

Volume 1, Number 2

Summer 2008

WINGMAN

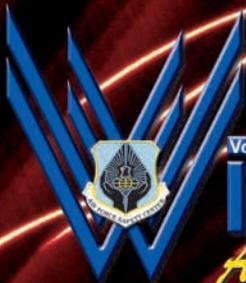
Airmen Taking Care Of Airmen

The United States Air Force Journal of Occupational, Operational and Off-Duty Safety

- ★ **USAF Chief of Safety Summer Message**
- ★ **New USAF Deputy Chief of Safety Interview**
- ★ **2007 USAF Ground Safety Award Winners**

**101 Critical Days
of
Summer**

THE UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE MEMORIAL



Volume 1, Number 2

Summer 2008

WINGMAN

Airmen Taking Care Of Airmen

The United States Air Force Journal of Occupational, Operational and Off-Duty Safety

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Front cover: USAF photo by TSgt Rebecca F. Corey



MAJ GEN WENDELL L. GRIFFIN
United States Air Force Chief of Safety
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With summer just around the corner, it's the time of the year when many of us will be going on vacation, playing sports and enjoying the great outdoors. It's also the time for the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign (May 23 – Sept 2).

This campaign is aimed at reducing accidents and mishaps from Memorial Day through Labor Day, traditionally a time when mishap and accident rates have increased along with the risk. In 2007, the Air Force suffered 19 fatalities, ranging from private motor vehicles to sports and recreation. Your MAJCOM safety offices and the Air Force Safety Center will be teaming to develop a toolbox that will help installations create a specific 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign. In this issue, we explain what the toolbox consists of and where to find it online. These tools will provide installations with the information they need to target high-risk activities that are unique to their areas.

Our core objective for this campaign follows our wingman heritage of "Airmen taking care of Airmen." Our campaign focus area will be involvement at all levels, supporting ultimately our wingmen, commanders, first sergeants and you, in saving lives and protecting resources. The involvement I'm referring to isn't just giving briefings and sending out a PowerPoint chart; it's actually getting involved during social gatherings, sports activities, driving, etc. This means when you're at a function, on or off duty, it's your responsibility to take care of each other. If you see a hazard, report it or fix it. If you see someone starting to do something that makes the hairs on your neck stand up or your gut knot up, don't look away — be a wingman and do something about it.

Bottom line — mishaps are preventable, and every Airman must serve as a reliable and trusted wingman. This is our opportunity to work towards preventing the next mishap. Airmen are our most valuable asset. Be safe, and let's do all we can do to take care of each other.

One more thing: Your safety professionals need your feedback. We only get better with a hard debrief and good lessons learned, so fire away. E-mail your comments to afsc.semm@kirtland.af.mil. ★★

Air Force Motorcycle Mishaps Since Fiscal Year 2006



HQ AFSC/SEG
Kirtland AFB NM

The Air Force Safety Center recently reviewed 582 Class A, B and C motorcycle mishaps from the start of FY06 through the first half of FY08.

During this period, there were 40 deaths, six permanent total disabilities, and 530 lost-time mishaps (Classes B and C combined).

Alcohol incidents accounted for less than 3 percent of the mishaps, but in 12 cases, Airmen were driving motorcycles legally drunk (having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.09 – 0.24).

Thirteen percent of those either fatally injured or suffering permanent total disability were not wearing required personal protective equipment.

The most dangerous time of day to operate a motor-

cycle was from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., which had 31 percent of mishaps, followed closely by the noon to 3 p.m. period, with 24 percent. The most dangerous six-hour stretch was 6 p.m. to midnight, with 26 percent.

Airmen in grades E-1 through E-6 accounted for more than 86 percent of the mishaps.

Months in which the most motorcycle mishaps occurred, in descending order, are July, April, August, May, September, March, October, June, November, January, December and February.

The first half of FY08 has had slightly fewer mishaps compared with FYs 06/07. FY06 had 31 percent of the total year's mishaps in first six months, and FY07 had 35 percent. ■

Air Force Deputy Chief of Safety Interview

Editor's note: William C. Redmond became the U.S. Air Force deputy chief of safety and executive director of the Air Force Safety Center in December 2007. He entered the Air Force in 1977 as a crew chief and received his commission in 1980. He has more than 3,200 hours in the F-4C/D/E/G, F-15E, F-16D and B-1B, and more than 350 combat hours, including combat drops, in the F-4G, F-15E and B-1B as a weapons system officer. He is a graduate of the USAF Fighter Weapons School, and a distinguished graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting, and the National War College. His 28 years of active-duty service included tours in Europe, Korea and throughout the Middle East, and command of an operational fighter squadron and operational bomber group. After retiring as a colonel in 2005, he entered civil service, where he served as Director of the Commander's Advisory Group at U.S. Joint Forces Command and NATO Allied Command Transformation until assuming his current position.

The interview for this article took place in February 2008.



Q: What's your perspective on safety?

A: I think that first and foremost, safety is inherent in everything we do. Whether in a squadron, in a flight, in a group or wing, over Afghanistan, over Iraq, or in the middle of the Indian Ocean. We want to make sure that the things that we do and we train to, the safe procedures that we use at home are used in war. If I've learned anything in my time in combat in three different airplanes, it's that you follow procedures, work to make your place as safe as possible, work to follow technical orders, and that's important in building a culture. I also believe that it's a commander's program. I believe the commander goes to great care to lead and to institutionalize, to

codify, where possible, the safety process. So that people understand how important it is to him. You go back over all the years that you've been a leader in the Air Force, and what you learn is that simple messages — passion, never forgetting where you are and who you are, teaching all the time — is important. And safety is one of most important things you can teach.

Q: What are your top priorities here?

A: The top priorities are always to help the MAJCOMs. To make sure that we are providing the services, the capabilities, and the subject-matter expertise that are out there, so that the major commands, wing commanders,

squadron commanders, and our 1,700-plus safety professionals across the Air Force have the tools that they need to do the job. When I think of that group, I think of commanders, I think of command chiefs, I think of the first sergeants. It's a very inclusive group. And it's the Airmen. Making sure that the analysis window, making sure that the subject-matter experts we have, making sure that the tools that we're building and we already have, and the capabilities that the Safety Center has, are available to everyone. That they know what's available and they can use those. Making sure that our courses are first-rate, that we teach our academics that are available, the magazines that we publish reach out not only to the commanders, but they reach out to the Airmen, and they talk to them. I think the Safety Center is a gold nugget, with the expertise here. I think we need to move ahead, and we need to be as proactive as possible, to help the MAJCOMs as they work to institutionalize the Wingman culture, as they move to work the Voluntary Protection Program, so that they look at hazards out there and mature the risk-management concept. That's what I'd really like to see, where people are picking up the phone and saying, "Let's call the Safety Center and get them out here," or "Let's call the Safety Center and see what they think," or "Let's take advantage of their expertise that exists at the Safety Center." I have always wanted to make sure that the Safety Center is seen as a primary supporter to the warfighter.

Q: What is it you want Air Force safety professionals, and all Airmen, to know?

A: About the Wingman culture. I love the concept of the Wingman culture. As I grew up in the '90s with the risk-management principles, and we brought those not only to aviation, but to the flight line, and we distributed them across the base, I think of the maturation of that as the Wingman culture. Also, it's codified, and it's a historical precedent, because wingmen take care of themselves, they take care of their lead, they take care of their flight, they protect each other. I think it's a great concept for us to teach our young Airmen as they come in that wingmen never take a day off; it's 24/7. They look at what's going on around them, they speak out, they're forward, they're aggressive, they're leaders, and they're supporters. That is what I think is a great ethos for us to have. When we do hazard assessment, when we look at our brothers and sisters, when we look at our parking lots, and when we look at trying to build the tenets of what the Voluntary Protection Program talks about — that's all being a good wingman. As a young Airman and a crew chief, I sat on the Commander's Advisory Board. What a great educational experience that was, because we could reach out to the commander and talk to him directly about things we wanted to see changed in the squadron. That's the type of thing a good wingman does. It's a two-way street. The commander

talks to the Airman about what he needs to see, what she needs to see.

Q: During your many years in the Air Force, what changes did you see in safety?

A: I think they reach out to the individuals now. I think the education is better. Of the Accident Investigation Board courses I've gone to, the Chief of Safety courses I've looked at, and reviews, I think we have some first-class education now, and I think we have some good tools. Also, I think the commanders have gotten more involved. I certainly became more hands-on as I matured. I also reached out to take the pulse of the people in the organizations — civilians, military and contractors — so that I had a good picture of what the organization needed to do. In the opening remarks that I've made in classes, one of the things I talk about is, how do you change a culture, how do you institutionalize processes that are right, how do you locally codify things that are important? I think we're well on our way to doing that. I don't think we've taken advantage of 21st century methods of information passing. Each generation is better at information than the preceding one. It gets better, and we need to do that. I think that some of the things that we're trying to do are just on the cusp of that. I really like the appeal to the individual. The individual can do risk management, the individual can test sanity and say, "This is wrong." The individual knows what's right. Initiative is a principle of war. One of the checklists I use all the time to see if things are working right is the principles of war. Simplicity is a great one, unity of effort is a great one, and initiative is a great one.

Q: Is there anything else you want to add?

A: What I am surprised by, as I see the Safety Center, is the amount of different tools and capabilities that are out there that can help a commander in any form, whether at a two-star, four-star or wing commander level. We're an Air Force at war in the Global War on Terror. So we want to support that to the maximum extent, and we want to make sure our Airmen are prepared, better than any Airmen in previous lives. We want to learn lessons learned, and we want to have best practices. So those are the areas that we will concentrate on, so that we can provide those commanders, and we can provide those safety professionals, and we can provide our wingmen the best-ever programs, the best-ever tools. I'd like to remind everybody out there that I'm a phone call away, 24/7.

I took this job because I believe I can save lives. In my interview with Maj. Gen. Griffin, I liked his strategic vision, that safety is a commander's tool, and that he wants us to come up with innovations of 21st century resources. Every day for me is exciting and challenging, and I am proud to work on this team. ■

101 Critical Days of Being a Wingman

GARY COLE
75 ABW/SEG
Hill AFB UT

It's not too hard to decide on a focus for the upcoming 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign. One only need look at last year's dismal statistics. No sense talking about keeping germs off your barbecued chicken when so many people are dying on the roads! The Air Force suffered 19 fatalities during the summer of 2007 – 15 of them in traffic mishaps.

Breaking it down further, “loss of control” was one causal factor in six of the fatalities, and other external factors contributed to nine more.

Before you nod off on another boring safety article, consider something. Of those 19 Airmen who tragically lost their lives, how many got up that morning and decided to kill themselves before the next sunrise? Exactly! Not one. They all woke up just like you did this morning, looking forward to a full day and an even fuller life ahead of them. Only their “fuller” life consisted of just a few more hours, due to a lapse in judgment or a poor decision. Before reading any further, you need to get into your mindset that you aren't immune to making poor decisions – nor immune to the tragic consequences that sometimes follow.

With our focus established, let's first look at why these accidents are happening. Speed is the No. 1 killer. The standard safety pitch you hear all the time is “Leave in plenty of time to travel,” or “Pay attention to posted speed limits,” but you all know the real reason for speeding. You drive your car or ride your bike around for three months and then decide you know everything there is to know about driving. You get way too comfortable with yourself and your machine. Besides, it's macho to test the limits of your new ride and impress your friends with your total command. Maybe a few cocktails are in the mix, too. Whatever the case, the world is your oyster! Except for one small problem: Physics. Yup, nature's laws don't know you from Adam and don't care if you're only 23 years old; try to defy them and you're toast!

If we eliminated just the speed, alcohol and cockiness, we'd have at least 12 more Airmen walking around with us today.

It seems as though I've run out of time and space for this article. I was going to run the whole gamut of our typical 101 Days topics, writing about lawnmower safety, gardening safety, and stretching before softball games. I'm not saying those aren't important; it's just that I like to cut to the chase and target what needs targeting. Let's get this driving thing under control and then next year I promise we'll talk about insect bites or something!

Besides, we can establish two factors of prevention for nearly all other summer activities: risk management and the Wingman principle. If you're not one for detail, you can narrow operational risk management into two steps: 1) identify the hazards, and 2) do something about them.

In identifying hazards, just consider all the things that make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. Think of a deer standing in a field, peacefully grazing, when suddenly its head pops up and its tail flashes. “Danger, danger!” If that creature can sense danger, surely you can tell when you're about to do something stupid. If not, let's hope you have a good wingman.

That brings us to the next factor. Each of us is responsible for our wingmen's health and welfare, as the subtitle of this magazine says: “Airmen taking care of Airmen.” If they're not smart enough to take care of themselves, it'll be up to us. We wouldn't let them do something stupid and die in a convoy through downtown Baghdad, so why don't we get involved when they fly past us at Mach II on their bullet bikes, or zip in and out of traffic just to get someplace two minutes quicker?

I didn't cover half the subjects that I originally intended to, but I hope I at least got you to think – and act – toward a long, safe, and enjoyable summer.

Remember, “Involvement” is the key to being a good wingman. ■





Preventing Heat Injuries

MAJ DARRYN BRYANT
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Whether deployed to Southwest Asia or operating stateside during the summer heat, many military operations take place under extremely hot conditions. Because of the insidious nature of heat illnesses, heat injuries frequently result because people often don't recognize their symptoms until it's too late. Our body's protective cooling mechanism against heat injury is sweat. As long as we can sweat and the sweat can evaporate, we can continue to cool ourselves efficiently. If either the sweating mechanism begins to fail or the sweat cannot evaporate, then the cooling mechanism will fail, and heat injuries may occur.

On hot, humid days, our cooling is extremely inefficient, and it becomes relatively easy to overheat, because the sweat cannot evaporate. The evaporation of sweat accounts for 90 percent of our cooling ability.

Additionally, our ability to sweat diminishes as we become dehydrated. We lose body fluids in many ways every day. Sources of fluid loss include respiration, perspiration, urination and defecation. The loss rate from each of these will vary according to activity levels, air temperature, humidity and altitude. With normal

daily activities, we typically lose about 1-2 liters just from respiration, and another 1-2 liters from normal perspiration. During heavy exertion, we can lose 8-10 liters of fluid over an afternoon of exercise or heavy activity. A 150-pound person can lose two percent of his body weight – three pounds – in fluid in just one hour! Because muscles are made up of about 70 percent water, this can definitely affect our ability to continue to do both aerobic and anaerobic work.

How much fluid do you need? One of the best ways to judge hydration status is to check the color of your urine: it should be relatively odorless and no darker than the color of straw. The rule of thumb is "clear fluids in, clear fluids out." A dehydrated person is more susceptible to developing a heat-related illness. Early symptoms of dehydration include thirst, fatigue, loss of appetite, lightheadedness and flushed skin. Later symptoms may include difficulty in swallowing, stumbling, numbness, blurred vision, painful urination, muscle spasms and delirium. It's extremely important to pay attention to these early symptoms so that heat illnesses can be averted. If it continues and goes untreated, heat exhaustion and heat stroke may occur.

Heat exhaustion is a condition caused by water and electrolyte loss. The primary cause of symptoms is related to the amount of sodium chloride (salt) lost. Symptoms

can include excessive thirst, fatigue, exhaustion, nausea, muscle cramps, anxiety, agitation and headache. If treatment is further delayed, heat stroke may result. Heat stroke is a potentially life-threatening situation. Death can occur in less than 30 minutes. As the brain overheats, the person may become disoriented, combative, argumentative, and may hallucinate. Symptoms may also include seizures, vomiting and coma.

We assume that our sense of thirst will protect us from dehydration. This is not always the case. Our thirst sensation doesn't normally kick in until we are already two percent dehydrated! You don't want to wait until you feel thirsty to drink; it may be too late. Instead, design a fluid plan, just like you plan what you will be eating that day. Drink a couple of glasses of water with breakfast and throughout the morning, a couple at lunch, again in mid-afternoon, and then some more at dinner. A good rule of thumb is that you should drink at least 72 ounces of fluid every day. Obviously, if you're going to be exercising or working outdoors and sweating a great deal, you'll require much more fluid than this basic recommendation. The type of fluid is not nearly as important as the overall quantity, although water should be your first choice. Alcohol and caffeinated beverages are both diuretics, which can increase your fluid loss.

Here are some easy things you can do to protect yourself from heat injuries. Stay well hydrated by drinking fluids beginning about 12 hours before a scheduled work/exercise period. Our bodies can lose up to 2.5 quarts per hour, but can only absorb about one quart of water per hour. Carrying a clean, reusable water bottle can also be beneficial while at work, especially if you typically spend a lot of time outdoors. Pay attention to work/rest cycles and take frequent breaks from the outdoor heat. If possible, wear clothing that allows evaporation to help with the cooling process.

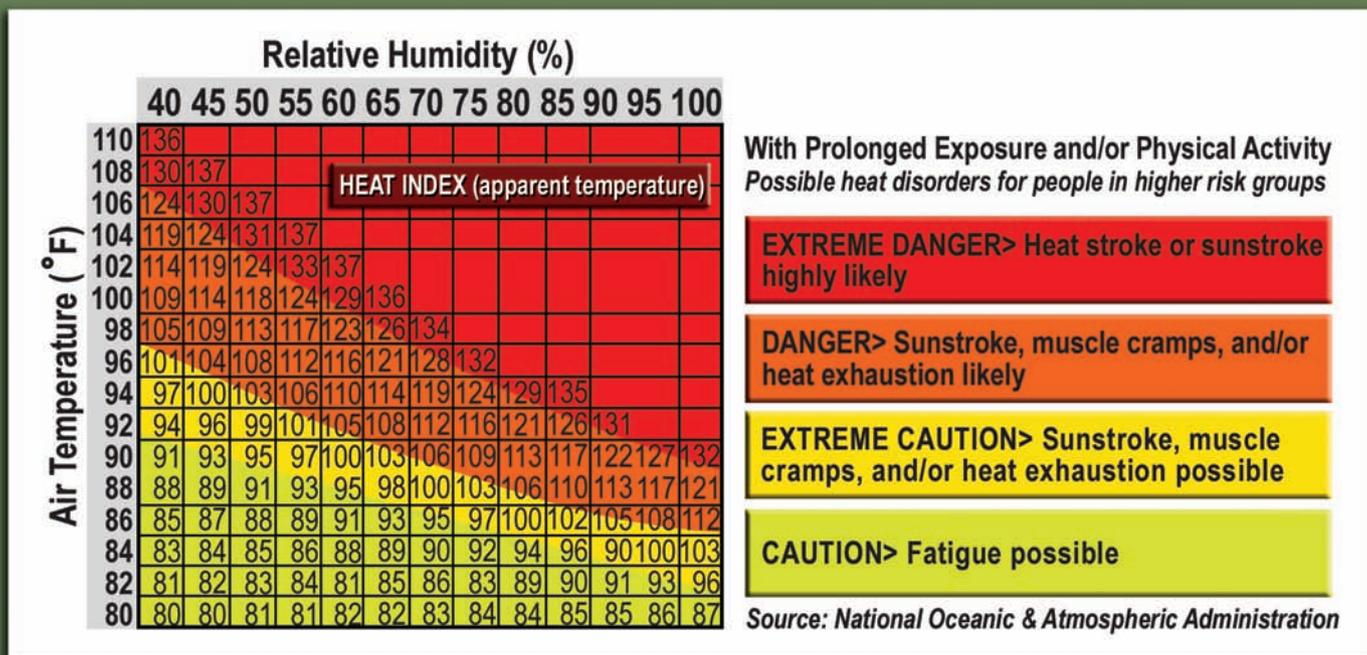
Supervisors need to pay close attention to where their people are and what they're doing. Everyone should be able to recognize the early signs and symptoms of heat illness, so further progression can be avoided.

Can you drink too much water? The answer is yes. Perhaps you've heard of "water intoxication" incidents with U.S. military recruits and athletes at summer training camps. The military has traditionally focused on the dangers associated with heat illness, which have killed a number of healthy young enlistees. However, pushing the need to drink water too far can also have deadly consequences. Unfortunately, the dangers of over hydration are similar to those of dehydration! Over hydration can flush out critical electrolytes like sodium and potassium. Look for sweating, dizziness, fainting, flushed skin and possible unconsciousness. Here are a couple of examples:

- A 19-year-old Air Force recruit collapsed during a 5.8-mile walk, with a body temperature of 108 degrees Fahrenheit. Doctors concluded he died of heat stroke and low blood sodium levels because of over hydration.
- A 20-year-old trainee in the Army drank about 12 quarts of water during a two- to four-hour period while trying to produce a urine specimen for a drug test. She experienced fecal incontinence, became confused, lost consciousness, and died from swelling in her brain and lungs.

When we drink too much water, brain swelling can result. To prevent over hydration, stay hydrated, but limit your water intake to 1-1/2 quarts per hour, and 12 quarts total per day. If you suspect over hydration, call 911, as this is a medical emergency!

Heat injuries are preventable. It's up to everyone to continue to check each other to ensure no one succumbs to a heat-related illness, especially when conducting military operations under extremely hot conditions. ■



My Ride Home

(Ghostwritten for a fallen rider)

My story is absolutely true. It happened just last summer. I was a staff sergeant living out my dream of working hands-on with fighter jets. I had a new custom Hardtail Harley that was the envy of my co-workers.

I'd just finished working my shift, had a three-day holiday weekend starting, and was pumped to go have some fun. My wife, who was expecting my first child, was living about 200 miles south. My plan was to meet a buddy, hit the open highway, and let the weekend begin.

The ride was awesome! Open air in my face ... freedom! The ride was smooth, with no problems – not even any of those idiots who cut you off in traffic. I arrived at my destination just a little tired from the long day.

My wife was so beautiful. People say that a woman glows when she's with child. I now knew what they meant. I must have been the luckiest guy in the world.

My best bud from high school came over, and my best friend from

work was there, so why not have a few shots of Jack, just to take the edge off? After a few, my bud showed me his new cruiser. It was cool, but not as cool as the mean machine I was riding. The next step was obvious – gotta take a short ride together.

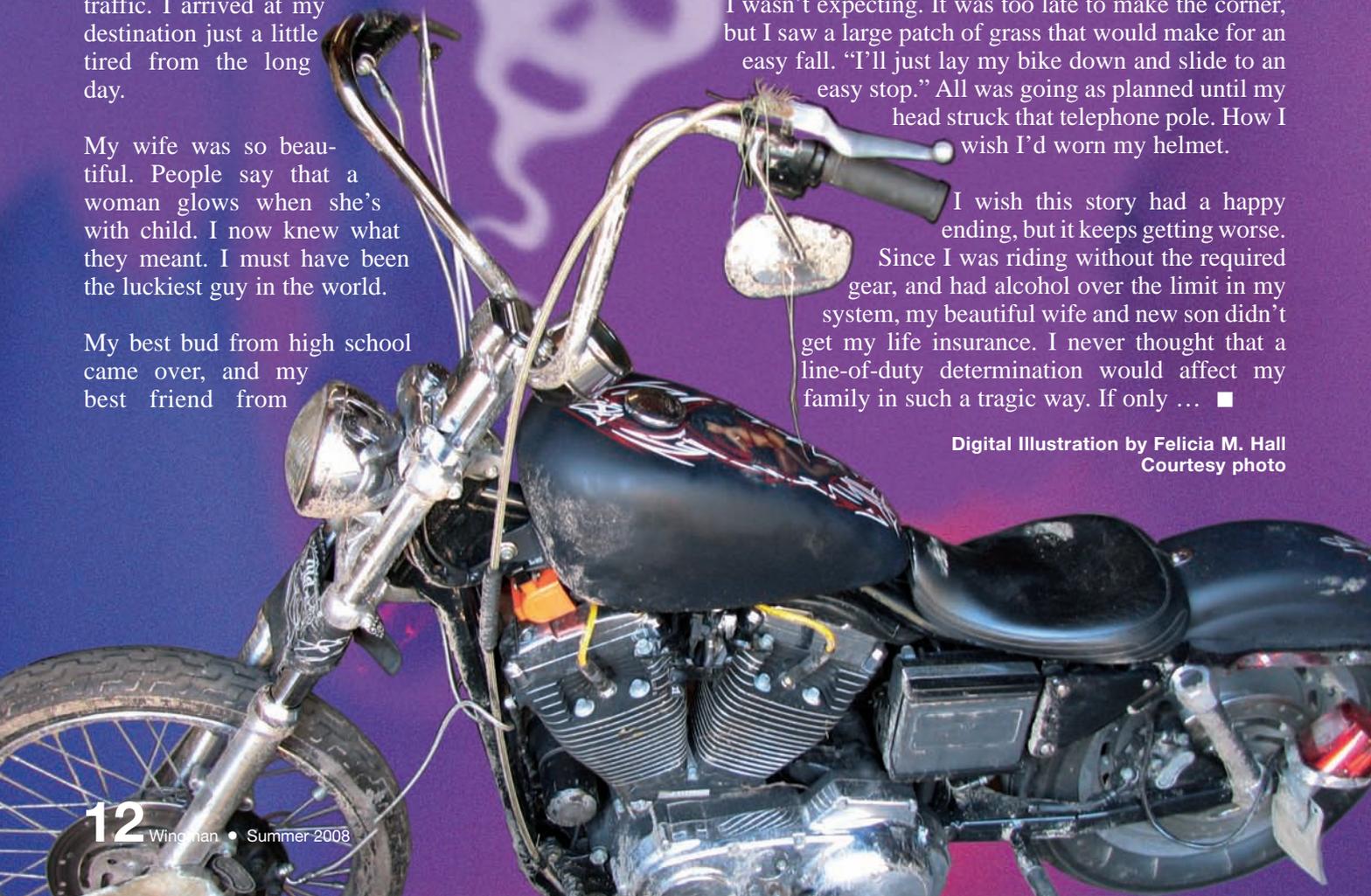
I had my helmet and riding gear, because I'd been on base earlier that day. But there was no Air Force base in this town, and no one to bust me for riding the Dennis Hopper way, free from the brain bucket. So off we go, three in a row.

We weren't even traveling that fast. Compared to those interstate speeds from earlier in the day, 45 is slow. The posted speed was 30 mph, but that's for cars. Bikes handle much better and are designed to corner at higher speeds.

We crested the hill and there was a sharp left turn that I wasn't expecting. It was too late to make the corner, but I saw a large patch of grass that would make for an easy fall. "I'll just lay my bike down and slide to an easy stop." All was going as planned until my head struck that telephone pole. How I wish I'd worn my helmet.

I wish this story had a happy ending, but it keeps getting worse. Since I was riding without the required gear, and had alcohol over the limit in my system, my beautiful wife and new son didn't get my life insurance. I never thought that a line-of-duty determination would affect my family in such a tragic way. If only ... ■

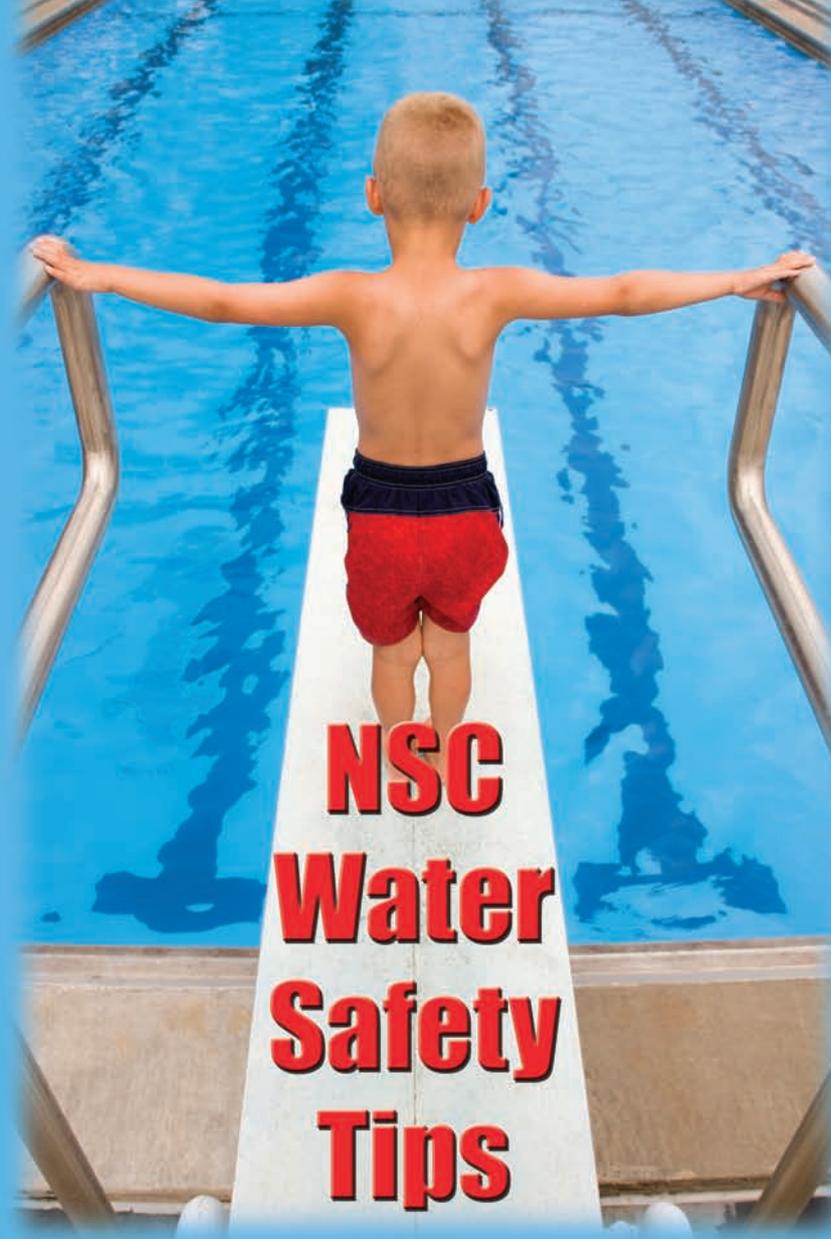
Digital Illustration by Felicia M. Hall
Courtesy photo



Drowning claims the lives of nearly 3,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children four years old and younger have the highest death rate due to drowning. Most drowning and near-drowning incidents happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub.

Safety Tips

- Never leave a child alone near water: on the beach, at a pool, or in the bathtub. If you must leave the immediate area for a telephone call or to answer the door, wrap the child in a towel and take him or her with you.
- Kids don't drown only in pools. Bathtubs, buckets, toilets, and hot tubs also present drowning dangers. Don't leave a small child alone with any container of liquid.
- Enroll children older than three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. Keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."
- Always follow posted safety precautions when visiting water parks.
- If you're visiting a public pool, keep an eye on your kids. Lifeguards aren't babysitters.
- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.
- Always use approved personal flotation devices (life jackets).
- Don't underestimate the power of water. Even rivers and lakes can have undertows.
- A swimming pool drowning could also be called a



"silent death," as there is rarely a splash or cry for help to alert parents to the problem. The typical drowning victim is a boy between one and three years old who is thought not to be in the pool area at the time of the incident.

- Fence in the pool completely. Doors leading to the pool area should be self-closing and self-latching or equipped with exit alarms, and should never be propped open.

- Never take your eyes off children when they are in or near any body of water, not even for a second. Don't rely on inflatable devices, such as inner tubes, water wings, inflatable mattresses and toys or other similar

objects to keep a youngster afloat. Keep toys, tricycles and other play things away from the pool area. A toddler near the water could unexpectedly fall in.

- All parents and pool owners should seek training in swimming, lifesaving, first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

- Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy.

Teach your children these four key swimming rules:

1. **Always swim with a buddy.**
2. **Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.**
3. **Don't push or jump on others.**
4. **Be prepared for an emergency.**



HMMWVs, SWAMPS AND A LACK OF TACTICAL DRIVING EXPERIENCE DON'T MIX

PATRICK EGAN
720 OSS/AST
Hurlburt Field FL

In early December 2007, while conducting a quarterly training event, my unit experienced a High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle incident caused by a lack of understanding of how to drive tactical vehicles in poor conditions.

We pride ourselves in training Special Tactics opera-

tors to carry on in the Global War on Terrorism. These young Airmen are inexperienced and sometimes cause damage to our few tactical vehicles. Vehicle nonavailability hinders our ability to give every Special Tactics trainee the chance to train like previous students.

Our school is an 11-month, multidiscipline training course. We give the Special Tactics trainees a familiarization on the HMMWV when they first arrive. At various times, they are expected to drive HMMWVs to and from training events on Eglin Range.

One day, the Airmen were returning to Hurlburt from Eglin Range.

The previous few days had been rainy. On the day of the incident, actual conditions were OK, but still quite damp on the range roads. The HMMWV involved in the incident was occupied by two Airmen who were following a quarter-mile behind another vehicle carrying instructors. As the incident vehicle moved toward a large body of water spanning the range road, the driver gunned the engine and plowed through the puddle. A rooster tail formed behind the vehicle, and immense amounts of muddy water washed over the windshield. The driver lost visibility on the road and drifted off the range road into a swamp that borders that area of Eglin Range.

Both Airmen were OK because they wore their seat belts. They took stock of their situation and abandoned ship before the swamp started to swallow the HMMWV.

Next, they called their instructors, who immediately tried to pull the stuck HMMWV out of the swamp. Without luck in budging the HMMWV from the muck, they placed a radio call to the school operations center for assistance. The instructors relayed the information and request for a wrecker to pull the mired HMMWV out before it sank too deep into the mud. As you can see in the pictures, the HMMWV continued to succumb to the swamp.

Once the incident information was passed to our unit vehicle maintenance section, they contacted base transportation, and both our unit vehicle maintenance troops and base transportation rallied to the incident site with a tow truck capable of pulling out a stuck HMMWV.

Post-analysis of the incident: The driver was driving too fast for conditions, which could have resulted in a possible rollover accident and the potential loss of two Airmen. The Airmen and unit got off lightly, with only possible water damage to the engine's electrical components, as well as a bruised operator ego.

The Army uses the following guidance for crossing water obstacles in HMMWVs: **Army TC 21-305-4 "Training Program for the High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle"** describes the proper procedures for fording a shallow body of water (30 inches or less). "The driver will ensure the water depth does not exceed 30 inches; shift the transfer case into high range, then enter the water slowly and maintain even vehicle speed while fording (5 mph or less)."

The Airmen knew how to drive the HMMWV in normal conditions. They failed to apply common sense and



were probably under a little Get-Home-Itis after the training event ended. They didn't realize the gravity of driving fast under poor conditions through a body of water until it was too late.

Our vehicle maintenance troops and instructors will ensure that incoming Airmen are briefed on proper and safe HMMWV driving during bad conditions, so that this incident will not be repeated. ■

**Driving is one of my 101
favorite summer activities.**





Won't you join me this year?



Mentors Hold the Key to VPP Success

LT COL WADE WEISMAN
SAF/IEE
Pentagon
Washington DC

The implementation of the Voluntary Protection Program across the Air Force is well under way, with more than 20 assessments completed, as well as assessor training for AFMC, AMC, ACC and PACAF. At least five sites are expected to apply for VPP Star recognition this year.

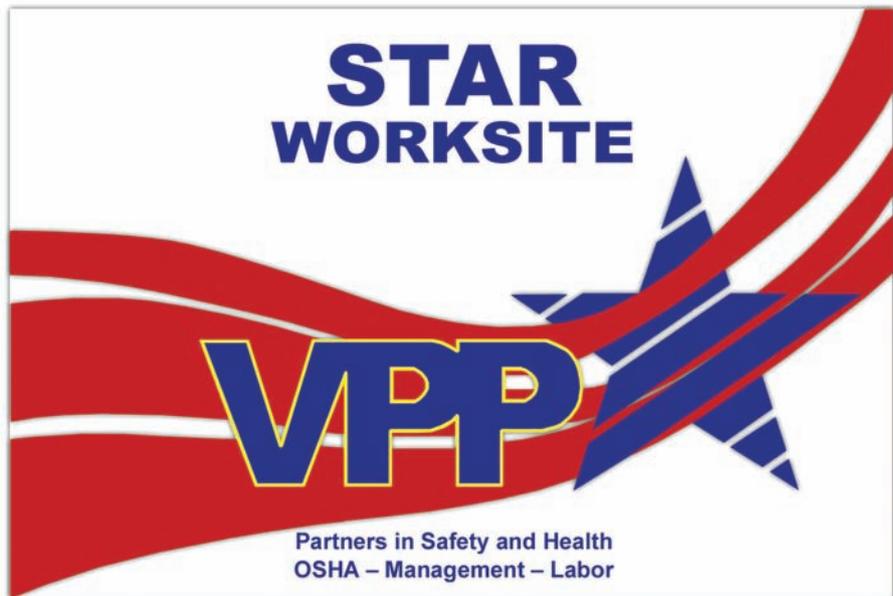
Through all this forward movement, we've learned that the VPP mentor and their Star site are critical links in successful VPP execution. A mentor is a company or federal work site that has already received VPP Star recognition from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Star is the highest level of VPP recognition. Two of the unique "above and beyond" requirements of VPP is that Star sites must show continuous improvement after recognition and that they must mentor "up and coming" sites into the program. It is a part of the VPP culture that there is nothing proprietary about safety – even among companies that may be competing in the marketplace.

Once an installation, through its MAJCOM, requests a VPP, assessment planning begins. This includes a request to the OSHA Cooperative and State Program Regional office asking for recommendations for potential mentors for the base. The regional office knows which of the Star sites are looking to mentor. The staff will also be able to recommend a possible "good fit" for the base. The possible mentor(s) names are provided to the installation, who contacts the mentor site to find out if the staff is willing. If so, what follows is usually a visit to the mentor site by members of the installation VPP team to see how the site

puts VPP into practice. This mentor site visit has been included in the 2½-day VPP assessor training class with great success. The initial site visit is the best opportunity for the installation and prospective mentor to determine if the mentoring relationship will work for both sides, and for the base to see what the VPP culture is all about. If both parties agree, then the site becomes the mentor — there is no paperwork required, although some installations have agreed to formalize the agreement and acknowledge the scope of the mentoring through a written document, such as a memorandum of agreement. Once the site is established as a mentor, the installation should plan another site visit with a larger contingent from the installation, including representatives from unions, junior enlisted, supervisors and leadership. The visit should include both safety and occupational health specialists and those who are not SOH professionals. It has played out many times that the site visit holds the key to convincing those who are unsure of the benefits of VPP once they see it in action at a site.

What can an installation expect from a mentor besides site visits? Mentors are primarily available to share what has worked for them in executing VPP. This may include example VPP applications and annual reports, examples of employee involvement, near-miss reporting incentives, training outlines and job safety analysis formats. They are there to answer questions about the program – especially the subjective requirements. They can also visit the installation, and review and observe the AF program in action and make recommendations, either as part of an AF site visit or independently. The mentor is not, however, expected to execute VPP for the base, close out findings, or develop local policy.

How much does all this cost the installation? The great part of VPP is that the mentor services are free; mentors do not charge the sites they are mentoring for their efforts. The exception may be an installation agreeing to reimburse travel for a mentor site that is not close to the base. This brings up an important attribute of a mentor — proximity. If the mentor site is close, face-to-face interaction and site visits can occur more frequently and involve more base employees. Proximity probably trumps similar mission with selecting a mentor site. For example, Tinker AFB has selected a local Xerox company as one of its mentors, with great success.



There are times, however, when the installation needs the expertise of a mentor with more closely aligned mission or process. This was the case when Eielson AFB teamed up with Allegheny Power Company. Two mentors from a VPP Star coal-fired power plant recently made a visit to the plant at Eielson to observe their safety and health program execution and make recommendations. Michelle Baber, Brad McPherson and their company’s commitment to support VPP sites as a mentor could be no more apparent than their trip in the dead of winter and with Allegheny supporting one of the team member’s travel. Allegheny was the first coal-fired power plant VPP Star site and with similar age and technology to the co-generation coal-fired central heat and power plant at Eielson, they were able to provide a focused review and

recommendations. They were able to discuss some of the specific concerns at the site, including coal handling and compliance concerns such as machine guarding. The team identified a key to safety culture at the plant – the employees at the plant with a passion for safety and ideas for safety improvement. In this case, Michelle and Brad were able to serve as safety coaches, listening to the concerns and ideas from plant employees and relaying them to management in an effective manner. As is usual with mentoring relationships, the Allegheny team noted best practices to take back with them. Lessons learned usually work both ways in a mentoring relationship.

The Chief of Safety at Eielson AFB, Lt. Col. Todd (Marco) Craigie, said of the mentoring visit, “We

appreciate the opportunity to partner with our VPP mentors from Allegheny Energy. We recognize management at Eielson’s plant don’t really have “peers” in the Air Force with whom to share lessons learned or crosstell; therefore, seeking industry assistance from a VPP Star site has definitely helped us to identify areas for improvement. We hope to send representatives from Eielson to visit some of Allegheny Energy’s plants in the next couple of months and plan to host Ms. Baber and Mr. McPherson at Eielson again in June.”

As your installation begins down the road toward VPP, a site mentor will prove crucial to successful implementation. ■



VPP Fast Facts

- ★ Performance based safety recognition program for “best in class”
- ★ An AFSO21 concept for Wingmen ground safety
- ★ Built on **current** Air Force Occupational Safety & Health (AFOSH) programs
- ★ A tool to drive down preventable mishaps; Improves our mature programs
- ★ A proven concept in Industry
- ★ A means to recover lost mission capability from on & off duty injuries

VPP Applies to Military & Civilian

Every Airman & his Wingman actively Identifying hazards & taking action to eliminate them

<https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/USAFVPP>

4 Key Elements of VPP

- ★ Management leadership & Employee Involvement
- ★ Worksite Analysis
- ★ Hazard Prevention & Control
- ★ Safety & Health Training

VPP is a partnership between the AF and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to promote effective safety and health programs.

Did You Know? Preparing for an OSHA Visit

MSGT TIM HELMS
HQ AFSC/SEG
Kirtland AFB NM

One of the principal tools used to identify hazards or unsafe conditions in an organization is a safety inspection. These inspections are accomplished at various levels and are valuable tools when properly used.

Inspections are usually done by your wing/base safety personnel. However, Occupational Safety and Health Administration may also come on to your installation to conduct inspections and issue citations.

From October 2004 to August 2007, OSHA cited several Air Force installations in the Western United States (OSHA regions 8, 9, and 10) with 214 safety violations, according to OSHA's Integrated Management Information System.

Areas most commonly receiving citations were maintenance squadrons, equipment maintenance squadrons, logistics readiness squadrons, component maintenance squadrons, medical groups/squadrons, and mission support squadrons, with civil engineering and services squadrons receiving 54 percent.

The most common violations were in machine guarding, electrical standards, National Life Safety Code, walking and working surfaces, industrial trucks, hazard communication, PPE, lockout/tagout, and asbestos.

Are you prepared for an OSHA visit? Your best preparation for an OSHA inspection is ensuring continual compliance with the safety standards. OSHA visits are often conducted with no notice, but there are steps you can take to be better prepared for unannounced OSHA visitors. The most important one is



to conduct periodic self-inspections. Self-inspections provide a method of identifying hazards and unsafe practices within the work area, and they keep commanders informed on the degree of compliance with safety standards. In addition, a well-publicized hazard reporting system is vital, allowing front-line supervisors and workers the opportunity to identify hazards and participate in the hazard abatement process. Once these efforts have been accomplished, the process is not final without proper documentation. In the eyes of



a compliance inspector, the absence of documentation is the absence of action.

What happens if OSHA visits your area and finds violations? According to the Department of Labor, if an OSHA inspector identifies any violations, the inspector must issue a citation and proposed penalty within six months of the violation's occurrence. Citations describe the OSHA requirements allegedly violated, list any proposed penalties, and give a deadline for correcting the alleged hazards. Violations are categorized as other-than-serious, serious, willful, repeated, and failure to abate. The next time you do a self-inspection, ask yourself these questions: "Are inspections abundant, thorough and accurate? Are the findings documented and abated? Is proper follow-up conducted? Is the safety program healthy and effective so that workers feel encouraged to participate?"

Another important element to an effective safety



program is to recognize those who support the safety program and correct those who don't.

By doing in-depth self-inspections, you'll be complying with federal and Air Force instructions, and you'll be keeping people safe, saving your unit money, productivity and resources.

Remember the safety rule – "You're no good to anyone dead." ■



An Epiphany of Fire and Fear: Independence Day on the High Plains

Anonymous

The odds seemed to be in our favor. Even Mother Nature had decided to comply with our grand scheme to patriotically celebrate our nation's coming into being with nearly \$1,000 of imported fireworks, a healthy amount of strong drink, and the desire to be awed among good company. Considering the scale of our plans, it was roundly agreed upon to locate ourselves on the furthest outskirts of town ... a remote place with advantageous surroundings for the night's proceedings.

When the sun finally set, we left in convoy to claim the responsibility of bringing light back to the sky. The throng of at least a dozen had piled into five vehicles, along with the arsenal of celebratory fireworks, which fit tightly into the rear of a full-sized SUV. Little wind,

the soft glow of a faraway moon, and an unforeseen amount of chaotic behavior lay ahead of us.

The days leading up to this national holiday were filled with continuous bombardments of eye-opening, real life, all-jokes-aside safety information by means of e-mail, articles in periodicals, and supervisory "please be safe" conversations; all of which were supported with vividly gruesome photos, e-mail forwards, and eyebrow-beating looks from superiors who were expressing what their face would look like if a fireworks mishap were to occur. By the end of the duty day on the 3rd of July, there was enough "I told you so" cannon fodder to blast down the Great Wall of China.

The only viable excuse for any mass wildfire, property destruction, or other mishap this night would be a meteor impact. None of us had the power to call down a space rock, and therefore would have to accept our fates as blissfully incapacitated, thrill-seeking individuals on a well-traveled path headed toward a mortal lesson on the mixing of influences and excessive amounts of low-grade black powder. The weather forecast for the night was a low of 67 degrees Fahrenheit, minimal cloud cover, and soft breezes of less than 10 miles per hour.

By the time our assembly of congenial patriots and well-wishers had arrived, the few remaining rays of sunlight gave us the opportunity to take in the details and dimensions of our surroundings. The idea to set up shop next to a profoundly steep-walled canal seemed to be a quality decision, though for unspecified reasons. Possibly the presence of a water source, however accessible, was the justification. Not a human alive could have seen or heard us for miles around.

Only two things could have exposed our position: the fireworks or a raging fire – and the close proximity of the prairie grass made the latter option an alarming one. Collectively, our financial worth would have been only enough to buy a four-foot square patch of land. Burning up the grasslands on the High Plains would have meant certain ruin for the lives of all included on this voyage.

There was nothing overly complicated or refined about our set-up: a handful of vehicles parked sporadically, coolers positioned for easy access, fireworks a mere 20 yards away, and no clear line established to safeguard wanderers from sparks or reports from the fireworks.

A simple diagnosis of the intelligence of this crowd would have led one to assume there was enough overall common sense and, moreover, aptitude for understanding the reasons why others in this situation have failed to effectively and safely pull off an occasion such as this one. One element this diagnosis would have failed to account for is the real influence of alcohol on a gathering of adults who still respond to fireworks displays in the same manner as children. At this point, the word consequence had left, or failed to enter, our vocabulary, let alone our thought processes. It might as well have been a word in Mandarin Chinese.

Having a multiple-shot, high-altitude fireworks item explode 30 feet in the sky is a gripping experience. It recalls the thoughts of first learning what influenced Francis Scott Key when he wrote “The Star-Spangled Banner.” A witness goes through a myriad of emotions, but it’s a significantly different experience when the brightly colored galaxy of flares and reports are traveling in your direction, between ground level and nine feet high. Engulfed by objects burning at hundreds, if not thousands, of degrees, as well as travel with lightning speed, it was immediately clear we were doomed.

While dodging and ducking the incoming projectiles, it immediately made me wonder if we were to become the next mass e-mail forward, expressing the “don’ts” of han-

dling fireworks, bound certainly to reach every Safety office in the major command. A gambling man would wage money on it being seen across the greater Air Force. While successfully surprising ourselves, we were now on the run from the very munitions our money had purchased. What sick irony presents itself in such cruel ways? It’s probably better known as overconfidence.

Echoes from all corners of the known and unknown region began to flood the conscious airways of our minds. It was the report from the explosive projectiles, as well as the voices of those who would make examples of us for behavior deemed intolerable and problematic. Before debate began on what a good response would be for the reasons for the night’s actions, it was necessary to put out the many small fires within the vicinity, ensure none had started farther off, and attend to the injured, if there were any.

The sight of rag-tag, amateur firefighters determined to put out a baker’s dozen small grass fires appeared also to look like a strange, discombobulated tribal dance. If it was any sort of ceremony, it was one in which we were determined to save our souls and as much land as possible. If there had been fewer people attending the night’s festivities, who knows what would have happened with the spread of the fires, though it is doubtful they would have been extinguished as rapidly.

Fortunately, the process for terminating the spread of the fires was quick and relatively simple: stomp your feet until the ambers cease to glow, and then stomp a little more just to be on the safe side, now that making active safety considerations had become paramount.

As it seemed our fate with a spreading prairie fire was put to rest, the next logical issue was ensuring no one had lost an eye, sustained third-degree burns, or had a massive head contusion. In terms of what injuries were possible, considering the type and size of incoming projectiles, it was anyone’s guess, though it was everyone’s hope there were none at all.

The extent of what could be considered unfortunate consequences of such a circumstance were minor burns and bruises, burned clothing, and broken beer bottles. I felt a sharp pain in my thigh, and a small brown dot of burned denim affirmed the throbbing notion. Others had similar markings on their clothing; we’d been initiated into the society of the stupid, and received a symbol to prove our place within the organization.

What the symbol really represented was the luck we had been afforded. When recounting the night’s travails with the “what-if” game, words like “negligent,” “reckless endangerment,” and “felony property damage” seemed to continually pop up at the end of any given thought pattern.

Some of us had put our toes on the ledge and peered over to where such terms are reality for those who carry heavy weights of judicial and personal guilt. On that night, a few had seen what it potentially takes to drop to such a low level, and with one simple twist of fate, it’s plausible the whole lot of attendees could have plummeted. ■



A Hike to the Top

CAPT MICHAEL AKINS
43 ADOS
Pope AFB NC

Never having lived north of my current home in Fayetteville, N.C., my idea of severe weather was surviving triple-digit heat in Del Rio, Texas and Okinawa, Japan. Consequently, the cold-weather experience I had about five years ago caught me a tad ill-prepared.

Believe it or not, my cold-weather adventure occurred in the middle of August. My family and I decided to vacation in Tokyo, Japan, just a short hop from Kadena Air Base. Our trip included a hike up Mount Fuji. We'd never done any climbing like this before,

but had heard that this was for novices and that our 10- and 11-year-old boys would enjoy it. So, I started planning our trip.

I knew that living at sea level for three years might be a factor as we approached the thinner atmosphere at the peak, and I was also aware of the temperature difference on the mountain. As the trip got closer, I encouraged the family to go for long walks to increase their stamina. At the same time, I started shopping for jackets, thermals and gloves; garments we have no need for in Okinawa's tropical climate. As I recall, I had to order most of our cold-weather clothes online. From my research, I found August temperatures on Mount Fuji to be mild, but I wanted us to be prepared, just in case. Unfortunately, this was my first point of failure. In my haste to secure warm clothing, I neglected to consider weather proofing.



The big day arrived. We were very excited to start our pilgrimage up the mountain, feeling very prepared with our camel backs and hiking sticks. With our backpacks filled with snacks, some cans of oxygen, and our seemingly unnecessary warm clothes, we began our trek. I remember getting hot along the way, even wearing shorts. After all, it was August. We welcomed each checkpoint to take a short break and have our walking stick souvenirs burned with the highly coveted stamps. After some time, as our fatigue, hunger and shortness of breath started to increase, the temperature had noticeably dropped. Apparently, a front had moved in, and we were in store for a pretty exciting afternoon. Big deal; we didn't come all the way out here just to turn back before reaching the top, especially when we were so close! This is where the second point of failure occurred. I blame the lack of oxygen for my poor judgment.

Now donned in our warmer, yet conspicuously nonwaterproof outer garments, we surged forward. It wasn't long before the rain and sleet appeared, and just like that, we found ourselves in the middle of a nasty storm. That was when I started thinking that maybe this wasn't such a good idea, as I looked down on the shivering faces of my kids. Even though we could see the top, I suggested that we head back

down. My family looked at me as if I suggested we throw ourselves into oncoming traffic. It seemed they were not going to be denied their final checkpoint stamp on their hiking sticks. So, despite only seeing people heading in the opposite direction and the lack of feeling in my fingers, we made a final push. It was truly surprising how long it takes to travel 1,000 yards up a mountain.

Finally! We made it, and not a moment too soon. I don't think we could have dealt with the wind chill much longer. Fortunately, there was a checkpoint near the top to warm up in before we went back down. I was thankful to be returning to the base, but even more thankful that we managed to escape severe hypothermia in our wet clothes. I've wondered if we would have continued if we'd had another few hundred yards in front of us.



On the way down, we ran into a father and son not as lucky. The father had slipped and broken his leg. He and his son had been there for a while and were suffering from hypothermia. Their location prevented rescue vehicles from reaching them in those weather conditions. I sent my wife and kids down on their own and remained with a few others on the scene to help get the two down the mountain. It made me realize how easily a fun family activity can turn life-threatening.

We were able to carry the injured father and son down on litters fashioned from jackets and hiking sticks. Fortunately, we were able to get them to a point where rescuers were waiting. At the base, I reunited with my family, and soon we returned to the hotel. It seemed like forever before that inner chill disappeared and my fingers were warm again. I don't recall ever having a better night's sleep than that night.

Looking back, I realize the situation could have been much worse. Lack of proper preparation, lack of respect for severe weather, and an overabundance of ego nearly got me and my family into a lot of trouble. Now, I incorporate a little more ORM when I plan these types of activities and "what if" worst-case scenarios. There is definitely some value to the old adage "Better to have something and not need it, than need something and not have it." The last place I want to be is up the creek without a paddle, or up the mountain without dry clothes. ■

2007 Air Force Ground Safety Awards

Air Force Safety announces
the 2007 Safety Awards recipients:

***Colonel Will L. Tubbs Memorial Award
for Ground Safety***

Category I:

Air Force Materiel Command

Category II:

United States Air Force Academy

Chief of Staff Individual Safety Award

***Lt. Col. Edward Vaughan, NGB
Andrews AFB MD
(ANG)***

Safety Career Professional of the Year Award

***Mr. Thomas Diveley
305 AMW
McGuire AFB NJ
(AMC)***

***Air Force Chief of Safety
Outstanding Achievement Award
for Ground Safety***

Category I:

***45th Space Wing
Patrick AFB FL
(AFSPC)***

Category II:

***52nd Fighter Wing
Spangdahlem AB GE
(USAFE)***

Category III:

***22nd Air Refueling Wing
McCConnell AFB KS
(AMC)***

Category IV:

***33rd Fighter Wing
Eglin AFB FL
(ACC)***

Category V:

***703rd Munitions
Support Squadron
Volkel AB GE
(USAFE)***

*Air Force Chief of Safety Special Achievement Award
48th Fighter Wing
RAF Lakenheath UK
(USAFE)*

*Air Force Chief of Safety Medical Achievement Award
Capt. Trisha Douglas
99 AMDS
Nellis AFB NV
(ACC)*

Ground Safety Plaque Recipients

*Air Combat Command
27th Fighter Wing*

*Air Force Materiel Command
Electronic Systems Center*

*Air Force Space Command
45th Space Wing
21st Space Wing
460th Space Wing*

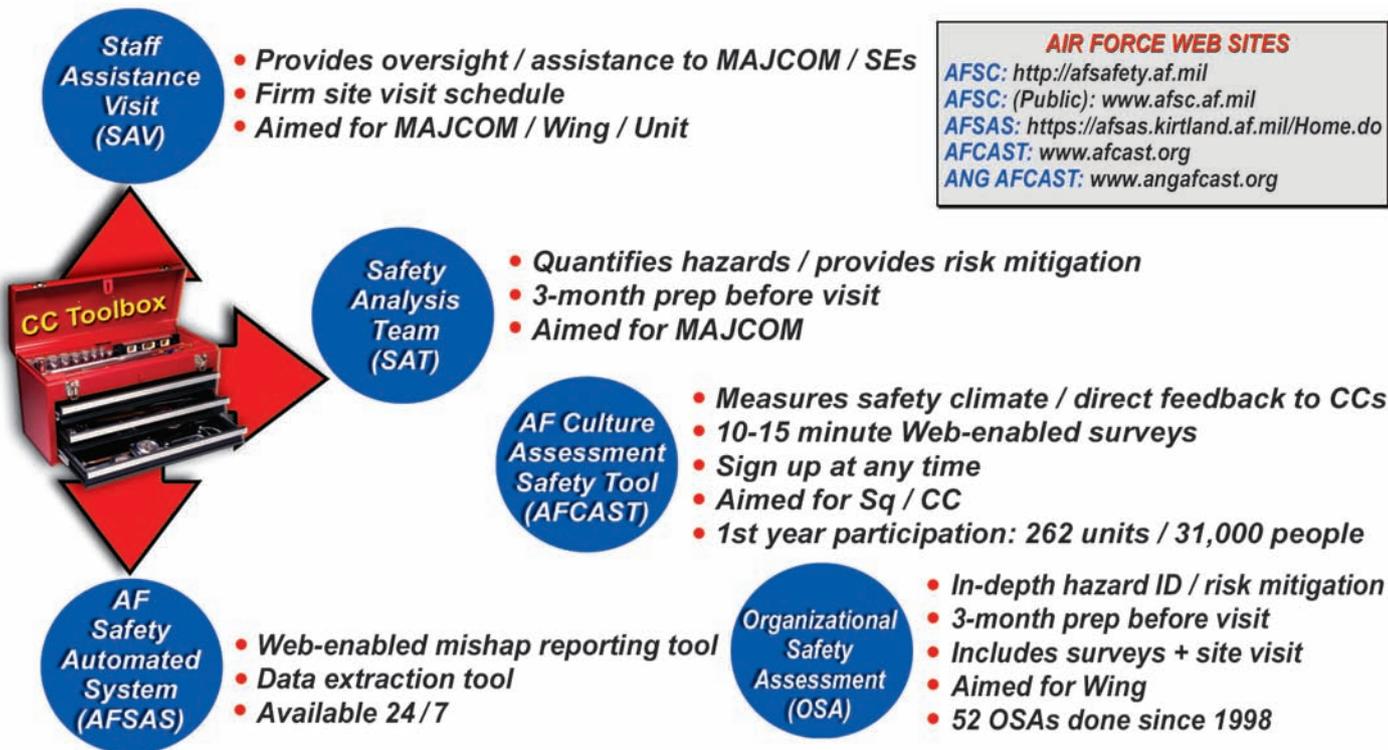
*Air Mobility Command
375th Airlift Wing
725th Air Mobility Squadron
6th Air Mobility Wing
730th Air Mobility Squadron
22nd Air Refueling Wing
92nd Air Refueling Wing*

*Pacific Air Forces
8th Fighter Wing*

*Air Force Special Operations Command
1st Special Operations Wing*

*United States Air Forces in Europe
52nd Fighter Wing
65th Air Base Wing*

Commander's Safety Toolbox



AIR FORCE WEB SITES
 AFSC: <http://afsafety.af.mil>
 AFSC: (Public): www.afsc.af.mil
 AFSAS: <https://afsas.kirtland.af.mil/Home.do>
 AFCAST: www.afcast.org
 ANG AFCAST: www.angafcast.org

AL JONES
 HQ AFSC/SEO
 Kirtland AFB NM

Editor's note: Al Jones is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and former commander of the Air Force Arctic Survival School. He's now confined to a small cubicle at the Safety Center under the close supervision of two staff psychologists. The following is a fictional account of his glory days of command. The author's opinion about competing for promotion does not reflect that of 99.9 percent of Air Force squadron commanders.

I've been a squadron commander for seven months now, with no major problems. If I can just get through the summer without a safety incident, life will be good. Ah, yes, the 101 critical days of summer. If I knew what was out there, I could prepare; but who knows what might come our way? Wait a minute, I'm smarter than that. I don't have to just sit around until trouble finds me, which sounds like something my archnemesi, Lt. Col. Smith, would do. If he thinks he's getting that DP for O-6 instead of me, he's got another thing coming.

As a responsible driver, I don't wait for the car to break down before I open my toolbox — I open it and perform routine maintenance before the car breaks down. I always get the car in shape before making a long and potentially dangerous trip. I'd like to take a trip over to Smith's house and give him a piece of my mind. Later. For now, I need to focus.

As a responsible commander, I can take the same preventive actions in regard to safety. I don't have to wait for an incident to occur before opening my Commander's Safety Toolbox. I can perform preventive maintenance anytime, especially before my squadron takes a dangerous trip, such as during the 101 critical days of summer.

Let me take a look and see what's in my safety toolbox. I'm sure glad somebody printed my toolbox on this page; that's handy. There's got to be something that might help me deal with the 101 critical days.

We have a staff assistance visit; however, that looks like a pretty big operation. It involves a site visit, so it'll take some time to schedule and set up. I think I'll leave that to the MAJCOM- and wing-level folks.

The Air Force Safety Automated System is a Web-

enabled data-extraction system. I know our safety folks have AFSAS accounts that allow them to retrieve mishap information data. I bet they can search the database and get information on Class A accidents that occurred during previous 101 critical days. That's good, but I need something that will give me even better insight into my own squadron.

The Organizational Safety Assessment will give me in-depth hazard identification and offer some risk mitigations. A three-month prep — sounds like something we should do at the wing level. I need to remember to recommend that to the wing commander before Lt. Col. Smith does. He thinks he's so great ... but I digress.

The Safety Analysis Team also quantifies hazards and offers risk mitigation, but it sounds like that's aimed at the MAJCOM level.

The Air Force Culture Safety Assessment Tool may be just what I'm looking for. Measures safety climate with direct feedback to the commander. I like that. A dot-com Web-based survey, so my Airmen can take the survey at work, home, or anywhere they have Internet access.

Only 10 to 15 minutes to take the survey, and I can sign up my squadron today. A team of experts gathers the data, completes the analysis, and gives me a personal debrief on my squadron's results. Not releasable to anyone else ... not even my commander.

I don't mind that the MAJCOM can look at aggregate data from all over the command. They can't break out my data. I wish they could look at my data compared to Smith's squadron data; then they'd know the score on that knucklehead ... but again, I digress.

I can get started today; professional analysis, quick, easy, and at no cost to my squadron or wing. This is a no-brainer.

AFCAST has seven different surveys, so which one, or maybe which ones, should I choose to battle the 101 critical days? Looks like the basic survey is customized for either operators or maintenance/support. I know there are plans to break out maintenance and support as two separate surveys and to customize a survey for our medical folks. Sounds good, but for now, I want to target summer travel and outdoor activities.

The Voluntary Protection Program is a partnership between the Air Force and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Looks like its goal is to promote effective safety and health programs. Good stuff, but I need something a little more focused. The other four seem to address

the activities that cause us problems every summer.

Drinking & Driving — we absolutely need that. Off Duty & Recreation — perfect for all the summer weekend activities and leave time coming up. Private Motor Vehicle — PMV accidents kill more of our troops than anything else. Motorcycle Safety — say no more.

I'd like to strap Smith to a motorcycle and send him right over the Grand Canyon. Sweet, but he'd probably come up with some way to get a medal out of it. Darn. Focus, focus.

I can open my toolbox and grab the items I need. Perfect. I'll get started now and have all my troops take the PMV, D&D, OD&R and Motorcycle Safety assessment surveys. I can log on to www.afcast.org and get started, or call 888-603-3170 and get assistance from the pros.

Poor ol' Smith; he probably doesn't have a clue about any of this. I'm really going to make him look bad when I implement my plan. No, I can't do that. He's a knucklehead, but I'm his wingman. I guess I really need to share this information with all the commanders across the wing ... even Smith.

The goal is for everyone to be safe this summer, so we're all here for the fight. We need all our people and resources to get the job done. One team, one fight!

Still ... I wouldn't mind if Smith came down with a really, really bad summer cold. ■



CONTROL YOURSELF

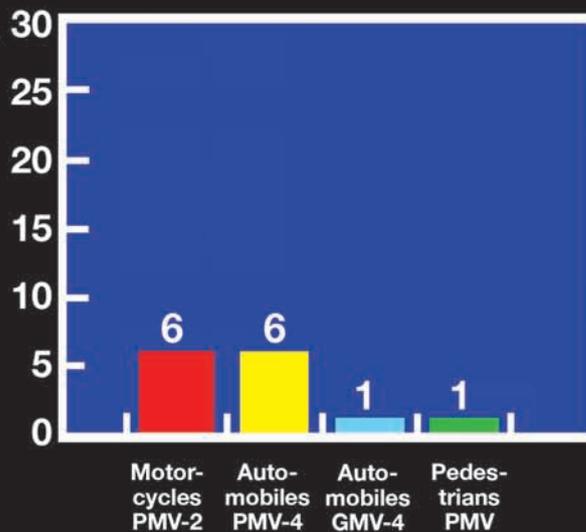
Play it smart. Know your skill level and ride within it.

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Snapshot on Safety

Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY08 As of March 4



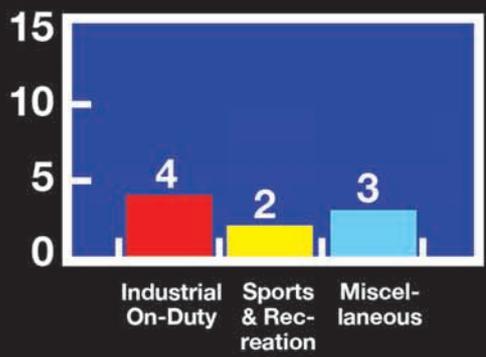
BRIAN DYE
HQ AFSC/SEG Contractor
Kirtland AFB NM

Editor's note: *The numbers presented in the graphics portion of this article indicate fatalities in those mishap categories. The narratives below recount nonfatal mishaps.*

**Lack of Warning, Speed and Road Conditions:
An Accident in the Making**

During the early afternoon on a clear, sunny day, Airman 1 (operator) and fellow Airmen 2, 3 and 4 (passengers) were driving east on a road that had a steep cliff on one side and mountainous terrain on the other. All the Airmen were wearing their seat belts. Without warning, Airman 1 entered into a 45-degree curve too fast for the conditions. The vehicle fishtailed on loose gravel, turned 180 degrees and struck a tree. It then moved forward and rolled down the embankment about 230 feet until it finally stopped. All four Airmen were transported to a local medical facility. Airmen 1 and 4 needed extensive treatment, so all were transported to a local hospital. Alcohol and lack of sleep were not factors in this mishap.

Non-Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY08



his friends asked him to ride ATVs. The Airman hesitated because he had little experience with ATVs, but succumbed to the group's insistence and decided to ride with them. The Airman donned the proper personal protective equipment and rode out on a dirt road with the group. He rode in the rear of the group, but later the group stopped at a scenic area and asked the Airman to lead them back. When he asked why, they told him that their pace coming out was causing him to out-drive his abilities. He led the group back, driving at speeds he was comfortable with. As the Airman rode into an "S" curve, he failed to negotiate the second half of the turn, left the road, and ended up in a gulley, where he was tossed over the handlebars of the ATV. He pushed off the ATV to avoid being struck by it, but landed head first on a concrete culvert. He estimated he was traveling at about 25 mph. He was taken to a local medical facility and ended up paralyzed. Alcohol was not a factor in this mishap.

Lessons Learned:

Peer pressure and lack of experience are not a healthy combination. Off-duty activities can be just as dangerous as on-duty activities. Risk management applies in all areas of life, not just at work. The Airman could have said he'd like to ride with one of the experienced riders. By doing so, the group would have been satisfied and the inexperienced ATV operator would have been at ease. Proper use of risk management goes a long way toward keeping people safe.

A Dog, A Deer and a Motorcycle

Late in the evening, an Airman left work on his motorcycle. He had traveled three miles north of the base at the posted speed limit of 35 mph when he saw a dog crossing the road about 30 yards ahead. He kept his eye on the dog to make sure it didn't come back into the road. While he was watching the dog, his motorcycle struck a deer, going out of control and leaving the road. The Airman was thrown from the motorcycle and struck the ground. After an ambulance ride to the hospital, he received treatment for a fractured left clavicle and three days off work.

Lessons Learned:

At night and especially during seasons of heightened deer activity, motorcyclists need to take extra precautions to avoid such situations. Using risk-management principles will identify hazards and solutions to mitigate or reduce them. It's important to know the areas you travel in. Ask co-workers, local residents and law enforcement officials about areas of animal activity. Reduce speed and scan the area as you travel. As always, wear the appropriate personal protective equipment to give yourself the best chance of surviving a mishap. ■

Lessons Learned:

Lack of a warning sign, speed and road conditions were factors in this mishap. Proper application of risk-management principles could have compensated for them. Planning the trip could have alerted the Airman to the dangers and road conditions. Inadequate planning can have serious consequences.

Peer Pressure and Lack of Experience Make for a Bad Situation

An Airman was on vacation with family and friends when

Monthly Safety Topics

Safety "Spot On"

MAY

Buckle Up America
Safe Boating Week
Lawn mowers & garden tools
Backyard pools, safe swimming
Pesticides and insecticides
Hot-weather vehicle maintenance
Sun hazards
National Sight Saving Month
101 Critical Days starts

JUNE

Fishing and camping safety
Vacation driving
Ocean hazards
Trailer towing
Barbecuing

JULY

Independence Day —
Fireworks hazards
Lifting — Back injuries

AUGUST

Back to school awareness
Labor Day Weekend

SEPTEMBER

Farm Safety Week
Contact sports
Personal protective equipment
CPR / First Aid
Hunting safety