

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

4th of July Safety

Summer "fun in the sun" is in full swing and a strong emphasis on safety is vital. A lot of us will drive great distances to visit families and friends and enjoy swimming, boating, barbecuing and fireworks this 4th of July holiday. Whatever your plans, resolve to use common sense and ask yourself "What's the worst thing that could happen?" before every activity. This one question will go a long way to managing the many risks that face us during long holiday weekends. Here are some survival tips to keep in mind:

•**Driving** - Putting on a safety belt is the first thing you do when you get in a car and takes all of three seconds to do. A safety belt is a simple habit and can make all the difference between walking away from a crash or being carried off on a stretcher. Keep children safe. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride, and all children must be restrained with the correct safety equipment. Don't speed. You are six times more likely to be involved in a crash if you're 10 mph over the speed limit. Speeding also reduces your ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the road. You never know what's around that next corner: a deer, stalled car, or pedestrian in the roadway. Most importantly, don't drink and drive and equally important, don't get into a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking.

•**Swimming** - Use common sense - swim where lifeguards are present. They are trained to identify hazards and help you if you get into trouble. Never dive unless you know the water depth and what obstacles are below. Don't let a bad decision leave you paralyzed for life.

•**Boating** - Take a boating course, file a float plan, never exceed the boat's maximum capacity, wear a personal flotation device (PFD), keep an

eye on the weather and save the alcohol for later.

•**Barbecue safety** - Keep the youngsters away from the hot grill. Follow manufacturer's instructions for lighting gas grills - there's a right way and a wrong way. Remember, propane gas is heavier than air, so it can accumulate in the bottom of the grill or spill out of holes in the bottom of the grill before ignition. Many people have been severely burned when gas build-up in a grill has led to explosions.

•**Fireworks** - The best advice: leave them to the professionals. If fireworks are legal in your area and you decide to light off a few, use caution! Here are some specifics to keep in mind:

- Don't allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Older children should only be permitted to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Don't allow any running or horseplay.
- Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.
- Don't try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place.
- Observe local fireworks laws.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting
- Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.

Careless use of fireworks can cause serious injury and sometimes, even death.

•**Alcohol** - Moderation, moderation, moderation. Drink responsibly. Know when enough is enough!

Bottom line is "think before you act". Watch out for others, who might not know how to manage risks. Remember to ask yourself "What's the worst thing that could happen?"



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National Safety Day

At last winter's National Board Meeting, MGen Wheless announced a 12-point safety initiative in his opening remarks. Item 8 stated:

"I will declare a National Safety Day in Civil Air Patrol, on which day I will want every Wing to have special programs and activities for Cadets and Seniors focusing on Safety. The only flights to be flown on that day will be actual missions, flights related to special safety instruction, and Cadet orientation flights."

October was chosen as the month for the CAP Safety Day. Currently, the plan is to select a two-week window in which units will be able to select a day to conduct their safety day. The information presented that day should cover the full spectrum of CAP activities; seniors to cadets, aviation, driving, ground teams, etc. At the August National Board Meeting, I will provide a suggested outline of topics to use for this meeting. Tailoring to the season, as well as local risks and activities is highly encouraged. Now is not too early to select a project officer and start thinking about some local safety topics you would like covered in your unit.

It's Getting Hot Out There

Summer flying has some unique challenges -- heat being one of the most insidious. It's hard to fully appreciate the debilitating and sometimes deadly effects of heat on aircrew. It can kill in two ways -- directly, through its cumulative effects upon the human body or indirectly through its debilitating effects on aircrew performance and subsequent loss of an aircraft.

One of the first casualties of operating in a hot environment is a sharp degradation in mental performance. Even simple tasks are often associated with a high percentage of careless errors. You're just not as sharp as you were in a more temperate climate. This decline in performance can occur without your being aware that the heat is in any way affecting you. In flight operations, this degradation in mental capacity is often exhibited by missed checklist items, faulty flight planning, activating the wrong switch, or seemingly intentional violation of basic rules and regulations. It can affect an entire crew so that no one acts as a safety valve to question the errors when things

are obviously becoming unsafe. Minor discomfort, confusion, disorientation, and memory loss are some of the earliest signs that heat is beginning to cause serious problems. Be aware that even relatively mild heat stress can impair performance enough to tip the balance toward failure. Here are some ways to prevent heat-associated problems:

- ✓ Ensure that personnel eat and drink plenty of water on a recurrent basis.
- ✓ Have water available for people at both their work and rest sites.
- ✓ Recommend that everyone pre-hydrate with 1-2 liters of water before any prolonged activity.
- ✓ Make people aware that they can monitor their own hydration level by checking the color of their urine. The color should be no darker than dilute lemonade -- if it is, drink more water.
- ✓ Carefully manage work assignments and recovery periods.

The effects of heat and heat-related casualties are preventable, but it requires the combined efforts of everyone to achieve the goal.

Traffic Fatalities In Perspective

Most would agree that one of the saddest statistics in the history of our nation is that approximately 58,000 Americans lost their lives during our 14-year involvement in the Vietnam War. When I compare this number with America's 42,000 annual traffic fatalities, it really emphasizes the danger we face on our highways. 60% of these fatalities weren't wearing seatbelts and 40% involved alcohol. Remember, we're in the *101 Critical Days of Summer* and our survival plan includes seat belts, designated drivers and defensive driving. Be careful. **It's more dangerous than a war zone out there!**

Other Safety Meeting Topics

- **Density Altitude:** http://www.nw.faa.gov/ats/zdvarcc/high_mountain/density.html
- **Just For The Health Of Pilots:** http://www.cami.jcabi.gov/aam-400a/FASMB/HOP/HOP_index.htm
- **Glider Pilots - Current vs. Proficient:** <http://soaringsafety.org/prevention/aps3.htm>
- **Knife Safety:** <http://www.buckknives.com/safety.php>

Safety -- Expecting the Unexpected.