Feedback

Dear *Fathom*:

I have a lieutenant (junior grade) assigned to the engineering department. He daily wears brown, leather oxford shoes (like those worn by aviators). Although common sense and ORM dictate he needs steel-toed safety shoes—especially in engineering spaces—he refuses to change his style of shoes until he sees a requirement to do so, in writing.

I have looked all over OpNavInst. 5100.19D, Navy Uniform Regulations, and several NSTMs, and I cannot find any specific requirements for wearing steel-toed safety shoes at all times while aboard ship.

Can you direct me to an instruction, if one exists, so I can show this hard-headed JO "in writing" that what he is doing is unsafe?

Thank you in advance.

ICC LeRoy Garcia
USS *Wadsworth*

There is no Navy-wide regulation requiring shipboard Sailors to always wear steel-toed shoes. You're right in saying common sense should prevail, but individual ships often have their own instructions specifying the wearing of personal protective equipment and proper attire for entering engineering—and other—spaces. Also bear in mind enlisted Sailors are issued safety shoes while in recruit training, but for officers the requirement is simply that they be provided standard stock safety shoes when required. Here's an excerpt from OpNavInst. 5100.19D, paragraph B1203:

"**Foot Protection**. Shipboard environments, such as flight decks, hangar decks, machine shops, pipe shops, heavy supply parts stowage areas, replenishment stations, and sponsons expose personnel in some degree to foot hazards. Leather shoes are required for all personnel aboard ship for normal daily wear. Corfam® (or equivalent) shoes may only be worn when immediately departing or returning to the ship or when specifically authorized by the commanding officer for ceremonial or other special occasions. Do not wear Corfam® (or equivalent), plastic, synthetic or vinyl shoes in firerooms, main machinery spaces, or in hot work areas."

Dear *Fathom*:

How are you supposed to carry and dispose of fluorescent tubes?

When I reported aboard my current ship, the Norfolk-based USS *Laboon*, I saw people carrying bare fluorescent tubes without having them in any protective container. More shocking was seeing the tubes tossed into trash bins and, if necessary, breaking tubes so they fit into the bins!

As electrical officer onboard my previous ship—homeported in Yokosuka, Japan—we had strict carrying-and-disposal guidelines for fluorescent tubes. We had to carry them inside plastic trash bags if the tubes weren't in their original cardboard shipping containers. This prevented the spreading broken glass and poisonous mercury contamination if the tubes broke while being carried. One can imagine the mess of a broken bulb could cause when raining down a ladder well to the deck (or two or three) below.

Aboard that ship, EMs collected used fluorescent tubes and re-packaged them in the shipping containers left from newly installed bulbs. The EMs then took packaged, used bulbs ashore to a designated facility for disposal.

It's hard to imagine Yokosuka-based ships are more safety-conscious than their Norfolk-based sister ships, but—after seeing the way Norfolk-based ships transport and dispose of these tubes—I am really surprised!

Ltjg. Dave Schwind
USS *Laboon*

The Naval Ships Technical Manual, chapter 330, paragraphs 3.3.5.1 and 3.3.5.2, outline disposal procedures for incandescent and fluorescent lamps. Fluorescent lamps contain small amounts of mercury gas (about 15 milligrams for an 8-watt lamp and 30 milligrams for a 20-watt lamp). Although poisonous, the gas poses no danger if lamps are unbroken. However, because the mercury gas is sealed inside fluorescent lamps, they are not to be broken to fit into a trash bin. NavSeaInst. 5100.3 also addresses the safe and ecologically acceptable disposal of fluorescent lamps, including where to turn them in. Shipyards are required to follow NavSea instructions, but most ships are not. Afloat safety officers and petty officers are reponsible for reading and complying with those instructions and regulations applicable to their units.