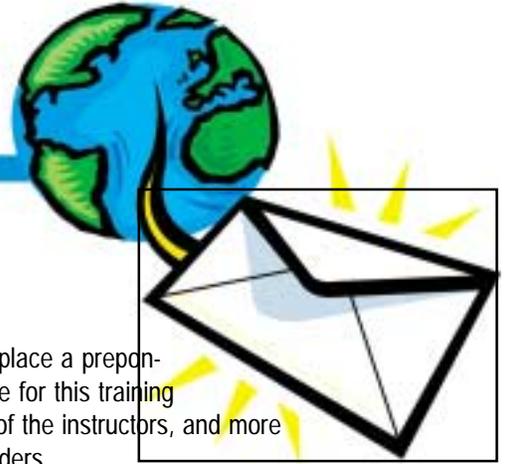


Reader e-mail



Most editors call this section "Letters to the Editor," but, this being the computer age, we received only e-mail responses to our previous issue. Thanks to those Marines who took time to let us know what they thought, what mistakes they caught, and for general feedback. You can reach the editor at jcleary@safetycenter.navy.mil.

Marine Corps Safe Driving Video

"No Memorials-Safe Driving for Marines" is a video produced by the Naval Safety Center and Headquarters Marine Corps, Safety Division, which describes the main factors that cause Marines to crash their vehicles. Furthermore, it explains how Marines can use operational risk management (ORM) to keep them from being victims of automobile crashes.

In October 1999, copies of the video were mailed from Tobyhanna Joint Audiovisual Center to most safety offices, training and audiovisual service centers, battalions and squadrons. If you didn't receive a copy and would like one, the video may be ordered at <http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/>. Select PCN/ICN SEARCH, enter 113842 in the box. The POC at the Safety Division is Ms. Eleanor Kaufer. She can be reached at Com (703) 614-1202/3164, DSN 224, or e-mail: kauferer@hqmc.usmc.mil.

Re: Anyone Can Drive a Truck, Right!

Ground Warrior, Winter '99

The author of this article states: "This next event shows what happens when people don't follow the rules..."

This article refers to a Marine in my company who nearly died in this accident when he suffered several fractures to his back. The Marine was not wearing a seatbelt because it was wedged under the seat and not in plain view. The instructor told the Marine, "Don't worry about it, just drive the truck." After the accident, I photographed the driver's seat to confirm the driver's claim that there was no belt for him to wear. I also watched the motor transport personnel disassemble the front seat during the investigation. The seat was bolted over the left half of the driver's seatbelt. The right half of the driver's seatbelt was used by one of the two instructors who were riding with my Marine.

I also take umbrage at your statements, "He was traveling too fast," "He was speeding," and "He didn't adjust his driving for the conditions." This Marine was driving in a convoy of other students and was in the middle vehicle. The instructors did not tell the students to reduce their speed for the wet conditions.

At the time of the accident, flak jackets and helmets were not required to be worn. Since then, tactical-vehicle operators driving on and off the base are now required to wear these items.

Much like you, I place a preponderance of the blame for this training accident at the feet of the instructors, and more importantly, their leaders.

GySgt. Brian K. Bingham
1st Maintenance Battalion, 1st FSSG

Your investigation into the matter provided much more detail than the investigation report. Your insight emphasizes the tremendous responsibilities of Marine leaders at all levels to enforce the rules and set the example. Since 1994, tactical-vehicle mishaps have claimed more Marines' lives (26) than any other operational-mishap category, including weapons and explosives.

The purpose of this article, like safety investigations, is not to place blame, but to find the causes so that we can prevent a mishap like this from happening again. Thanks for getting to the bottom of this mishap and sounding off; it makes a difference. -Ed.

Re: Those Targets Are Far Enough Away

Ground Warrior, Winter '99

In this article, Lt. Berthelotte states "EOD personnel accompany the unit to make sure they place targets at safe distances." This statement is misleading at best, and could serve to perpetuate the problem he is trying to eliminate through his otherwise informative article. EOD personnel escort the unit while placing targets to minimize the risk of injury in an impact area containing unexploded ordnance. Our mission does not include calculating and plotting surface danger zones. This is the responsibility of the range control officer.

Camp Pendleton's ranges are controlled from a remote location, using computers, radar, and remote-camera systems. If every platoon commander and sergeant visited range control, it would create an endless stream of disruptions for the controllers. They also control the base's air space, so this could endanger aircraft, as well as ground units. Visiting range control may be a realistic suggestion at other bases.

The author is right about one thing: If the RSO or OIC had done a hasty risk assessment at the range, they could have prevented a Marine from getting hurt.

GySgt. Michael Snow
EOD Operations Chief
MCB Camp Pendleton