

'101 Critical Days of Summer' come to an End, Safety Still Paramount

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by Patrick Gordon NDW Waterline writer

With the end of the Labor Day holiday comes an end to the "101 Critical Days of Summer," the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day when the Department of Defense warns of an increase in off-duty injuries and fatalities.

But safety personnel warn that many of the lessons learned in the 101 Critical Days of Summer can still be relevant throughout the year.

Through the summer, the Navy has warned its service members and civilians to follow rules of safety that are relevant not only to the summer months, but throughout the year as well; e.g. alcohol, traffic, and weather safety.

"The 101 Critical Days of Summer are a crucial time for service personnel to keep safety in mind, but safety is a year-round concern," said Edward Lewis, Naval Support Activity Washington (NSAW) safety & occupational health specialist. "Summer, fall, winter or spring, a lapse in judgment can happen to anyone at any time. So it is imperative that everyone keeps a good head on their shoulders and looks out for themselves, their coworkers or shipmates, as well as their families and friends to prevent mishaps and accidents through the summer and beyond."

Travel safety is a primary concern. Though the Labor Day holiday has past, many still take vacations and day trips into the fall, and lessons taken from the past summer can pay dividends later.

"One of the most important things to do before getting on the road, especially before a long car ride, is having a plan including an alternate route, provide plenty of time to get there, and always get plenty of sleep," said Walter Fulton, a contract safety instructor trainer with Cape Fox Professional Service, during a 101 Critical Days of Summer safety stand down at NSAW. "If you're in the Navy, I recommend utilizing the Travel Risk Planning System - or TRiPS - before getting on the road. It's available through Navy Knowledge Online and the Naval Safety Center, and it provides information and tips on safe travel."

Fulton added that simply following the rules of the road and paying close attention to what is on the road around you can mean the difference between a safe trip and an unsafe one.

Fulton's advice comes as statistics of off-duty traffic incidents from this year's 101 Critical Days are beginning to be processed. The Navy reports that between May 31, 2013, and Aug. 16, 2013, 33 Navy personnel were killed in motor vehicle incidents; 15 deaths as a result of 4-wheeler mishaps, 14 deaths as a result of 2-wheel vehicular mishap (either operator or passenger), and four deaths as result of pedestrian involved mishap.

Alcohol safety is also a 101 Critical Days concern that is important to remember throughout the year, as many service members and civilians enjoy a drink regardless of the season. But personnel are reminded to drink responsibly.

"Alcohol has been a factor in 42 percent of the Sailor and Marine automobile fatalities during the last five years, said Barbara Vandenberg, regional safety program director. "Our folks need to make responsible alcohol choices to prevent this tragic loss of lives."

This initiative to curb alcohol-related incidents and injuries through the "101 Critical Days" and beyond coincides with the Navy's new "Keep What You've Earned Campaign," which is designed to encourage responsible drinking among Sailors



U.S. Navy photo by Patrick Gordon Cynthia Oliver, Naval District Washington (NDW) management and program analyst, attempts to walk a straight line while wearing vision impairment goggles, designed to simulate the effects of extreme intoxication, during an NDW alcohol safety brief to stress the importance of responsible drinking and sobriety throughout the "101 Critical Days of Summer." Responsible drinking is a year-round concern and should be considered well past the "101 Critical Days."

by celebrating the achievements in their Navy careers. In both cases, the message is clear: if you do drink, do so responsibly and safely.

“Alcohol first effects a person’s ability to reason or apply good judgment, meaning individuals who intake too much alcohol - especially if they haven’t eaten a meal or they are mildly to moderately fatigued - will be adversely affected,” said George Revoir Jr., NSAW safety installation program director. “This can lead them to make poor decisions.”

Revoir noted that alcohol also has the physical effect of being a diuretic and can cause someone to become dehydrated even though they feel the drinks are satisfying their thirst. He recommends drinking plenty of water in between alcoholic beverages to prevent this. Revoir also advises against drinking to excess, and if drinking at all, to employ a designated driver.

As the summer comes to a close, weather safety should always be on the minds of personnel. Even as the days get cooler, hurricane season still continues until the end of November, at which point winter storms can begin.

“Following your local weather updates and ensuring compliance with preparedness guidance is an essential part of the process,” said Larry R. Nelson, director of training and readiness for Naval District Washington (NDW). “Advanced preparedness is the key to having an advantage over an inclement weather situation.”

To stay informed of any emergency weather situations, regularly check weather reports on the radio, television or online. NDW personnel can receive weather and other emergency alerts by signing up for the Wide Area Alert Notification (WAAN) system. AtHoc WAAN alerts can be received by workstation alerts, email, phone calls or texts. To register with the Wide Area Alert Network, visit <http://www.cnmc.navy.mil/regions/ndw/about/waan.html>.

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