



Commanding Officer's Policy Letter #2

From: Commanding Officer
To: All Personnel

Subj: SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT



Between October 2008 and April 2010, **40 Marines died** while operating cars, **18 died** on motorcycles, and **30 more died** during various off duty or recreational activities. I have read the details of each heartbreaking incident, and I want to share with you that a traffic or boating death is every bit as tragic as a combat loss. The core of my message to you isn't about safety, it's about doing things right and making sound decisions. It's about following our standards and laws, and procedures. It's about having the correct training and wearing the appropriate protective equipment at all times. Check the references first, and abide by them. When in doubt of a reference or rule, ask. Be aware of your surroundings and take care of yourselves and each other. Above all, **don't cut corners and avoid taking shortcuts**. If these ideas seem simple to you, then good for you, you've got it! That's all I'm asking of you to understand and be aware of.

One of the common threads that took the lives of our precious brothers and sisters was that each faced a hazard that led to a dreadful conclusion. The hazards they faced are the same hazards that surround us and tempt us every day. Recognize the hazards of alcohol, speeding, fatigue, weather, and distracted driving. Assess the risk. Implement controls. Specifically, **wear your seatbelts, watch your speed, drink responsibly, and don't text while driving**. These are simple. Let sound judgment be your guide.

Since we can't completely eliminate risk, we must manage risk. Risk Management. You might be the first person in a group or crowd to prevent an injury or death. Keep your eyes open to hazards and either abate or mitigate them. **Recognize that all activities have risks**.

Know the task, follow the standards, fix discrepancies. You might be the only one that notices that someone's not wearing their seat belt. Point out and correct discrepancies. **Recognize that all risks can be managed**.

Know a Marine or Sailor who's down or lost interest? Mentor, supervise, and then guide them. One life lost is one too many. Again, you might be the first or the only person to reach out to your shipmate who's in trouble. Reach out! Get help. **Recognize and eliminate all preventable mishaps**.

As the Commander of Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 2, I care deeply for each and every one of you, and will take care of you to the best of my ability, but I need your help too. Whether on duty or on liberty, making sound decisions will require your leadership and courage to step in, ask hard questions, and when necessary, break the chain of events that might otherwise lead to tragedy. **Recognize that ALL Marines and Sailors look out for each other with honor, courage, and commitment. Semper Fidelis!**

Thomas J. Witczak
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Commanding Officer MWHS-2