

Don't let alcohol drown a safe, healthy summer

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Ho'okele Staff

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Region and MIDPAC team, we must work harder together to end inappropriate (under age) and irresponsible use of alcohol, which can put ourselves, our shipmates and our families at risk.

In our Navy, nearly half of all sexual incidents and assaults involve alcohol use and/or abuse. Fully two-thirds of unplanned pregnancies involve at least one partner who was drunk. Most fatal car and motorcycle accidents involve alcohol, speed, poor decisions, or all three.

As we begin the Navy's summer safety campaign from this Memorial Day weekend through July 4 and all the way to Labor Day weekend, I need your help in focusing on alcohol abuse prevention.

The Chiefs on the Waterfront and petty officers of CSADD (Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions) are helping to get the word out using the popular "That Guy" campaign. Military and Family Support Center and DAPA (drug and alcohol programs advisor) counselors are educating Sailors about responsible drinking and the consequences of poor decisions.

Leaders at all levels are promoting and encouraging alternatives to drinking, and we are providing more programs and facilities for our Sailors that focus on their well being-away from alcohol and substance abuse.

Another tool now available to us is the alcohol detection device (ADD). I expect our commands to fully implement the ADD wherever possible. This tool will help enhance fitness, ensure safety and security, maintain maximum readiness, and prevent abuse and misuse of alcohol.

Testing inspections with an ADD may be scheduled or unannounced. ADD is not designed to be used as a punitive weapon but instead as a tool to identify those at risk and afford them help before a career-ending or life-altering event.

The ADD tool will assist us in identifying service members who may not be fit and ready for duty because of how, when and where they used alcohol. In short, it will help us ensure a safer workplace for everyone.

Understanding how alcohol affects you and knowing what steps you can take to prevent abuse has never been easier. Resources are online at thatguy.com, nadap.navy.mil and safe-ty.center.navy.mil.

The Navy's "Keep What You Earned" campaign focuses on what a Sailor can lose if he or she makes a poor choice regarding alcohol. "The Domino Strategy" teaches people how to calculate the size, content and amount of alcohol a person consumes so each individual can make an informed decision. As a reminder, never drink and drive. It's just not worth the risk.

One of the best new programs is "Who Will Stand the Watch," a substance abuse prevention program that focuses on a Sailor's personal responsibility. Think about your shipmates and how they will be adversely impacted if you are removed from duty because of an alcohol or substance abuse incident. We don't want to let our shipmates down, and being there is what it means to be a shipmate.

Alcohol-impaired judgment puts all at risk. We don't want to disappoint our families. And, if we stop to think about it, we don't want to adversely affect our jobs or our careers because of a momentary lapse of judgment. Remember, a poor choice made in a moment can have a lifetime of negative consequences. Let's have a good and fun summer. Let's stay healthy, safe and ready. So, "think before you drink"...

Read more about staying safe this summer in upcoming issues of Ho'okele News.