

What I Have Learned In Safety

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[Return to cover page](#)

Often times during deployments and contingency operations safety gets pushed to the rear or even overlooked all together. This is especially true as the OPTEMPO increases. However, it is at just such times that accident rates increase which may result in mission degradation. With that in mind, we present the following thoughts from the recent Safety Director for USFOR-A (S/SW):

1. Negligent Discharges (ND): Units need to continue weapons emersion training at home station. We are still having lots of ND incidents; whether they are producing injury is beside the point. They have to have the magazines in the weapons when they go thru practice clearing procedures. All too often units will issue out a weapon without the magazines, this should be mandatory with the weapon. If the magazine isn't part of the clearing procedure then you are not clearing the weapon correctly. You have to physically drop the magazine.
2. Composite Risk Management (CRM) Training: All personnel should be required to take the on line course offered by Combat Readiness Center (CRC). Once taken, then unit training should be accomplished to ensure all understand the principles of CRM. Leaders should be doing, on a routine basis, a CRM worksheet and having it reviewed by their supervisors to create routines and excellence.
3. Explosive Safety: Commanders, you are building your own ammunition supply point (ASP), do you know how and what to do? In living quarters, no more than individual combat load. You can't have 40mm, claymore, AT-4, etc. in the rooms. That's what is left in the vehicle at that Basic Load Ammunition Holding Area (BLAHA) / Ammunition Holding Area (AHA). Do you want to sleep three rooms over to someone violating this? Frag arc of one pound net explosives weight (NEW) of 1.1 is 200 feet--450 lbs NEW goes to 1243 ft. All leaders have to know what NEW they have and the explosive arcs of what they are storing. We have a large problem with storing of munitions correctly, war zone or not. It still kills you if it blows up and you or your equipment is too close. Propagation and fragmentation come to mind.
- 3a. Ammunition Draw: Commanders are coming to theater and just signing for ammunition that is in place, they have ammunition that is not in a surveillance program by a Quality Assurance Specialist (Ammunition Surveillance) (QASAS), they have signed for munitions that they don't have weapons for. Commanders should consider in their relief in place / transfer of authority (RIP/TOA) to do a turn in and redraw of what they need. This will get accountability, proper surveillance. The light is at the end of the tunnel on leaving; don't be stuck with a problem when you are trying to leave.
- 3b. Explosive - Units Using Unauthorized Ammunition: Individuals using ammunition they are not trained on. Easy to get your hands on items left behind by other units such as Special Operations Forces (SOF) units. People will use it and without proper training get injured.
4. Fires: Are you trained? Do you have the right fire extinguishers? Who is the contractor that does fire inspections? Has the Task Force (TF) Power looked and signed off on all your areas? If not, when? Fuel separation from ammunition areas; when you have the fire, and you will, what is going to burn and where?
5. Electrical Fires: Let's look at Iraq and Afghanistan, we lost a few people to electrocution and lots of people being shocked. Why? Poor workmanship, TF Power is here checking all the buildings but what about the 3rd

.... continued from page 4

[Return to cover page](#)

country generators, power cords, outlet adapters & transformers. We cannot use these, we have to ensure the importance of fire wardens that are trained and correct deficiencies found by contracted fire inspectors. This is leaders business, just like at home we need to do it here, its no different. What about the commander that told his people to move a latrine without permission and didn't have the electrical inspectors come back in and certify it, this is a problem-working outside of your scope of knowledge. Who suffered? Ensure you have the right people doing the right job. Safety officer teams also consist of the fire wardens and fire marshals, use them, work them.

6. Accident Reporting: Everyone---everyone needs to know what an accident is versus a combat loss. What do you do? Have you had a practice accident? What were the findings and recommendations that were briefed to the chain of command. Believe me you will have one here and have to do it. Turn yourself inside out and see what you look like.

7. Safety Officers: Need a good 0018 at the Brigade and higher. Need all Commanders and Leaders to take the Commanders On line safety course. Need the additional duty safety officers (ADSO) school trained. If you have not instilled AR 385-10 para 1-5 into all of your people, you will have accidents.

8. Drivers Training: Commanders are not exercising AR 600-55 on driver's selection. Not everyone has the maturity to drive a tactical vehicle, just because you drive a car means nothing. I believe we need tough and tougher requirements for the driver's license. Pushing 25 tons down the road requires a little more maturity than driving a non-tactical vehicle. Speed is not the answer. Control of the vehicle is. If your TCs are not in charge and do their job IAW AR 385-10, then relieve them of their duties, period.

9. Rollover Training: If you don't have this training down and understand it, you will DIE! Every vehicle is different for rollover, you have to be trained in the type vehicle you are using, rollover drills and techniques have to be briefed every time the vehicle leaves outside the wire. Has your interpreter gone thru the training, he is part of the crew? How about the guy that is just along for the ride to the FOB or command observation point (COP)? This goes for the leadership too, believe me, you have to take the time for the training because you bleed like everyone else.

10. Vehicle Preventive Maintenance Checks & Services (PMCS): This is done in desert conditions, not motor pools. Have the personnel been trained on this? Where do you put the hazardous waste, how do you move around the vehicle with all your combat gear on, climbing on top, climbing down off the vehicle (not jumping), tying down equipment, are you using the manuals (not enough in theater). I will go to a driver and ask him how many warnings, cautions and notes are in the -10. You better know what I am talking about. These were written in blood and added to the manual. If you don't know the warnings they will kill you.

11. Aviation Safety: The first 90 and the last 90 days are critical. Long hours (a very high non-stop OPTEMPO), no quality crew rest, field maintenance, people shooting at you is a fact of life. Down Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) training is critical. As for the Aviation Commander need to discuss and brief actions to pilots on, "urgency over the emergency", i.e. where are you in relationship to where the perceived threat is. As for the Ground Commander that maintains a helicopter landing area, need to maintain it and ask for aviation safety officer support on what he wants done. Pre-accident plan in place and practiced. This is his life line.

NOTE: You as the safety representative need to have AR 385-10, DA Pam 385-10/40 down cold. Are you trained enough to see something and know what right looks like??

We would like to invite our readers to share their lessons learned, good news stories, horror stories, and helpful hints. If you have something you would like us consider for an upcoming bulletin, please send it to <https://www3.dac.army.mil/es/usatces/default.asp?view=bulletin>.