

NABLC Safety Advisor

August 2004

2004 Critical Days of Summer Update

This year, there are 102 days from the Memorial Day weekend (starting Friday, 28 May) through Labor Day. These are called the "Critical Days of Summer" because the non-operational fatality rates are usually higher than the full-year rates, as the tables below show.

Here's how we stand through 28 July (after 62 of the 102 days):

	Actual Fatalities	Actual Rate	Predicted Fatalities*	Predicted Rate
Navy PMV	20	30.90	23	21.69
Marine PMV	5	16.61	20	40.55
Navy Shore/Rec	6	9.27	11	10.37
Marine Shore/Rec	2	6.64	2	4.06

*The number of fatalities predicted to occur by the **end** of the Critical Days. As depicted, Navy PMV fatalities are well ahead of the predicted number and Marine PMV fatalities are below predictions.

SafeTips of the Week -- Safety at the Beach (courtesy of the Naval Safety Center)

* Protect your skin: Sunlight contains two kinds of UV rays -- UVA increases the risk of skin cancer, skin aging, and other skin diseases. UVB causes sunburn and can lead to skin cancer. Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor containing a high rating such as 15.

* Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly but make the heat's effects on your body worse. This is especially true with alcoholic beverages, which dehydrates the body.

* Watch for signs of heat stroke: Heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Signals include hot, red, and dry skin; changes in consciousness, rapid, weak pulse, and rapid, shallow breathing. Call 9-1-1 or your local EMS number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body by wrapping wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying down.

* Wear eye protection: Sunglasses are like sunscreen for your eyes and protect against damage that can occur from UV rays. Be sure to wear sunglasses with labels that indicate that they absorb at least 90 percent of UV sunlight.

* Wear foot protection: Many times, people's feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand.

* Spinal Injury Prevention

* Don't dive headfirst into any unknown water. Remember, the beach ocean floor may change its shape constantly.

* In shallow water, don't dive headfirst toward the bottom into oncoming waves.

* In shallow water, don't stand with your back to the waves.

* Don't jump or dive from a cliff, pier, jetty or bridge.

* Avoid bodysurfing, body boarding or surfing straight "over the falls." Ride the shoulder.

* During a body board or surfing "wipe out," try to put your hands out in front of you. Don't dive straight to the bottom.

* While bodysurfing, always keep at least one arm out in front of you to protect your head and neck.

* Don't swim near piers or breakwaters. The currents here may be very strong, even for the best of swimmers.

* Stay clear of boats. They take time to change direction, and they may not even see you.

* Swim parallel to the shore. If you swim out too far, you may be too tired to swim back.

* Open water is usually much colder than a pool; so don't swim out too far.

EYE SAFETY

Some 150,000 disabling eye injuries occur each year. Eye injuries can occur in any operation and in any work area, including offices. All too often we take our eyesight for granted and figure that we'll always have it. We treat our eyes as though we can get replacements. How many home runs could Hank Aaron have hit if he had lost the sight in one or both of his eyes? How well would you be able to do your job if you were blind? There are two important issues to consider; first, you need to have the proper eye protection, second, you need to USE IT!

People who wear glasses usually become so accustomed to them that without much thought they clean them, carry them in their pocket or purse so they are handy, and wear them when they are needed. Unfortunately, few of us are this mindful when it comes to eye protection, and too often we forget it. Some safety glasses and goggles grow dusty from lack of use as their owners trust luck to protect them from an eye injury.

The most common complaint about eye protection is that it's uncomfortable. Protective eye equipment must be carefully fitted and then worn correctly. It may take some time to adjust to wearing goggles or safety glasses, but it will take much longer to adjust to losing your eyesight. If your goggles or glasses give you a headache, adjust the frames or straps or consider a new pair.

Straps used to hold goggles or glasses in place should be adjusted to provide just enough tension to hold them securely. During hot weather, a sweatband will keep perspiration off your goggles or glasses and out of your eyes. Take time to clean your goggles or glasses so they do not interfere with your vision. Don't touch the lenses with your fingers, and keep them away from anything that could scratch or pit them.

Effective eye protection extends beyond keeping bits of debris out of your eyes. If you are working around welding or cutting operations special lenses may be required to protect your eyes from the bright, intense light. Chemicals also pose a hazard to your eyes; make sure you use eye protection and splashguards when handling chemicals.

Virginia Safe Driver Laws Took Effect July 1

When Hurricane Isabel caused stop light outages around the state, many motorists were left wondering who has the right-of-way at intersections. One of Virginia's newest driving laws clarifies which driver must yield to the other.

When two or more drivers approach an intersection where traffic lights are dark because of power failures or similar causes, drivers must proceed as though the intersection was controlled by **all-way stop signs** - no vehicle has the right-of way. The laws states that when two or more vehicles approach an intersection from different directions at the same time, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on the right.

Other safety laws passed by the 2004 Virginia General Assembly include:

Reckless Drivers. Drivers who operate a motor vehicle on a suspended or revoked driver's license will be charged with a class six felony if a person is killed as a direct result of the reckless driver.

Racing. Drivers who cause serious bodily injury to another while racing in a manner that shows a reckless disregard for life will be charged with a class six felony.

Bicycles. Vehicle drivers passing a bicycle (or another motor vehicle) in the same direction, must pass at least two feet to the left of the overtaken vehicle.

Aggressive Driving.* If convicted of aggressive driving, a driver's license may be suspended for up to six months.

*To help you avoid driving aggressively, the National Highway Traffic Association offers the following tips:

Plan ahead - Don't leave late and expect to make up for lost time on the road.

Concentrate - Give driving your full attention. Don't be distracted by talking on the phone; eating, shaving; putting on makeup; reading; or other tasks.

Relax - Tune the radio to your favorite station. Music can be calming.



The Ultimate Couch Potato

Moving can be a traumatic experience. Adults can be subject to stress-related illnesses, kids and pets can get sick because of the disruption, plants can die, and couch potatoes ... oh, it's just a miserable sight to see. They've been known to go insane ... drooling and wandering in circles ... and short of caging them up, they are inseparable from their cushions and remotes.

Here's proof ... this truck is piled with furniture, including a television and a couch. Right there in the middle, yup, it's a wild couch potato. You can tell because of the blank stare and hunched posture. Now I know I'll start getting emails saying that it surely isn't proof of anything. This person might just be a trying to single-handedly hold down all that furniture so it doesn't blow away as the truck traverses from one point to the other.

I submit, however, that no *normal* person is stupid enough to do something like this, and it's a well-know fact that pure-bred couch potatoes have as much common sense as the vegetable they are named after.

Seriously, folks, moving yourself *can* be done safely. Just remember Newton's laws of motion, use rope, don't overload, and never, ever try to hold something down yourself. Use [risk management](#) to identify the hazards you face, and to implement controls. That-a-way you can enjoy that couch and TV when you reach your destination, without the bulky cast and neck-brace.