



## So You Think You Can Drive?

### What's the issue?

There is more to being a good driver than going fast and not having a wreck. Traffic mishaps remain the leading peacetime killer of military personnel, and they are almost always the fault of the person at the wheel.

### What's going on?

Of the 563 Navy operational and non-operational fatalities from FY02-FY07, 350 were PMV. No other category comes close.

A recent analysis of the human factors involved in 338 PMV mishaps from FY99 through FY07 showed that 60% involved "skill-based errors." In other words, in six out of 10 mishaps, the driver wrecked because he or she lacked the driving skills to maintain control and avoid traffic/roadway hazards.

### What's the solution?

Too many people are nonchalant about how hard it is to drive. They think that knowing how to start the car, knowing where the brake and accelerator are, and then temporarily learning enough to pass the driver's test is all there is to it.

Learning from a professional would be a good starting point. Reviewing the driver's manual for your state is another excellent habit. Other good habits:

- Not being in a hurry
- Never driving after drinking
- Looking out for the idiots on the road, but not

taking their behavior personally

- Staying alert and paying attention

Consider the former truck driver who was a member of the trucking industry's Three Million (accident-free) Mile Club. He drove for 40 years, logging the equivalent of 125 trips around the world, without an accident or a ticket. His wife said that he referred to other drivers as "idiots." His daughter added, "He knew what people were going to do before they did."

### Discussion Items and Open Questions

1. Weaving in and out of highway traffic and going 15 miles per hour faster than everyone else doesn't mean you are a good driver. What other ways are there to define "good driver"? Possibilities include not getting tickets; low rates for insurance; never having wrecked a car.
2. If you learn bad habits from your dad or whoever teaches you, they are still bad habits, even if someone has been doing them forever. What sorts of bad habits have you witnessed? Do you have any?
3. What is the stupidest thing you've ever seen another driver do?

**Supervisors: Use this page to guide safety discussions with your personnel**