



# Southwest Region - Safety Newsletter

November

## SAFETY ON-THE-JOB

### Accept It - It's Yours

Accident prevention is the responsibility of everyone. You've heard that statement probably more times than you can remember. But it is a fact.

Safety responsibility has to be the responsibility of each and every one of us. No one person or department can constantly watch, guide or instruct every person or operation that is going on throughout each day.

While there may be many people in your chain of command that are vitally concerned with your safety, these people cannot be with you every minute and on every job, so you have to accept your own responsibility for safety. It's not such an overwhelming task. You should know how to do your job safely. The training that you have received, use of Operating Procedures, following existing safety regulations, and the use of everyday common sense will help prevent you from being involved in a mishap.

Of course, things can and do change daily on the job. You need to be aware when those changes affect yours or other's safety. Don't be ashamed to ask questions about a job assigned to you. An employee trying to bluff his way through a job he/she doesn't understand is just asking for trouble. Even if you think you know the correct procedures, a review may bring out an important phase of the job that has slipped your mind. At the same time, your questions and the answers you get may be helping a new or less experienced employee who is too bashful to ask questions.

Your responsibility for accident prevention doesn't stop with the job. At home, behind the wheel, at play, etc., you've got to keep your safety guard up. Not just for your own safety but for the safety of others as well.

Face your safety responsibility as you do the other obligations that make up your daily life and each day will be completed without an untimely mishap or injury.

### Latest Driving Hazard: Conversation

A cell phone can come in mighty handy in an emergency situation -- it can even be a lifesaver. But lately, cell phones are more and more



frequently being cited as the culprits behind automobile accidents. Are cell phones really dangerous?

A study published in the February, 1997 New England Journal of Medicine concluded that drivers using cell phones were four to five times more likely to have crashes than drivers who were not talking on the phone. Surprisingly, drivers using hands-free phones fared no better.

The study confirmed what may seem like a logical conclusion to many, that any distraction while driving will increase the likelihood of an accident. Several states appear to have concluded that cell-phone distraction has become a serious threat to highway safety. California, Florida, Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Minnesota have all passed laws regulating cell phone use. In Oklahoma and Minnesota, accident reports must include cell phone information.

In England, Switzerland, Spain, Australia and Italy, cell phone use while driving is currently prohibited. How well these countries are able to enforce this rule is uncertain. More certain is that a universal ban on cell phone use in American cars is unlikely anytime soon. So what can American drivers do to safely and simultaneously talk and drive? The American Automobile Association (AAA) offers these tips:

- Keep your phone where you can reach it easily while driving. You should be able to reach it comfortably without moving out of your usual driving position or taking your eyes off the road.
- Know all the operations of your cellular phone, and learn to use it without looking.
- Program frequently called numbers into your phone memory so you can minimize dialing and keep your attention on the road.
- Dial sensibly. Wait for a stoplight, pull off the road to dial, or ask a passenger to dial for you.
- Don't use your cell phone in distracting traffic situations. Pull off the road to make a call.
- Be careful about where you stop to make calls.
- If you are calling 911 to report an emergency, have the names of the closest major cross streets or off-ramps ready, along with your cell phone number.
- Use your voice mail to take calls or leave yourself messages. Never take notes while driving.
- Disconnect your cell phone when using jumper cables; the power surge could burn out your phone.

Watching out for inattentive drivers is an important defensive driving technique. Drivers who are talking on their cell phones are dividing their attention, so when you see these drivers, give them extra space if you can, and watch out for erratic movements.

Limiting your on-the-road calls makes good sense. Only taking incoming calls, and then keeping them as brief as possible, makes better sense. Even if you can dial without looking at your phone, placing a call demands more of your concentration than answering a call. Don't even try to place calls while merging or driving in heavy traffic.

Some kinds of calls are more distracting than others. Even if you aren't in the habit of "talking with your hands," avoid stressful or emotional conversations while driving. Studies have shown a high correlation between the complexity and emotional content of a call and the amount of distraction it causes. If your call is urgent or deeply emotional, get off the road until you're done.

For additional tips on safe use of cell phones from State Farm Insurance, go to:  
<http://www.statefarm.com/consumer/cellphone.htm>.

## **What You Can Do To Prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

Anything that compresses the median nerve, such as a cyst or rheumatoid arthritis, can cause carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). Most often, however, CTS is caused by repeated motion that eventually causes the tendons in the fingers and hands to swell and press on the nerve. To prevent serious overuse injuries you should pay attention to the first sparks of pain or discomfort. Ignoring symptoms can lead to permanent damage. In order to avoid CTS, take the following preventive measures.

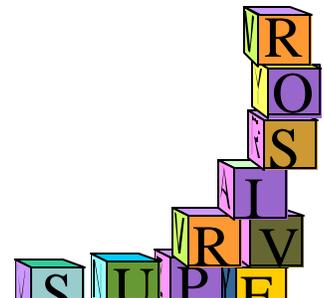
- Remember to avoid doing repetitive hand motions with a bent wrist whether at work or on your own time. Keep the wrist straight and relaxed when you write, type, draw, drive, use power tools, pliers, or scissors, play musical instruments, or do needlework.
- Never work with your wrist or forearm pressing against any hard surface such as a desk or chair arm.
- Take frequent breaks (five minutes each hour) from repetitive hand motions to stretch your fingers and thumb, do wrist curls and circles, and change your grip.
- Avoid sleeping on your hands or with your wrists curved.

Don't ignore wrist pain. Stop the activity that is triggering the problem. If the symptoms decrease, resume the activity gradually, while making an effort to keep the wrist straight. If you cannot stop the activity, try to change the way you do it so that your wrist is not stressed. Try to alternate tasks so that you don't spend more than one or two hours at a time doing one that involves your hands.

**Next month - What You and Your Doctor Can Do to Treat CTS**

## **SUPERVISOR'S CORNER**

### **Supervisors Corner – Making Safety Meetings Work**



Safety meetings can be a value added contribution to a work unit safety program. When a Supervisor is well prepared and presents a safety meeting on a topic that is current and of interest, it can be time well spent to improve safety performance.

If you want to give a powerful safety presentation, put some time into planning it. The shorter the meeting, the more each minute counts. Decide what you wish to get across to employees. It's better to give employees 3 things they will remember than 13 things they will forget. Write down your meeting goals and share them with employees as the meeting starts.

To help select a practical topic, ask employees what work areas they feel are the most dangerous. You can then focus on those areas or on a recent mishap in the workplace. Topics can also include reminders on work unit safety policies; awareness of hazards common to the individual's work site, trade, occupation or task; information on specific hazards of chemicals used; personal protective equipment reminders, etc.

Get creative. Give your Safety Meeting an unusual title. This will help draw attention fast, and will be a good way for employees to recollect your key points in the future. For example, instead of doing a Safety Meeting on "Hearing Conservation" – why not call your meeting, "Stick it in your ear!" That may draw some attention.

Whenever possible use visual aids or handouts. Your local Site Safety Office is a good resource for videos, pamphlets, handouts, and other training materials. Good slides, pictures, or demonstrations, can give your presentation life.

During the meeting, your job is selling the benefits of safety. Tell people what's in it for them. Be creative here as well. Good safety practices not only are effective at work, but can be brought home as well. Techniques learned at work can help people protect their families and homes as well.

Lastly – get your employees to participate. When people participate in discussion, demonstration, etc., they are more likely to remember what you say. Someone once described a lecture as "Information that comes out of the mouth of one, into the notebooks of many, without going through the mind of anyone." If you make your meetings participatory and memorable, you will get your message across.

Document the completion of the Safety Meeting by having participants sign a roster form. Briefly describe what was presented and list participants by name. This is a good way to track participation.

Contact your local Site Safety Office for more meeting ideas, information on your mishap trends, inspection results, etc. These can be used to help formulate good Safety Meeting topics.

## **EXPLOSIVE SAFETY NEWS**

**From the Explosive Safety Officers (ESO) Desk:**



**Question:** "I am a new supervisor and have been given an assignment where explosives are handled. Where can I get some information on my responsibilities?"

**Answer:** NAVSEA OP-5 provides supervisory personnel with information on their responsibilities. Basically, you must be thoroughly familiar with OP-5 and applicable instructions.

Here are some of your responsibilities:

1. Ensure that all processes are conducted in accordance with SOP's.
2. Explain to your employees the safety regulations and precautions that they shall follow.
3. Training each employee in the work they will perform.
4. Ensure that all employees are qualified and certified to perform the job assigned.
5. Assisting the ESO and NAVOSH Manager in conducting investigations.
6. Enforcing compliance with safety regulations that concern personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE).

A complete list of supervisor and employee responsibilities can be found in section 1-4 of NAVSEA OP-5. If you need additional information, contact your local explosive safety specialist.

### **Just a Reminder...**

**MINIMIZE exposure, MINIMIZE personnel, MINIMIZE explosives**

## **RECREATIONAL AND OFF-DUTY SAFETY**

### **Holiday Cooking**

Have you ever eaten deep-fried turkey? Delicious, isn't it? Deep-fried turkey has been around for years. It's even bragged about on cooking shows on the Food Network and other cable channels. But there is a down side to all of this "turkey talk."



Turkey fryers can be extremely dangerous if not used properly. According to Underwriters Laboratories' (UL) safety experts, concerns are running high about backyard chefs sacrificing safety for good taste. Recently, there have been an increasing number of fires related to these turkey fryers. UL has performed tests on these fryers and found that the "great-tasting birds" are not

worth the risk. "As a result of these tests, UL has decided not to certify any turkey fryers with our trusted UL mark", said John Drengenberg, UL consumer affairs manager.

If you absolutely must use a turkey fryer, here are some tips for safer use:

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and other materials that can burn.
- Never use turkey fryers on wooden decks or in garages.
- Use turkey fryers on a flat surface to help prevent accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you are not careful, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer.
- Do not overfill the fryer. Doing so may cause the oil to catch fire from the burner.
- Lids and handles can become extremely hot. Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when handling any part of the aluminum pot.
- Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes in case of oil spatter.
- Keep an ABC multi-purpose dry chemical fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions on proper use of the turkey fryer.

## **Holiday Cheer – Be Responsible And Safe**

With the holiday season fast approaching, it is important that we remind ourselves about the effect and dangers of alcohol use, and be on the alert for some of the signs of potential alcohol abuse. We should all be aware of how alcohol can affect us and look for the warning signs:

- ✚ Alcohol takes five minutes to enter your bloodstream.
- ✚ It definitely causes short-term impairment, and potentially long-term impairments.
- ✚ It causes dizziness, blurry vision, slurred speech, poor and slow reactions.
- ✚ It acts like a depressant.
- ✚ A person under the influence may be in denial and not acknowledge the extent of his or her impairment.
- ✚ There is no safe way to drive while under the influence. Even one drink can make you an unsafe driver.

Of particular interest and concern are the potential safety issues associated with alcohol abusers in our workplace, particularly in an industrial, laboratory or 'shop' environment. Often, the abuser may be

high functioning and demonstrate no obvious signs that would alert us; however, there are certain behaviors we should be aware of and look for:

- Work Behaviors. They may ignore safety rules, have frequent accidents, take risks, argue with co-workers and/or supervisors, and have frequent absences.
- Personal Behaviors. They will blame others for problems, have mood swings, and avoid responsibilities. They may be overanxious, oversensitive, loud and/or aggressive.
- Drinking Behaviors. They will drink before work, drink alone (to avoid problems), drink to feel confident, or drink to relax, and they can be very creative in finding many more reasons to drink!

We're not saying that you have to be a "teetotaler." Most of us have heard or read about the dangers of alcohol use, especially during the holidays. So, for the sake of your family, friends and fellow employees, we would like to urge everyone to "be safe" and extra cautious. If you drink, drink in moderation, and please have a "designated driver" before the celebration begins!

## **Road Safety - Drowsy Driving**

Almost everyone knows that driving a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is a deadly combination. However, few people seem to realize the danger associated with driving while fatigued. In fact, drivers who become drowsy or fall asleep at the wheel contribute to thousands of crashes each year.

Fatigue is a condition that affects everyone. Although typically associated with long-distance driving, fatigue can set in after a long day at work, an outing at the beach, or virtually any activity. The body's natural rhythm associated with the earth's rotation, causes nearly everyone to be less alert or even drowsy between 1 and 5 p.m.

Emotional stress, illness, or boredom can also cause fatigue. Sun glare, a major factor in eyestrain, can contribute to fatigue. Overeating, drinking alcoholic beverages, or riding in an overheated or very cold vehicle can compound the effects.

What can you do to prevent tiredness from making you another crash statistic? Start any trip by getting enough sleep the night before - at least six hours is recommended. Wear good quality sunglasses, avoid heavy foods and, of course, don't consume any alcohol during your trip. If you can, have another person ride with you, so you will have someone to talk to and who can share the driving. Avoid driving during your body's downtime.

Be on the alert for these signs of sleepiness: trouble keeping your eyes open, difficulty paying attention, or yawning frequently. If you notice any of these danger signs, stop periodically for a rest, and if needed, a quick nap - even 20 minutes will help. During your break, get some exercise - it helps you become more alert quickly.

The problem with long-distance driving is that many people do not know, or choose to ignore, how much driving is too much. On long trips, schedule a 15-minute break outside the vehicle every two hours or every 100 miles. There is no rule to say how far you should drive at any given time, but no destination is worth risking your life. Don't overextend yourself. Determine a reasonable distance in advance, and stop driving when you reach it.

If you must stop for a rest, stop at a designated rest area or parking lot. It usually is not advisable to just pull off to the side of the road to sleep, yet there may be times when it is better to pull off the road and nap than to continue driving and chance falling asleep behind the wheel.

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING AT...**

### **NAWS China Lake**

#### **2003 Shoemobile Schedule**

Iron Age Shoemobile will be at the China Lake Safety Office parking lot from 1200 - 1600 hours on **November 17**. This will be the last time they'll be here this year. Please bring a credit card buyer with you to purchase the shoes. Pass the word to all interested folks.

#### **Safety Training Courses**

Every Wed	Respiratory Protection (Renewal)	0800 – 1100
Nov 03	Forklift Safety (Industrial)	0800 – 0900
Nov 04	Respiratory Protection for New Users	0800 – 1100
Nov 10 & 19	Forklift Safety (Explosives)	0800 – 1600

To sign up for classes at China Lake call the Safety Division at (760) 939-2315. At China Lake, visit our intranet Safety web site at <https://publicsafety/DPS/OSHMMain.htm> for more information.

## **NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST – POINTS OF CONTACT**

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Site Manager - Jerry Welch  
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Cornado Complex  
Site Manager - Robert Chatman  
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Naval Station Complex  
Site Manager - Luis Campos  
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NAF El Centro  
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NAS Fallon  
Site Manager - Clair Sheffield  
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NAS Lemoore  
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NWS Seal Beach  
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NB Ventura County

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NBVC Port Hueneme  
Lead Safety Specialist - Bonifacio Palma  
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NAWS China Lake  
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NSA Corona  
Site Manager -  
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NPS Monterey  
Site Manager – Mike Berry  
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**Please pass this newsletter on! Feel free to use this information as part of your monthly safety meeting. Comments can be addressed Navy Region Southwest Regional OSH Program Manager - Ken Gentle at (619) 532-1336. For more information, visit the NRSW Safety Web Site at [http://www.cnrsw.navy.mil/Safety/index\\_1.htm](http://www.cnrsw.navy.mil/Safety/index_1.htm).**

**Better a thousand times  
careful than once dead.**