The Safety Corner

From the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned
November 8, 2006

Private Motor Vehicle Travel

This issue of the Safety Corner highlights lessons and observations about PMV travel and accidents and how they affect our readiness to support operations in the War on Terror.

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From the Director:

We want to hear your success stories and your good ideas. This issue of the Safety Corner features the success of an AAV Company Commander.

I have traveled in numerous convoys during my deployments in OIF. Convoy Commanders have a plan for nearly every situation which they may encounter on the road. Vehicles are inspected every trip, Drivers and A-Drivers have detailed plans, and train to support these plans. Sadly, safety briefs in garrison are hardly given a second thought. Marines face multiple hazards during weekend travel. Drunk drivers, fatigue, and aggressive drivers can be just as deadly as a road side bomb. All Marines need a plan for holiday travels. These plans need to include back up plans in the event of emergency. Marines in a convoy know what to do if their vehicle is hit or comes under fire. Through training they know how to safely react in the event of an emergency. Is the same true of Marines who have a travel emergency while on liberty? Do they know how to react to a blown tire, brake failure, or if they hydroplane? Every convoy commander ensures that Marines are equipped with radios, first aid kits, and emergency supplies. Do we hold our Marines on liberty to the same standard? Do they have cell phones, a serviceable spare tire, cash for a tow truck or hotel, or blankets and an “MRE” if they are stranded for a period of time? If we don’t know, we should.

I would recommend you take a good look at the attachment from the CO of D Company 3d AAV on how he reduced the risk to his Marines on long weekends. Couple his risk management tool with the top fatal five National Safety Center risk factors and you can make a positive difference for private motor vehicle safety. As leaders we are taught to Train as we Fight and this needs to include PMV travel.

I look forward to your comments, observations, and concerns.
Semper Fidelis,

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Private Motor Vehicles

Safety Briefs and PMV safety are discussed every weekend at many commands and required at every holiday. However, many of these briefs seem to be conducted as “Check in the Box” training. Of the countless Safety Briefs I have seen, most seem to have little affect on the audience for which they were intended. Most Marines can recite the brief in their sleep, for they have heard it so many times. The unfortunate thing is, many of those same Marines still continue to take unnecessary risks. The Navy and the Marine Corps have lost 9 service members in FY07. During FY06 we lost 143 Marines and Sailors to PMV accidents. For FY06 the Army reported the loss 248 soldiers.

There are many reasons why Marines choose risky behaviors. For many, thrill seeking is a replacement for the adrenaline rush that became a part of their everyday life while deployed. Some young Marines use risky behaviors as a way to prove themselves; they want to feel accepted and part of the club, when they join a unit with combat-hardened veterans. Reducing the incidence of Risky Behavior is vital because careers, lives, and military readiness are at stake.

The observations and recommendations contained in The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) Safety Corner represent the considered judgment of Marines who have identified safety issues in their units. The purpose of this newsletter is to apprise other Marines of these safety recommendations and to encourage them to enter their own lessons into the Marine Corps Lessons Management System (LMS).

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The Fatal Five

More than 41,000 people lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes each year and over two million more suffer disabling injuries, according to the National Safety Council.

These stats combined with the fatality rates of service members prompted the Naval Safety Center to define 5 factors that contribute to almost every traffic accident. These factors are independent of each other; combined they can turn a small accident into a deadly one very easily. These five fatal standards are Driving at Night, Driving Without Seatbelts, Driving Under the Influence, Speeding, and Fatigue.

The National Safety Council includes distracted drivers in its top list of major factors contributing to vehicle accidents. These factors are addressed through Safety Campaigns throughout the year. These campaigns are enhanced by catchy slogans, videos, and posters. All of us have sat though safety briefs in large auditoriums where we are put to sleep by a video or a power point presentation. Much of this information is lost as it reaches the individual Marine. NCOs have a talent for knowing more about their Marines then the Marines know themselves. NCOs need to be aware of their Marines risk' factors, and know how to help them remain safe.

The following was submitted by a former AAV Company Commander.

Here is my "two cents" regarding POV safety as it relates to travel during 72/96 hour liberty periods. I was an AAV company commander for 2 years here at 29 palms with an average company size of 225. I had a safety officer (XO) and a safety manager (GySgt) and liberty safety was a big theme of ours. During the 24 months, I had no POV accidents resulting in deaths. 29 Palms liberty travel often extends 2-3 hours away due to the lack of quality of life facilities out in town and the number of Marines with relatives/friends in the L.A./San Diego area. We had a few accidents but no one was seriously hurt. Sometimes it is difficult to measure how many lives are saved with a good safety program but if no one is killed then it has a 100% success rate.

[The following] two documents that my company used during 72/96 hour liberties and during leave periods. These documents were filled out 1-2 days prior to the liberty period.

The LIBERTY OPERATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT (LORM) form is filled in by the Marine. Section/squad leader reviews, the PltSgt/Plt Cmdr signs, and the safety officer/XO signs. BOTTOM LINE: No plan, no liberty. If the Marine does not have a POV, then what is his liberty plan? Is he traveling as a passenger with his buddy? Is he going to rent a car for the weekend? Regardless, the Marine still needs a plan.

COMMAND VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION: Conducted by Section/squad leader. BOTTOM LINE: No driver's license; no use of the POV; No current registration, no use of the POV; no insurance, no use of the POV. If you fail a safety item (e.g. bald tires) get it fixed and re-inspected before using the POV for liberty.

If the vehicle fails and you suspect the Marine might still try to go on liberty, then keep it in the company parking lot for the weekend.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
COMPANY D (REIN), 3D ASSAULT AMPHIBIAN BATTALION
FIRST MARINE DIVISION (REIN), FMF
MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE TRAINING COMMAND, BOX 788274
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA 92278-8274

Liberty Operational Risk Management (ORM) Worksheet: Labor Day Weekend

Rank/Name _____ PLT.:_____ Date_____

1) DO I PLAN ON LEAVING 29 PALMS THIS WEEKEND? YES / NO
IF YES, WHERE AM I GOING? _____.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME? _____.

2) WILL I DRIVE THIS WEEKEND? YES / NO
IF YES, WHAT WILL I DRIVE? _____.

3) WHAT ARE MY KNOWN RISK HAZARDS FOR THIS HOLIDAY WEEKEND?

Examples Hazards;	**Causes;**
Transportation,	(Driving, Boating, Motorcycle/ ATV, Walking)
Location,	(Highway, Out of State, On / Off Base)
Weather/ Time,	(Rain, Snow, Clear, Fog, Day, Night)
Activities,	(Clubs, Parties, Swimming, Boating, PT/Hiking, Sports)
Alcohol,	(Drinking, No Designated Driver)
Fatigue,	(Lack Of Sleep, Sports,)
Other Individuals,	(Drunks, Thieves, Gangs)
Uncontrollable,	(Road Conditions / Traffic, Tide)
Speed.	(Rushing back to base / home)

A) _____ B)_____

C) _____ D)_____

4) WHAT ARE MY CONTROLS, AND HOW WILL I IMPLEMENT THEM?

Examples Hazards;	**Controls;**
Transportation,	(Car Inspection, Seatbelts, Tool / Emergency Kit, Reflective Vest)
Location,	(Planned Trip / allot enough time, Ensure Enough Money to complete trip)
Weather/ Time,	(Know Weather Report, Change Departure / Return Time)
Activities,	(Buddy System, Review activity/ course before doing)
Alcohol,	(Buddy System, , Designated Driver, Know Your Limit/ Drink in Moderation)
Fatigue,	(Sleep Plan / Rest, Delay Trip, A-Driver, Periodic Stops for Refreshments)
Other Individuals,	(Know the Area, Situational Awareness, Buddy System)
Uncontrollable,	(DOT Reports, Radio / Traffic Reports, Maps, Alternate Routes)
Speed.	(Allów extra time for delays, Observe Speed Limits, Plan travel times)

A) _____ B)_____

C) _____ D)_____

My overall Risk Level After Controls are implemented: Circle one;
L=Low, M= Moderate, H= High, EH= Extremely High.

Marine Signature _____ Date _____

Unit Leader Questions: (To be filled out by Marines' immediate supervisor) (Circle one, Yes or No)

1. Are you over age 21? Do you intend to drink?	Yes / No	Yes / No
2. Do you know when liberty expires?	Yes / No	
3. Do you have a liberty buddy this weekend?	Yes / No	
4. Are you driving alone?	Yes / No	
5. Do you plan to drive at night, either to or from liberty?	Yes / No	
6. Dose your liberty activities include sports? Do you have the proper equipment?	Yes / No	Yes / No
7. Do you believe you have a risky weekend planned?	Yes / No	

Plt. CMDR / PLT. SGT:
Review of ORM Risk Level: _____. Signature: _____ Date:_____

Safety Officer / XO/ CO
Review of ORM Risk Level: _____. Signature: _____ Date:_____

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COMMAND VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST DATE:_____

Rank / Name: _____

Platoon: _____

Vehicle Make: _____ Model_____ Year:_____

License Plate Number: _____ State:_____

	(Circle One)	
Vehicle Registration Current:	Yes / No	Expiration Date: _____
Vehicle Insurance Current:	Yes / No	Expiration Date: _____
Drivers License Current:	Yes / No	Expiration Date: _____
Base Decal Current:	Yes / No	Decal Number: _____
		Expiration Date: _____/_____

LIGHTS:	(Circle One)	**Note Remarks as Needed:**
Headlights (HI / Low Beams)	Sat / Unsat	_____
Taillights, (License Plate Lights)	Sat / Unsat	_____
Reverse Lights	Sat / Unsat	_____
Brake Lights	Sat / Unsat	_____
Turn Signals (Front / Rear)	Sat / Unsat	_____
TIRES:		
Tread	Sat / Unsat	_____
Pressure	Sat / Unsat	_____
Spare Tire	Sat / Unsat	_____
FLUIDS:		
Engine Oil	Full / Low	_____
Transmission	Full / Low	_____
Brake	Full / Low	_____
Windshield	Full / Low	_____
Coolant	Full / Low	_____
Power Steering	Full / Low	_____
Misc:		
Windshield	Sat / Unsat	_____
Windshield Wipers	Sat / Unsat	_____
Mirrors	Sat / Unsat	_____
Horn	Sat / Unsat	_____
Safety Belts	Yes / No	_____
Major Body Damage	No / Yes	_____
Exhaust System (Leaks)	Sat / Unsat	_____
Drive Belts	Sat / Unsat	_____
Jack, Jack Handle	Yes / No	_____
Lug Wrench	Yes / No	_____

Inspected By: (Print Rank/Name) _____

(Signature) _____

Vehicle Inspection Results: (Circle One) PASSED or FAILED