

Year-round safety—a destination, not a goal

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Ho'okele Staff

Rear Adm. Frank Ponds

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Recently I spoke with top senior enlisted leaders ashore and along the waterfront and told them how much I appreciated everything they do to keep our Sailors safe. Overall, Navy Region and MIDPAC have had an outstanding and longstanding safety record throughout 2012, and we can all be proud of that achievement. Of course it's a team effort, but it requires an individual commitment by everyone, guided by strong leadership. For the most part, each of our Sailors and their families made that effort and stuck to that commitment, and I am extremely proud of the results.

There have been innovative ideas and initiatives across the shorefront and waterfront that enabled us to succeed. To name a few: grass roots organizations such as Chiefs On The Waterfront (COW), walking the beats of our communities and patrolling the piers, flight-line and the deck-plates spreading the word of good decisions and positive behavior; Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD) out and about educating, promoting and encouraging the best practices and intervention tools for responsible behavior and safety; ward-room and senior leaders making

safety and good behavior a matter of mission readiness and warfighting relevance; but most of all, individual Sailors-especially the junior Sailors, having "Sailor talk" with each other and making commitments to each other to look out for one another. These are the things that truly make a difference. This is the personal involvement that brings about change. I am inspired by both and encouraged by all.

The work we do, whether at work, at home, or out and about, can put us at risk. Those risks must be calculated, the consequences in the choices acceptable.

In the vast majority of cases, our Sailors are making great choices, and I am very proud of the safety record you all, along with our families and DoD [Department of Defense] civilians, have earned.

I encourage everyone in our housing areas to continue employing the VEST concept – Vigilance, Engagement,



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Speed, Together. If you see something potentially dangerous in housing, get involved quickly and let your neighbors know. We're stronger and safer when we act together.

Additionally, the Naval Safety Center – <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/> – offers strategies for being safe in any season on the road, at home or at work.

It's a great truth – an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure- and a moment to pause and deliberate can truly prevent and avoid a lifetime of regret.

Whether you are a military service member, family member or civilian teammate, you are valued and valuable. You are part of our great team here in Hawaii. You maximized your efforts toward safety last year – Memorial Day, Labor Day, Christmas and into the new year. Let's rededicate ourselves to do the same this year. We need you to be safe in 2013; we need you to be ready. It's definitely an achievable goal.

It is an issue of relevance; it is an issue of readiness. We need you in our ranks for us to be both.