

It's Your Night Out!

Uh-Oh, Trouble!

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It's 0100, and you've got to be up and at 'em at 0700. The problem is you're toasted. Uh huh, you've had the time of your life and enough alcohol to drink to keep you happy until 1000 the next day! Somewhere in the fog, reality strikes. You've got to get home.

You look around. Your friends are toasted, too. You draw sticks to see who drives back to base and hope for the best. Darn, you "won." But no problem—it's only a couple of "clicks" to the front gate, and you don't feel that drunk. You toss a stick of chewing gum in your mouth, and off you go.

As you approach the gate, you fumble for your ID. If you could just get through this obstacle, you'd be home free! You're hoping for that quickie ID check and a friendly wave to proceed. As you hand the guard your ID card, he's watching your every move. He had noticed the way you approached the gate—weaving (because you were fumbling for your ID card, of course). He notices your glassy pupils and the way your eyes fail to focus. He notices your

slurred speech when he asks you how you're doing this nice evening. All your actions tell him to check you out a little closer. He can smell the alcohol on your breath. He knows there's no such thing as alcohol-flavored gum. You're busted!

This scene plays over and over again. Night after night, people are caught drinking and driving. Why? Because they fail to plan. They don't assess the risks associated with drinking and driving. If you take a minute or two to plan the evening, you can save yourself great embarrassment, you can save your career, and most importantly, you can live to enjoy another of those great nights out.

While we have been taught operational risk management (ORM) at work, many of us don't use it when we're off-duty. When you apply ORM to the situation above, you can see there are alternatives to drinking and driving. You have a chance to make a choice. Just don't make the wrong one!

Use the chart on the next page to see how ORM can keep you out of trouble on your night out.

ORM – DRINKING & DRIVING

1	Identify the Hazards	A car driven by a drunken driver is the principle hazard here.
2	Assess the Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I could get caught, end up in jail, and destroy my career – I could get into an accident and kill myself or someone else
3	Make Control Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I could walk, but the base is too far away. – I could take a taxi, but taxis cost money. However, we could all pitch in and lower the cost. – I could find a designated driver. Hey, Ken’s ugly and can’t get a date, but he’s reliable and doesn’t drink. Let’s see if he’ll be our designated driver (Just don’t tell him he’s ugly, okay?)
4	Risk Control Implementation	Ken’s the choice! He’s free and reliable.
5	Supervise and Review	Once you’re sober. Evaluate how well your activity went. Adjust as needed and start the process again!

[Note: When the author submitted this story, he used the Air Force’s six-step process. We substituted the Navy’s five-step equivalent.–Ed.]

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