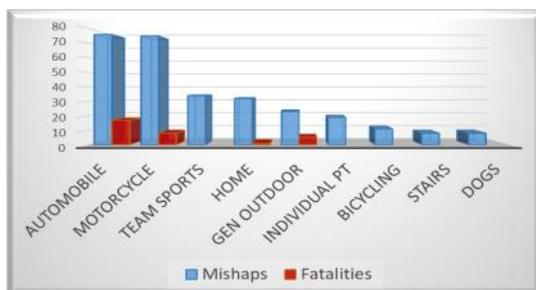


Figure 1. Mishaps and Fatalities

It wouldn’t be a proper debrief without discussing specific examples of how we got it wrong and reflecting on how we can do better next year. Read on so you can learn from your fellow service members and have a successful, injury-free summer in 2023

- **Take Me to The River.** A Marine was headed to a car meet with fellow Marines on their motorcycles. He was out of sight of the other Marines as he entered an “S” curve, according to the report. The Marine went too wide in the curve, applied brakes, but could not stop before striking the guard rail and being ejected down a hill into a river, temporarily rendering him unconscious. The Marine woke up in the river and yelled for help, which the other Marines heard and responded. The Marines drove him to the hospital due to balance and cognitive issues, where he was evaluated and placed on SIQ for two days to recover. *This Marine was fortunate that his friends heard him calling for help and thanks to his helmet, his injuries weren’t much worse. Slow it down in those curves. You’re not Tom Cruise in “Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation.”*
- **Not The Best Laid Plan.** Three Marines decided to head into town at 2230 after an entire workday that began at 0530 and ended at 1700. On the return trip at 0240 the following morning, the driver fell asleep at the wheel and the car crashed into the center barriers and rolled over multiple

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2022 — A DEBRIEF

times. All three Marines were wearing seatbelts and suffered multiple non-life threatening injuries. *The Marines planned to have a designated driver — check, but the driver had been awake for approximately 23 hours before the crash— eesh! Remember, fatigued driving is as dangerous as drunk or drugged driving. Plan your road trips with proper rest worked in.*

- **“Know Yourself And You Will Win All Battles”** — Sun Tzu. A Sailor was playing basketball at a local school and attempted a crossover (*also known as an ankle breaker*). *For non-basketball players, this move is so named because, if done well, it will cause the defender to fall, usually twisting an ankle in the process.* In this case, however, our “Steph Curry of The Seas” rolled his ankle, causing a fracture. *As the subtitle alludes, if you know your abilities and play within them, your ankles will thank you. Proper shoes and conditioning will help reduce the odds of injury too.*
- **Double Jeopardy.** A Sailor was riding his bike on a sidewalk, which led him down a flight of stairs. *Thank you, good night, everybody! Just Kidding, we’ll finish the story even though you know the ending.* While riding down the stairs, the Sailor fell off his bike and broke his arm, earning him six weeks on light duty. *Please stay off the sidewalk and the stairs on your bike, so you don’t make up two of our stats.*
- **“What Do You Do With A Drunken Sailor”** ♪. A Sailor joined other Sailors at a bar at 1700. After approximately five hours at the bar, the Sailor’s shipmates attempted to check in on him before returning to the hotel. Noticing that the Sailor was no longer at the bar, they searched and found him face down on the sidewalk with multiple cuts to his face. The shipmates attempted to bring him back to the hotel, but were unsuccessful and requested an ambulance due to the severity of his injuries. The Sailor was treated for facial cuts and released from the hospital the same night. *There’s no reason to get **that** drunk. You are in charge of your well-being, so be responsible. Look out for your shipmates and intervene before you need to pick them up off the sidewalk.*
- **Toy Story 5: Revenge of Lightyear.** A Sailor was putting their child to bed and turned off the light when they stepped on a toy, rolling their ankle. The Sailor went to the emergency room in the morning, where they were diagnosed with fractured metatarsal (*bones of the forefoot*) and received six weeks of light duty. Poor lighting and lack of situational awareness were deemed factors in this mishap. *Aside from having kids get in the habit of cleaning up their room before bedtime, do a gear adrift sweep while it’s still light before putting the kiddos to bed. This Sailor is lucky it wasn’t the much feared Lego.*
- **Cats Are Cute, But That Doesn’t Mean They Can’t Kill You.** A Submariner was transiting downstairs at his residence when he tripped over the family cat, fell down the stairs, broke his toe and spent the next 53 days on light duty. With all the head knockers and toe busters on submarines, this unfortunate submariner nearly met his demise from Fluffy the cat. *This example of feline lethality illustrates why we must always stay on our “toes.” See what we did there?*

Key Takeaways

While some of our stories were lighthearted, we also remember that the naval services lost 31 Sailors and Marines in off-duty mishaps between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Total fatalities exceeded the five year average for PMV-4 and Off duty Rec, while just under the average for motorcycles by 2. Our total mishap count of 328 was 38 below the five-year average. As we transition to fall, the hazards around us don’t go away, they only change flavors. There’s no better time than the present to adopt the CNO’s “Get real, Get better” call to action by looking inward, reflecting on our day-to-day activities, and committing to improving our safety mindset. Here are a couple of takeaways to help get you started.:

1. **Luck isn’t a superpower.** Make consideration of risks and hazards an ingrained part of your everyday life, on duty and off. The more you do, the luckier (*read “safer”*) you will be.
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. Couple this mindset with takeaway #1 to avoid being a painful or tragic statistic.

And remember, “Let’s be careful out there”

Page 2