

What I Learned From a Blowout

By 2ndLt. Stephen McMath, USMC,
TrAWing 6

As aviators, we play it safe around our aircraft. We routinely inspect it, check for FOD, and run through checklists because we know the hazards of flight. Then, when we're done for the day, we run out, hop in our cars, and go home, rarely thinking twice about the hazards we face in that environment.

Oh, we check the oil periodically, and we look at the other fluids once in a while, but that's about the

Navy photo by PHAN Mark Gleason



You keep a close check on aircraft tires...

extent of it. This lack of attention came home to me, when one of the tires on my car blew out. An inspection quickly revealed I had cord showing in both of my front tires.

I remembered it had been more than a month since I last had taken a careful look at the tires on my car, even though I check the tires on the aircraft every time I get ready to go flying. Furthermore, I'm often guilty of not noticing the fuel level in my car until the red warning light starts flashing, whereas I always monitor the fuel level in my aircraft.



...So why not these, too?

I don't handle other off-duty risks very well, either. For example, I was helping a friend replace his siding and wasn't watching for nails on the ground. I suddenly stepped on one and had to make a trip to medical to make sure my tetanus shot was up to date.

We need to take what we learn on the flight line and apply it to all the other parts of our lives. We constantly must do informal ORM—considering the possible risks we face and finding ways to minimize them while still getting the job done. In the end, this process won't slow us down; rather, it'll help us avoid mishaps—thereby saving time. **S**

The author was assigned to VT-4 when he wrote this story.

Resources:

- Operational Risk Management (ORM), <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/orm/default.htm>
- Liberty Incident Reduction Program, <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/ashore/checklists/motorvehicle/liberty.doc>
- Truman Encourages ORM Off Duty, http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=26504