

# NABLC Safety Advisor

May 2004

## *50% Mishap Reduction Campaign*

**About the 50%-Mishap-Reduction Campaign:** On May 19, 2003, the Secretary of Defense challenged DoD to achieve a 50-percent, across-the-board mishap reduction by the end of FY05. In fiscal year 2003, mishaps killed 106 Sailors, and cost the Navy \$737 million in equipment damage and lost resources. Of the mishap cost, \$694 million was in aviation mishaps. Sixty-six of the deaths were on the highway. The mishap-reduction challenge aims at 10 targets. Four involve Class A mishaps (which cause \$1 million or more in damage, destroy an aircraft, kill someone, or leave someone totally disabled): total operational, aviation (which alone accounts for 94 percent of the costs), afloat and ashore. Four other targets involve fatalities: traffic (which accounts for more than half the total deaths), off-duty, afloat and aviation. The other two are the number of destroyed aircraft and civilian lost-time injuries.

### **Traffic Wrecks Still Leading Killer, and Most Are Preventable**

National statistics show that car wrecks kill more people than AIDS, drugs, or gun violence. Navy data is equally disturbing. From FY2000 through FY2003, 251 Sailors and 212 Marines died in automobile crashes--more than half of all accidental deaths during the period, and more than one and a half times the number killed in all operational mishaps. According to traffic-safety experts at the Naval Safety Center, nearly all of these traffic mishaps are preventable.

When it comes to changing the behaviors that cause traffic deaths, one of the biggest challenges is a culture of widespread acceptance of the inevitability of traffic accidents. Crashes are not inevitable—they're preventable, often with the application of some common-sense risk management. A typical recent mishap involved a first-class petty officer driving an SUV with three shipmates as passengers. A Ford Supercab F-250 suddenly changed lanes and hit the SUV's right front fender, causing the Sailor at the wheel to lose control. His SUV rolled four times and was totaled. However, all four Sailors walked away. Why? Because they were wearing seat belts, which kept them in the vehicle.

Seat belts reduce the chances that a front-seat passenger will be injured or killed in a car crash by 45 percent. Every Sailor must learn to think of the seatbelt as the best free "life insurance" available. Research shows that once people develop the 2-to-3-second habit of buckling their seat belts, they usually keep it for life. Nevertheless, between FY01 and FY03, 42 percent of the Sailors and Marines who died in traffic crashes weren't wearing seat belts.

## *from the Electrical Safety Foundation International* **May is National Electrical Safety Month**



### **What are the latest statistics on residential electrical safety injuries?**

The latest figures from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) indicate that there were 400 total accidental electrocutions in 2000, 150 of which related to consumer products. Twenty-nine of those related to large appliances like air conditioners, pumps, water heaters, furnaces and clothes dryers. Another 22 involved ladders contacting overhead power lines. Seventeen involved small appliances such as microwave ovens,

electric fans, extension cords and televisions, 15 involved power tools, 12 involved lighting equipment, and 10 involved contact with installed household wiring. Another 30 involved a variety of other products such as sports and recreational equipment, lawn and garden equipment, antennas, pipes, poles and

fences. But that is only part of the story. The CPSC estimates there is an annual average of 165,380 electrical-related home structure fires, taking an average of 910 lives, injuring nearly 7,000 and causing nearly \$1.7 billion in property damage.

*How can consumers help protect themselves from electrocution and electrical-related injuries?*

Consumers should check for problems with their home electrical systems, and be ever vigilant for electrical hazards around the home and the workplace, like cracked or fraying cords, overheating cords and wall plates, and the presence of overhead and buried power lines when working outdoors. Check outlets and circuits to be sure they aren't overloaded. Make sure to use only the proper wattage light bulbs in light fixtures and lamps. Use extension cords only on a temporary basis, and be sure they are properly rated for their intended use. And always follow appropriate safety precautions and manufacturer's instructions on all electrical items.

Consumers should also remember to test their smoke alarms and ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) monthly. Replace smoke detector batteries twice a year. Make sure GFCI protection covers all circuits that come near water sources, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoors, and consider it for whole house coverage. Consider also having arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) installed in your home's electrical panel, particularly for older homes.

## Keeping Kids Safe from Sun and Smog



**If you spend time with kids in the summer, you want to keep them safe while providing fun outdoor experiences. Did you know that overexposure to the sun and air pollution can pose serious health effects, especially to children? You can take several simple actions to protect kids—and yourself.**

**Ozone:** “Good up high, bad nearby.”

### What's the Problem?

Ozone can be protective or harmful, depending on where it is found in the atmosphere. Ozone is a naturally occurring gas in the upper atmosphere (the stratosphere) that protects us from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Several chemicals released over time, however, have reduced the amount of stratospheric ozone left to protect us. *Paying attention to the summer sun is more important than ever.*

Ozone at ground-level (the troposphere) is formed from pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, refineries, and other sources. Ground-level ozone is a primary component of a chemical soup known as “smog.” Smog can be particularly high in the summer. *Your chances of being affected by ground-level ozone increase the longer you are active outdoors or the more strenuous the activity.*

### Health Effects

Overexposure to UV radiation can cause sunburns now, but also can lead to skin cancer, cataracts, and premature aging of the skin. Because kids spend so much time in the sun, and because even one or two blistering sunburns can double the risk of some skin cancers, protecting kids from the sun is especially important.

Kids and teenagers who are active outdoors—especially those with asthma or other respiratory problems—are particularly sensitive to ground-level ozone. Ozone can cause coughing, throat irritation, and pain when taking a deep breath. It also can reduce lung function, inflame the linings of the lungs, and even trigger asthma attacks the day after ozone levels are high. Repeated inflammation over time may permanently scar lung tissue.

**AAA Driver Improvement Training:** The Little Creek Safety Storefront offers this training for those military and DoD civilian drivers of a government motor vehicle involved in an accident (on or off base) and those same drivers convicted of a serious moving traffic violation (e.g., reckless driving, driving while impaired, etc.) while operating a GMV or PMV. Training is mandatory to avoid losing base driving privileges. For more information or to register for a class, contact Jim Filek at 462-1605.

# Click It or Ticket

## It's All About Law Enforcement Saving Lives and Preventing Injuries

The *Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC Mobilization* for May 2004 plays a critical role in the effort to keep people safe on our nation's roads and highways. From May 24 to June 6, law enforcement agencies in hundreds of communities across the country will be conducting *Click It or Ticket* campaigns that incorporate zero tolerance enforcement of safety belt laws with a special emphasis on teens and young adults. These efforts — coupled with paid advertising and the support of government agencies, traffic safety organizations, local advocates and others — will yet again result in dramatic increases in safety belt use, and will defend us against one of the greatest threats to us all — traffic crashes.

## Water Safety

Drowning claims the lives of over 4,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children 0-4 have the highest death rate due to drowning.

In 1998, 500 children under the age of five drowned. Most drowning and near-drowning happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. The National Safety Council encourages adults to establish and adhere to strict water safety rules.

### Safety Tips

- \* Never leave a child alone near water—at the pool, the beach or in the tub—a tragedy can occur in seconds. If you must leave, take your child with you.
- \* Always use approved personal floatation devices (life jackets.) The U.S. Coast Guard estimates nearly 9 of 10 drowning victims were not wearing one.
- \* Beware of neighborhood pools—be it your own or your neighbors. Remove toys from in and around the pool when not in use. Toys can attract children to the pool.
- \* For pools, barriers can offer added protection against drowning. Power or manual covers will completely cover a pool and block access to the water, however, be sure to drain any standing water from the surface of the pool cover as a child can drown in very small amounts of water.
- \* Enroll children over age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."
- \* Older children risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate the water depth.
- \* Teach your children these four key swimming rules:
  1. Always swim with a buddy.
  2. Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
  3. Don't push or jump on others.
  4. Be prepared for an emergency.
- \* Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.
- \* Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

## Wearing Bicycle Helmets

Each year, bicycle-related deaths number about 900 and hospital emergency rooms treat more than 500,000 people for bicycle-related injuries. More children, ages 5 to 14, go to hospital emergency rooms for such injuries than for any other sport. Many of these injuries involve the head. If you don't wear a helmet, you're risking your life. Statistics show that five Sailors died and 68 more were injured in recreational bicycle mishaps reported during the last five years. Fifteen of the 68 people who went to medical facilities for treatment had been involved in mishaps where their heads hit the ground.

### Why Wear a Bicycle Helmet?

Wearing one has been shown to reduce serious head injuries by 85 percent. Even a low-speed fall on a bicycle path can cause a serious head injury. You're breaking the law if you don't wear an approved bicycle helmet while riding a bike on any DoD installation (applies worldwide).