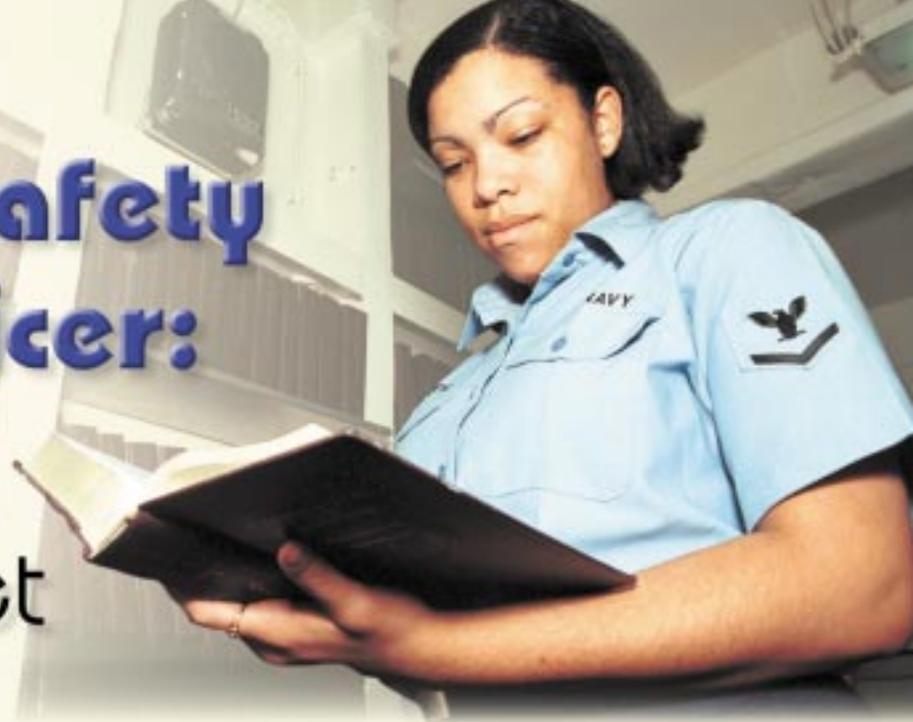


Division Safety Petty Officer:

More Than Just a Bullet on an Eval



Navy photo by PHAN Justin C. Proulx

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While perhaps not glamorous positions, shipboard division safety petty officers (DSPO) and embarked aviation safety petty officers have responsibilities not to be taken lightly. The division safety petty officer position demands integrity and merit, and those designated as DSPOs serve as role models, enforcers, educators, and supervisors. The position itself requires involvement in all shipboard aspects of occupational safety and health.

While DSPOs don't claim to be experts in occupational safety and health, they do have access to a wealth of information and training for presentation to the crew and, as such, are indispensable to overall shipboard safety.

Not everyone can be a division safety petty officer. OpNavInst 5100.19D defines the requirements and outlines division safety petty officer responsibilities, which include:

- Inspect divisional spaces regularly and submit hazard reports as required.
- Advise the division officer on the status of the Naval Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH) Program.
- Conduct shipboard division NAVOSH training.
- Assist with mishap or near-mishap investigations.
- Serve on the enlisted safety committee.

The DSPO is a vital link between Sailors and division officers. Being voices for safety, DSPOs

educate the crew and enable shipmates to avoid hazards and manage risk. Educating the crew on motor vehicle safety, selecting appropriate personal protective equipment, or ventilating a space during painting are just a few of the topics DSPOs periodically address for their divisions.

The DSPO also can sniff out compartmental safety discrepancies before they end up as zone inspection hits. A DSPO must regularly look for discrepancies such as loose handrails, exposed cables, inoperative or mislabeled eye-wash stations, and improperly stowed hazardous material, to name a few. He or she must also then submit a report describing the discrepancy, then follow through to make sure problems have been corrected.

Another DSPO responsibility is that of attending enlisted safety committee meetings. These meetings are another forum through which a DSPO periodically can emphasize the need to live and think safety "24/7."

Should you ever be called upon to be a DSPO, don't scoff at the opportunity. Remember, safety doesn't stop in the Navy! Corporate America, too, realizes the need for work-place safety. Many companies now hire safety technicians and experts tasked to reduce injuries and unsafe practices which cause lost corporate productivity. These civilian safety experts are like the Navy's DSPOs and share the goal of reducing organizational safety risks. ☺