

Forester Assumes Command of USACRC

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“As is the case in this great Army of ours, as one superb leader steps down, another superb leader steps forward to take the reigns and take the organization to even a higher level.”

Army safety continued its transformation here Aug. 25 as Director of Army Safety duties and command of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center changed hands during a ceremony in the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.

Brig. Gen. William H. Forrester assumed the roles and responsibilities of the two positions from Brig. Gen. Joseph A. Smith, who held the positions for a little more than three years.

The USACRC is responsible for improving combat readiness and preserving combat power. As a field operating agency of the Office of the Army Chief of Staff, USACRC is the knowledge center for all Army losses and the focal point for analyzing accident, serious incident and combat loss reports.

After congratulating Smith for his contributions to Army safety and awareness, Forrester said to the warriors of the USACRC that “together” they will continue the positive trends they’ve blazed, “always looking to raise the bar.”

A 20 percent reduction in accidental losses overall is one positive trend USACRC and Army members are witnessing this fiscal year.

“Joe Smith has done something no one before him has ever been able to do. He has turned the tide,” said Lt. Gen. James L. Campbell, director of Army Staff. “He has turned that mammoth battleship in saving Soldiers’ lives. As a result of his passion and sheer determination,

our United States Army reduced our accidental losses by 20 percent from last year to this year. That is Soldiers’ lives ... and the stakes don’t get any higher.”

Officials at the center attribute the majority of the decline to leader involvement and the implementation of several new initiatives including Army Safety Management Information System version two, or ASMIS-2 POV assessment tool.

This risk-planning tool allows travelers to create a tailor-made risk analysis and receive specific guidance to lower risks on road trips. Since its inception, statistics show that Soldiers have completed more than 1.3 million assessments. Of those people who completed the assessments, only four have been killed while operating a vehicle.

“It is obvious there was much work accomplished and all focused on preserving our Soldiers, civilians and equipment,” Forrester said about the USACRC warriors.

Forrester comes to the USACRC after serving as the assistant division commander (support) for the 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea. Though he was previously assigned here as the U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center and Fort Rucker chief of staff, the general said this assignment has a broader focus over the full spectrum of the Army.

“As is the case in this great Army

of ours, as one superb leader steps down, another superb leader steps forward to take the reigns and take the organization to even a higher level,” Campbell said. “Forrester joins the (USACRC) with a rich background in operational experiences. He has commanded an aviation brigade in combat ... and his experiences here at Fort Rucker as the chief of staff of the U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center, where the importance of preserving combat readiness is there every single day, will make him even more effective as leader of the USACRC.”

Drawing from his experiences, Forrester revealed his outlook on the way ahead for the USACRC.

“Nancy and I are humbled by the continued opportunity to serve our Army,” he said, “and we fully realize that our assignment at the Combat Readiness Center is just that. We look forward to forging strong professional and personal relations with organizations across the Army and the Department of Defense.”

Directly following the change of command, the USACRC conducted a retirement ceremony for Smith, who has more than 32 years of service. He said serving in this position was very rewarding.

“When I think about each Soldier that has died, I am convinced that we have saved not some lives, but many lives. That’s what it’s all about.”

Surviving the Storm

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It's been a year since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, leaving death and destruction in its wake across parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The nightmarish memories of that tragedy still haunt many Americans today who lost homes, friends, loved ones, livelihoods and prized possessions. Katrina showed the need for people who live in areas prone to hurricanes and tropical storms to be prepared. Even people who live inland and well away from the coastline can still experience the destructive winds, tornadoes and floods generated by tropical storms and hurricanes.

What is a hurricane?

Hurricanes, aptly named for the Mayan storm god Hurraken, are a type of tropical cyclone. Tropical cyclones are classified as:

How are hurricanes classified?

Hurricanes are classified with a rating of 1 to 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. The scale's purpose is to estimate the potential for property damage.

How to be prepared

Don't wait until the last minute to react. If news and weather reports indicate the potential for hurricane activity in your area, act accordingly and keep the following in mind:

- Fuel (have a full gas tank) and service vehicles.
- Be familiar with safe routes of travel.
- Have extra cash on hand.

- Make preparations to cover windows and doors and secure items that can be blown away or become hazardous projectiles to you or your neighbors.

- Make sure you have plenty of candles, flashlights, batteries, canned food (with a manual can opener), non-perishables, first-aid supplies, bottled water (three gallons per person) and medications.

- Have a battery-powered radio or television so you can keep informed on weather information should your electricity go out.

- Have protective clothing (especially raingear) and bedding or sleeping bags ready in case you have to evacuate.

- Make sure you have the appropriate special items for infants, elderly or family members who are disabled.

- Write down instructions for turning off electricity, gas and water if you are instructed to do so by local authorities and keep them handy.

- Collect important documents such as driver licenses, insurance papers, social security information, proof of residence, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates and tax papers. Keep these items in a safe location so you can take them with you in case of evacuation. Listen frequently to a radio, television or NOAA weather radio for official bulletins concerning the storm. Many weather radios available today are equipped with special alarm tones to

help grab your attention. There also are devices which can be connected to these radios for the hearing and visually impaired such as strobe lights, bed shakers, pagers, personal computers and text printers. These broadcasts will keep you informed about what to do whether you are under a hurricane WATCH (conditions are possible in the specified area, usually within 36 hours) or WARNING (conditions are EXPECTED in the specified area, usually within 24 hours).

Once the storm has passed and it is time for people to begin cleaning up and putting their lives back together, many often find themselves without electricity for days or even weeks. For those who planned ahead and purchased a portable generator, the loss of electricity is a minor inconvenience. If you are planning to purchase a generator, check out the following story, "Got Juice?"

Contact the author at (334) 255-3421, DSN 558-3421 or by e-mail at franklin.mcclanahan@crc.army.mil.

Tropical Depressions
 Systems of persistent clouds and thunderstorms with a closed low-level circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less.

Hurricanes
 Intense weather systems with a well-defined circulation and sustained winds of 74 mph or higher. Hurricanes are called typhoons in the northwestern Pacific and cyclones in the Indian Ocean.

Tropical Storms
 Organized systems of strong thunderstorms and well-defined circulation with maximum sustained winds between 39 and 73 mph.



The "Leader's Risk Management Guide for Disaster Relief Operations" is available on the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center Web site at https://crc.army.mil/guidance/leaderguides/Disaster_Relief_Leader_Guide.pdf. For more information on preparing for a hurricane, check out the American Red Cross online at http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_253_,00.html.

CATEGORY

1 74 to 95 mph

Minimal: Damage to trees, foliage and unanchored mobile homes

CATEGORY

2 96 to 110 mph

Moderate: Some trees blown down; some damage to roofing materials, windows and doors; major damage to mobile homes

CATEGORY

3 111 to 130 mph

Extensive: Trees blown down; mobile homes destroyed; structural damage to small buildings; damage to roofing materialsof buildings

CATEGORY

4 131 to 115 mph

Extreme: Trees blown down; destruction of mobile homes; extensive damage to roofing materials, windows and doors; complete failure of roofs on many small residences

CATEGORY

5 155+ mph

Catostrophic: Complete failure of roofs on many residences and industrial buildings; extensive door and window damage; complete structural failure of some buildings

Got Juice?



Weather-related disasters, such as last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, can deny huge numbers of people the electrical power needed for vital home appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, water heaters and air-conditioning units. Losing these important appliances can make life nearly unbearable, so many people buy portable power generators to serve as a backup. However, used improperly, these generators can create disasters of their own. Below are some tips to help you select the proper portable generator and use it in a way that will benefit your family, not endanger it.

Buying a generator

If you buy a generator, make sure you get one that is rated for the amount of power you'll actually need. Check the wattage or amperage requirements for all lights, appliances and equipment you plan to connect to the generator. Choose a generator capable of producing enough power to cover all the items connected to it, along with the initial surge when it is turned on. If your generator doesn't produce enough power to run everything at one time, stagger the operating times for the various items. Overloading your generator can blow a fuse in it or damage the connected equipment.

Don't get "gassed"

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock, electrocution and fire are the primary hazards when using a generator. To avoid CO poisoning, portable generators should never be used indoors, especially in any confined space such as a garage, carport, basement or crawlspace, even if ventilation is available. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO from building up to dangerous levels in the home. Because CO is odorless, you may unknowingly be exposed to it; thus it is a good idea to install battery-operated

CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with a battery backup in your home. If CO gas from a generator enters your home and poses a health risk, the alarm will sound to warn you. Test the battery frequently and replace when needed. Also, make sure you place generators well away from your home to avoid CO coming into your house through open windows or doors. Anytime you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a portable generator, get to fresh air immediately.

Avoid unpleasant charges

To avoid being electrocuted or shocked, keep the generator dry and don't use it during rainy or wet conditions. To protect the generator from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure, such as under a tarp held up by poles. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.

No "rings of fire"

Before refueling a generator, turn it off and let it cool down because gasoline spilled on a hot engine can ignite. Store fuel in an approved safety container and use the type of fuel recommended in the generator's instructions or on its label. Ask your local fire department about how much fuel you may store and where you may store it. Store the fuel outside of living areas; preferably in a locked shed or other protected area. Storing fuel indoors, especially near a fuel-burning or electrical appliance, is very dangerous. If fuel is spilled or the container isn't sealed properly, fuel vapors can be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches.

The "tie" that binds

Use a heavy-duty, outdoor-type extension cord rated for the total wattage or amperage of the connected loads. Make sure the cord is free of cuts or tears in the insulation and the



plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin. Never try to power your house by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "backfeeding." Backfeeding sends power back through the power line, posing an electrocution risk to utility workers repairing a downed line or neighbors served by the same transformer. Backfeeding also bypasses some of your built-in household protection devices.

Future considerations

The only recommended method for connecting a generator to house wiring is to have a power transfer switch installed. This switch must be installed in accordance with the National Electrical Code®, which is published by the National Fire Protection Association, and meet all state and local electrical codes. To ensure the switch is properly installed, either have it done by a qualified electrician or check with your utility company to see if they can install it for you.

For power outages, permanently installed stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to the home. Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, which can lead to a fire or generator failure. Be sure to read the generator's instructions and carefully operate it within its limitations. ⚡

Editor's Note: This information was developed by the American Red Cross with technical advice from the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code®) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

It's Just Around the Corner

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It was 6:15 p.m. and I needed to run to the store for a few items before starting my long trip to spend five months at Fort Rucker, Ala. Attempting to get as much family time as possible before I left, everyone hopped into the car with me. My wife got behind the wheel, and the kids got in the back seat and buckled up for safety.

My middle child always reminds me to wear my seatbelt by quoting a radio commercial that says most accidents happen within a few miles of home. Sure enough, I heard her say, "Dad, wear your seatbelt!" But I was talking to my wife and ignored the warning. I told myself, "We're only going to the store and it's just around the corner."

We headed down a four-lane divided highway toward the store and then turned onto a two-lane residential road.

The road was crowded with drivers headed home from work and some that were also headed to the store. We were all talking and carrying on when an oncoming minivan suddenly veered into our lane. I was frantically reaching for my seatbelt

and bracing myself for the impact. Fortunately, my wife reacted just in time to avoid a head-on collision. We came so close to the minivan you could hear the airstream around both vehicles collide. It sounded like a small explosion.

All I could think of were my daughter's words reminding me to buckle up. I pulled the seatbelt around me and locked it, thanking God it had only been a close call. My wife looked at me and said, "You're a little late, don't you think?" After we arrived at the store, I got out and checked the driver-side mirror and bumper for damage but didn't find any. From the sound I heard when the minivan went by, I was certain it had hit us.

I consider myself a very good defensive driver. However, I'd become complacent about my driving skills and believed I could avoid

any accident that might come my way. I didn't stop to think about the fact I wasn't driving or that I had no control over the driver in the minivan. My wife is a good driver and avoided what

would have been a nasty head-on collision. However, is everyone you ride with that good? And what

FAST *fax*

More than one-third of all unbelted Soldiers who die in POV accidents are passengers, according to accident reports submitted to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center.

about the driver in the other vehicle? Can you afford to assume you can always avoid them?

I finally realized my defensive driving skills can't guarantee I'll always survive when something goes wrong on the road. Like my daughter reminded me, I need to buckle up every time I drive or ride in a vehicle.

It's all about safety—which is my profession. Of all people, I might have been that needless fatality we preach about to Soldiers. It took me almost getting killed or seriously injured to learn the value of practicing what I preach—seatbelts save lives. Learn from my close call, just as I did, and always buckle up for safety. ☘

Contact the author by e-mail at clenis.r.blanton@us.army.mil.

CONNECTIONS

For an interesting article on how seatbelts function, check out the "HowStuffWorks" Web site at <http://auto.howstuffworks.com/seatbelt1.htm>.

Honey...Where's the Brakes?

CPT SHANE M. WELLER

Aviation Captain's Career Course Class 06-01

I was at a boat show in Dallas, jumping with excitement at the possibility of buying a new boat. As I looked around, I saw just what I wanted—a 2000 model 19-foot Crownline inboard/outboard with a stereo system that would knock your socks off. It was more than I could afford, but it was “calling my name” and my wife finally said I could buy it. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for.

The very next weekend was bright and sunny, so I took my wife and kids and headed for the lake. We filled the cooler with snacks and drinks and put on sunscreen. I hooked the boat trailer to my pickup, connected the lights, checked the battery and then yelled for everyone to get in the truck.

As a kid, I grew up around boats. However, dealing with a truck, trailer and boat was a first-time experience for my wife and kids. When we got to the lake the water level was so low the dock was resting on the sand. This meant backing the trailer way down the ramp to get the boat into the water. Since my wife couldn't back the truck and trailer, I had her and the kids get into the boat while I backed the trailer down the ramp. I told her to start the engine when the rear of the boat was in the water, and then I'd finish pushing the boat off the trailer. I told her to take the boat out and do little circles in the middle of the cove while I went and parked the truck.

When I finished parking, I came back to the boat ramp and walked out onto a rocky ledge. My plan was to have my wife bring the boat close enough to the ledge so I could jump on. We'd then back off and head out on the lake for a day of fun in the sun. Keep in mind that was the “plan.”

I walked onto the rocky ledge and motioned to my wife to come over. As she approached, I could see she hadn't mastered the finer points of power management and I yelled for her to slow down. She pulled back on the throttle, but it was too late—the boat

had built up a lot of momentum and was approaching much too quickly. As the boat got closer, I was really getting nervous and yelled again for her to slow down. I wouldn't have believed what I saw next if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Instead of looking where she was going, she was bent over looking beneath the steering wheel. I yelled “What are you doing?” and she yelled back, “Honey ... where's the brakes!”

I could see it all in my mind—my wife still searching for the brake pedal while my new boat smashed into the rocks and sank. It was time for the “supreme” sacrifice. I yelled, “Put the engine in reverse!” and then wedged my body between the rocks and the oncoming boat. If need be, I was going to stop the boat myself to keep it from crashing into the rocks. Fortunately, my wife got the engine in reverse and the boat slowed enough that I didn't get hurt. When the ordeal was over, I decided it was time to give my wife and kids some training on how to operate a boat.

Not everyone's boating “adventure” winds up being funny or injury-free. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, during 2004 there were 676 boating-related fatalities; 3,363 injuries, and 4,904 reported accidents—and that's not including those with less than \$2,000 damage. Approximately 70 percent of boaters who died drowned, and of that group roughly 90 percent weren't wearing their personal flotation device (PFD) or life jacket. Simply wearing PFDs could've saved 430 of these people.

To help you end your day safe rather than as a statistic, here is a list of boating safety tips:

- Take a boating safety class. Check out the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's Web page at <http://nws.cgaux.org/> and click on the “Boating Education” link for information on safety training.
- Know your boat's load limit and don't exceed it.
- Knowing how to swim makes

good sense if you spend time on the water. If you don't know how, LEARN.

- Keep PFDs visible and accessible and never make a person feel uncomfortable for wearing one.

- Learn the “rules of the road” for safe boating and obey them!

- Remember, while a drink or two can relax you and make your day more enjoyable, alcohol also slows your reaction time, reduces your coordination and makes you more vulnerable to hypothermia. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, alcohol played a part in approximately 30 percent of all boating fatalities during recent years.

- Stay hydrated—take along a variety of cool drinks, such as water, iced tea or lemonade. Bring plenty of food and snacks.

- Wear clothing designed to keep you cool.

- Plan to limit your time to a reasonable length to avoid fatigue. The combination of the motion, noise, sun, wind and glare causes you tire more quickly.

- If you want to make alcohol part of your day's entertainment, plan to have a party at the dock, in a picnic area, at a boating club or in your backyard. Wait a reasonable time (estimated at a minimum of one hour per drink) before operating your boat. 

Contact the author via e-mail at shane.weller@us.army.mil. For more information on boating safety, check out these Web sites: <http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/bui.htm> and <http://www.boatingsafety.com/alcohol.htm>.



Cave is Just a Cave Right?

MICHAEL SMALL

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It was just like any other spring Saturday morning on Okinawa, Japan. We were donning our dive gear and getting ready for our first of two dives that day. Little did I know that dive would be one of the most exciting I'd do while in Okinawa.

Our Saturday outings to different scuba dive locations had become the norm, and we always tried to make the trips a little different than the ones before. That morning would be my first cave dive. We talked about the dive and discussed safety, primarily what we should and shouldn't do when entering caves. Our lead diver was a rescue dive instructor who'd lived on the island for more than 15 years and knew the waters like the back of his hand. He made sure we buddied up for gear checks and the dive. Then it was time to hit the water.

There were several other divers in the water, so our lead diver told us to head for a meeting point farther to the right of our normal area. Diving there would put us in clear water with fewer divers' flags around. We entered the water and snorkeled out to our starting point. Once we were all ready, we began to descend. The water was clear and we could see a lot of fish in the area. Making sure our buddies were still with us, we enjoyed the underwater sights while our lead diver searched for a cave.

Our lead diver usually liked to take his dive buddies out to a series of large caves that all enter a central chamber. This time, however, he noticed a small cave he hadn't previously seen. He figured it was formed by seismic activity the previous week and decided it would be our cave.

As we gathered around, he entered the cave to take a quick look. When he came out, he indicated the cave was only big enough for one diver at a time. Also, because of the sediment in the cave, we'd have to pull ourselves along instead of using our flippers. Once we were ready, we began entering the cave one at a time

at two-minute intervals. The cave's exit was about 30 yards away, which gave us a meeting point. I was the third of six divers to go in. With my arms stretched in front of me, I slowly clawed my way through the opening. I was about half-way through the cave when I stopped to take a quick break. When I tried to pull myself forward again, I couldn't move. I could tell my regulator line was caught on something, but I couldn't reach back and check it. I tried to back out of the cave but only moved about six inches before I got caught again. I was scared and began breathing hard as I pulled myself back and forth without success. I felt like I was trapped in a coffin.

But was I really trapped? I took a quick, deep breath and told myself to relax. At that point, I decided to try and roll and see if I could work myself free. The trick worked! I rolled 90 degrees on one side and got free and then pulled myself the rest of the way out of the cave. When I exited, I quickly looked at my gauges and noticed I'd used more than three-quarters of my air inside the cave. I motioned to my buddy and we let the others know we were surfacing.

Once we were all gathered at the dive van, we discussed what had happened to me. I was told that when I exited the cave, I was white as a ghost and my eyes were as big as blowfish. At the time it seemed funny, but, thinking back, it wasn't funny at all.

My experience taught me only experienced divers should go into caves; even then, they should be very careful. I was lucky, I could have been stuck in that cave with empty tanks and everybody wondering what happened. I still dive today, but I stay away from unexplored caves. When I cave dive now, I do it with those who know what they are doing. After all, no two caves are alike.

Editor's Note: I asked an experienced diver, Capt. Charles Mopps of D Company, 2-485 Regiment, Fort Jackson,

S.C., to review this article and offer any comments. Here is what he had to say:

"The person at fault for this close call is the rescue dive instructor, not the author. While the instructor did everything correctly at the beginning, all the pre-dive prep went out the window when he decided to take a group of inexperienced divers through an unexplored cave. When the author got 'trapped,' his training definitely came through, reminding him to relax and work his way out of the situation.

"Before the lead diver decided to use this cave, he should have gone in with another experienced diver to map and mark it. Techniques for marking include using weighted reflective flags or glow sticks. He could also have used a guideline to assist the divers work their way through the cave system. Also, depending how deep the cave was and how long he spent exploring it, he could've used his decompression time on the surface to map out the cave and brief the other divers.

"The last paragraph of the article basically describes how to stay safe. Once again, a close call has led to a lesson learned." 

Contact the author at (252) 466-6455, DSN 582-6455, or by e-mail at michael.small@usmc.mil. For more information on diving safety, visit the Naval Safety Center Web page at <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/ashore/recreation/safetybriefs/scubaBrief.htm>. For more information on injury prevention while scuba diving, visit <http://familydoctor.org/156.xml>.



A Shocking Fish Tale!

RICHARD SUSSMAN
CP-12 Safety Intern



have you ever taken off for a long trip and wondered if you accidentally left something on at your house that might cause a fire? All you can do is hope your fears are wrong and your house is still there when you get back. But what if there's something you have to leave turned on? Can you still ensure your house is safe?

After a month's well-deserved leave, I came home to the sounds and smells of something burning. I was surprised because I thought I'd taken every possible precaution before leaving my house unattended. I'd turned off and unplugged all the electrical appliances except for my fish tank. I had to leave it plugged in so the filters would run and keep the little guys alive. I'd never had a problem before, so I figured it would be OK.

Boy, was I wrong. Within five minutes of walking into my house, I could hear a sizzling sound. I tracked the noise down and discovered it was my fish tank's power strip—or at least what was left of it. I then quickly found the main circuit breaker and turned off the power to the house so I could safely unplug the strip.

I'd been lucky. The power strip could have been burning and shorting out for days, or it may have happened just before

I walked in the door. I don't know which it was, but I could have lost my house. I found out there were a few simple tips and rules that could have prevented this near disaster. I'll share them with you.

Loop the power cord

If your fish tank is on a stand, then it's probably sitting about two feet higher than the typical electrical wall outlet. It's very important you have a dip in the cord that goes lower than the outlet so water will drip harmlessly from the bottom of the dip (see image below). This prevents water from running down the cord and into the outlet, which could be very bad news! If you're using a power strip, place it on something that will elevate it high enough above the floor so you can have a dip in the cord.

Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter

If your outlet does not have a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) built in, then you should purchase a power strip that has one. The surge protector ensures that should an electrical current enter the tank, whether from a frayed wire, sunken light strip or broken heater, the circuit

will immediately be broken, saving you and your fish from a powerful shock.

Turn off all electric appliances

As mentioned earlier, mixing water and electricity is a dangerous thing. To prevent you or your fish from being shocked, turn off ALL electric appliances connected to your fish tank when you are servicing it.

No "trip" wires

If the maze of wires beneath your aquarium looks like a plate of spaghetti, you're setting yourself up for trouble. Route your wires carefully and attach them securely to the stand to avoid tripping yourself or someone else. Use a single GFCI-equipped power strip to run all of your aquarium's electrical appliances. That way, in an emergency you can shut off all power to the aquarium quickly and safely. 

CONNECTIONS

For more information on how GFCIs can prevent accidental shocks or electrocution, check out the Consumer Product Safety

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announced a voluntary recall of approximately 1,000 Aqua-Pod Model 7050 aquariums. These aquariums have three power cords, two for the aquarium lamps and one for the power pump. When only one of the lamp cords is plugged in, the other lamp cord can become energized, posing an electrical shock hazard to consumers.

As of March 13, when this recall was issued, seven consumers had been shocked by touching unplugged, but still energized, lamp cords. To determine if you have one of these aquariums, check the owner's manual or packaging, as the model number is not printed on the aquarium. Also, not all Aqua-Pod Model 7050 aquariums are involved in this recall. Only aquariums without a white label containing the manufacturer date and bar code are involved in this recall. To locate the label, open the aquarium lid and check the bottom left corner of the light reflector. If you have one of the recalled aquariums, contact the distributor, Current USA Inc. toll-free at (866) 276-8872 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Pacific Standard Time Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web site at www.current-usa.com.



What's That Funny Little Button?

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Have you ever wondered about that strange-looking electrical outlet receptacle in your bathroom or kitchen? You know—the one with the little “TEST” and “RESET” buttons between the upper and lower outlets. It's known as a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI), and it's one of the most important safety items you need in your house.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, nearly 4,000 people are injured and more than 300 are killed each year from electrocutions involving electrical receptacles. Of that number, about 1,300 were children who inserted objects such as toys and keys into receptacles. In addition, problems with electrical receptacles cause some 5,000 home fires annually, resulting in more injuries and deaths.

A GFCI receptacle is designed to protect you from being shocked or burned should you touch a live (hot) wire. Because your body conducts electricity, current can run through you as it seeks a path to ground. Should that happen, the GFCI senses the difference in the electrical current between the hot and neutral (ground) conductors and stops the flow of electricity. This automatic

breaking, or interrupting, of the electrical circuit is what keeps you from being electrocuted.

To protect yourself and your family against ground fault hazards, it's important to know where GFCI receptacles should be located in your home. As a rule of thumb, GFCI receptacles should be used anywhere damp conditions could exist. These include bathrooms, kitchens, garages, crawl spaces, basements and outdoor receptacles.

Electrical receptacles deteriorate over time. Also, homes built before the current National Electrical Code® may lack the needed GFCI receptacles. If you live in an older home, have it checked. If you need to have GFCI receptacles installed, contact a qualified electrician. Also, like any other electrical device, GFCIs can wear out. To ensure your GFCIs are working properly, check them each month by pressing the TEST button and ensuring no electricity is flowing from the receptacle. To restore power, simply press the RESET button. Replace any GFCI receptacles that fail this test.

This cost of installing GFCIs is a fraction of the cost of replacing a home or paying for a funeral. Think of it as one of the cheapest and best forms of insurance you can buy for your home and family. ⚡



Update on New GFCIs

As of July 28, production of the current type of GFCIs has ceased in the United States to be replaced with the new Harmonized GFCI. The reason for the design change is based on a study conducted in 2001 by the Underwriter's Laboratory and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association. The study discovered a significant number of existing GFCIs failed to work after several years. The Harmonized GFCI will incorporate safety features designed to better protect and alert users when a GFCI malfunctions. The new changes include the following:

- End of Life Provision: Once a GFCI becomes incapable of passing its internal test function (it no longer provides

ground fault protection), it will either render itself non-operational by no longer providing power or notify the user by audible or visual means that it must be replaced.

- Reverse Line-Load Miswire: The GFCI will deny power to the receptacle if it has been miswired.

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Kids, Schools & Safety

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With summer over and schools back in session, children are in greater danger of being involved in an accident. Children are easily distracted, and it's not uncommon for them to suddenly run into the street while walking to school or waiting for the school bus. Many kids will be riding their bikes to school, even though their skills and understanding of traffic safety leave a lot to be desired. (You sometimes see these kids riding down the middle of the road, oblivious to the hazardous traffic around them.) Parents whose children walk, bicycle or ride a school bus should consider the following tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

Riding the School Bus

- Teach children to wait until the school bus has completely stopped before approaching it from the curb.
- Make sure children understand that after boarding the bus they must find a seat and stay in it. Explain to them the dangers of moving about on the bus while it is in motion.
- Train children to check for traffic

before crossing the road to board a school bus and to make sure the bus driver can always see them.

Walking to School

- Ensure your child's walk to school is safe by choosing an appropriate route with well-trained adult crossing guards at each intersection. Practice walking the route with your child so they'll be familiar and comfortable with it.
- Determine if your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision. Smaller children can be impulsive and less cautious around busy roadways.
- Dress your child in brightly colored clothing so drivers can see them easily.

Riding a Bike

- Ensure your child always wears a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride, and that the helmet meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Snell, American National Standards Institute, or American Society for Testing and Materials safety standards. According to the CPSC, of the nearly 200 children killed each year in bicycle-related incidents, more than half died from head injuries.

- Train your child to ride on the right side of the road, going in the same direction as traffic. Teach them to use appropriate hand signals and respect traffic lights and stop signs.
- Dress your child in brightly colored clothing to help drivers see them.
- Test your child's knowledge of the "rules of the road."

Finally, a word to motorists who drive in residential areas or near schools—be alert for children engaged in horseplay, as well as for unskilled bicycle riders. Remember to observe speed limits and respect the flashing lights in school crossing areas. Stop for school buses as they load and unload and at crosswalks where children are crossing.

School should be a fun and exciting time for children; following these precautions will help make it a safe time, as well. 🚫

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Have a Fun and Safe on Fright Night!

This Halloween, children will be drifting off into an orange-and-black-colored fantasy world of ghosts, goblins and witches. During this evening of fun and fright, it's important to remember that children involved in Halloween activities often forget about personal safety. Many will be wearing face masks that restrict their vision, while others may be adorned in cumbersome costumes that limit their freedom of movement. All of them will be burdened by the large bags they use for carrying their Halloween loot.

TIPS FOR PARENTS and kids

- Parents can ensure a fun and safe Halloween for their children by taking a few simple precautions:
 - Always accompany children while they are trick-or-treating and carry a flashlight to help illuminate walking surfaces and increase your visibility to traffic.
 - When selecting Halloween costumes, make sure they are labeled as fire retardant. Also, ensure they're short enough to prevent tripping, allow freedom of movement and provide optimum visibility at night. To enhance visibility, adorn the costume with reflective tape to help drivers see youngsters.
 - Ensure children are instructed on pedestrian traffic rules. Teach them not to step into the road from between parked cars, to look both ways before crossing a street and

to cross the road only at corners or intersections. Make sure they understand they must watch and obey all traffic lights and walk on the sidewalk instead of in the street. Warn children to stay away from unfamiliar vehicles and drivers who may offer them candy treats or a ride home.

- Instruct children to trick-or-treat only in their own neighborhood unless arrangements have been made for them to be accompanied elsewhere by parents or responsible guardians. Warn them not to enter any home unless a relative or trusted family friend resides there.
- Caution children to beware of neighborhood pets and any other animals that are roaming free.
- Establish a rule for the children that no candy or treats will be eaten until they are brought home and thoroughly inspected for possible tampering.

TIPS FOR DRIVERS

For those driving on Halloween evening, here are some safe motoring tips to keep in mind:

- Make sure your headlights are serviceable and your windshield is clean so you can see clearly.
- Obey all traffic signs and regulations. Also, drive slower than the speed limit through residential areas to allow adequate reaction time should children dart out from between parked cars.
- Be on the lookout for children in dark clothing walking on roadways, shoulders and

medians. Watch out for kids in areas you would not normally expect to find them.

- Alcohol slows reaction time, so leave the bottled "spirits" at home to protect the little spirits walking around your neighborhood.
- Halloween should be an evening of excitement for both children and adults. Plan now to do your part to make Halloween a safe and memorable experience for your family. 🚫

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Several bicycle helmets, including some specifically designed for children, were recalled earlier this year by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. To see the list of those helmets and their problems, visit the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute's Web page at <http://www.bhsi.org/recalls.htm>.

My Hide and the Highway

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“**D**arn, it’s cold this morning,” I thought as I considered the 24-degree temperature. It was a February morning in 2003, and it wasn’t exactly motorcycle weather. However, I figured if I plugged in my electric vest and cranked up the grip heaters on my BMW, I’d be just fine. It was going to warm up to 50 degrees later on, so I just needed to suffer through the morning. What I didn’t know was my suffering was going to last for the next couple of days—even with Demerol™!

I’m an avid motorcyclist who has owned a large street bike of some kind for the last 30 years. I’ve had my share of crashes—the last was in 1982, when I slid my Honda CB900F down Interstate 40 in the rain. My leather jacket and Bell Star II full-face helmet kept me out of the hospital that time. That was 21 years ago, and I figured I was a better rider now. After all, I’d ridden

thousands of miles on motorcycles.

I had an appointment about 100 miles away from my house. However, since the temperature was going to climb once the sun came up, I decided to take the bike. That was a big mistake—I didn’t count on the way cold weather could slow my thinking and reactions. I was about to learn the hard way.

After riding for about 30 minutes, I got on an exit ramp doing about 50 mph—well within the speed limit. I used the ramp all the time, so I didn’t expect anything unusual. However, as the ramp turned to the right, I noticed something in the road, but I was so cold I couldn’t react in time and rolled right through it. That “something” was diesel fuel—not the kind of thing you want to hit in the middle of a curve at 50! As the bike started a low-side slide, I thought, “This won’t be too bad.” However, the bike suddenly got traction and high-sided. I vaguely remember flying through the air,

but that was it. The next thing I can remember is sitting in the back of an ambulance and talking to a police officer. It wasn’t that I’d lost consciousness, I’d just blocked out part of the crash. When the police arrived minutes after the crash, they said I’d already gotten up and moved the bike to the shoulder of the road.

I was wearing long pants and a jacket with CE armor made of Cordura®. I was also wearing leather boots and gloves and an Arai Signet II helmet. While I didn’t lose any skin to road rash, I did break my arm at the elbow socket. As you can see in the photo, my helmet was damaged. If you look close, you can see the impression my watch crystal made on the face shield. Had I been wearing anything less than a full-face helmet, my injuries would have been much more serious. The impact marks on my Arai literally have been “ground” into my memory! My “Beemer” didn’t fare so well, but the factory in Berlin builds new ones every day.

I crashed because I was complacent about the cold weather and overrated my ability to react quickly when half-frozen. Fortunately, I was wearing motorcycle gear designed to protect me and lessen my injuries. I can tell you from experience that when you’re sliding down the road, it’s nice to have something between your hide and the highway. 🦄

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Inches from Disaster

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It was a beautiful fall morning in Beaufort, S.C. My roommate, Sqig, and I decided we'd spend this particular Saturday doing house and yard work around our "palatial" double-wide rented trailer. I knew this would be my last chance to help for a while because I'd be leaving the next morning for 30 days at Nellis AFB, Nev. Nellis is on the outskirts of Las Vegas, and it just wouldn't feel right to leave all the chores to Sqig while I was sipping rum and coke at a blackjack table.

We started cleaning inside about 9 a.m., opening a case of beer and cracking our first cold ones about five minutes later. Being young, single Marine sergeants, this was our established house-chore SOP. By 11 a.m., we'd finished cleaning the bathrooms, dusting, picking up and vacuuming. We'd also finished off at least a 12-pack. It was time to move outside.

Sqig started mowing and I began edging and trimming. I finished first, took a beer break and then started raking. Sqig finished mowing and

started bagging after his beer break. After much effort and taking enough beer breaks to polish off the case, we finished the yard work. By then, it was about 4 p.m. and a few friends showed up. They were so impressed with our yard skills they offered to share

their bottle of bourbon with us. We accepted and the five of us sat on the porch passing the bottle and talking.

By 6 p.m., we'd emptied the bottle and one of our friends suggested we go to a local club. Sqig and I were up for it. After all, seven hours of work while drinking a case of beer followed by two hours of drinking bourbon—all on empty stomachs—shouldn't stop us. I took a shower and was getting ready to go when I remembered I was supposed to leave in the morning. I told the guys to go ahead and I'd catch up with them after I got packed.

I went back in and started pressing my "cammies." I remember eating a sandwich in the kitchen, and then the next thing I remember was my alarm going off. A little confused, I turned off the alarm and looked around the room. I saw my neatly pressed cammies hanging on the doorknob and my seabag packed next to the dresser. I shrugged it off and got ready to go. As I shouldered my bag, I knocked on Sqig's door and told him I was ready for my ride to the air station. I walked out to his truck, threw my bag in the back and then turned to walk back to the trailer. That's when I saw it—the driver's side of my car was smashed from bumper to bumper and covered with yellow paint.

I freaked out! I ran back in screaming, "Sqig, what the @#%* happened to my car?" He said he had no idea what I was talking about. When I described the condition of the driver's side, he said, "Oh, that must be what you were talking about last night."

Apparently, I did make it to the club. Sqig informed me when I showed up I was slurring something about not being able to open my door. He had another friend drive me home in my car.

I had to catch a C-141 to Nevada, so I didn't have time to solve the mystery. Sqig said he'd find out what happened. The next afternoon I called Sqig and he told me he'd figured it all out. He'd retraced the route we normally took to the club, which was mostly on two-lane back roads. Apparently, I'd entered a particularly sharp right-hand turn, crossed the oncoming lane and gone off the road. It was there I'd sideswiped a yellow-painted metal barrier pole in front of a fire hydrant.

As he told me what happened, I realized if I'd been a few more inches to the left, my life would've been a lot different. I'd have been charged with DUI and "missing movement." Also, I could've been injured or killed because I don't remember wearing my seatbelt. Worse still, I could've hit another car and killed or injured someone else. I was lucky to have only done about \$1,000 worth of damage to my car. That was a small price to pay to learn a lesson from an event I don't even remember.

That was 1991, and I still live in Beaufort. The corner, post and fire hydrant are all still there too. I've pointed out the post, which is still canted at an odd angle and missing yellow paint on one side, to several friends and my children. I hope they learn from my mistake. I did. ❌

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HOW DRUNK WAS HE?

Using the blood-alcohol content (BAC) calculator provided on the HealthStatus Internet Assessment Web site, located at <http://www.healthstatus.com/bac.html>, the author's BAC was approximately 0.20 before he began drinking the whiskey. If the five friends shared the fifth of whiskey evenly, that would've added another 0.07 or so on top of what he already had. According to the Web site, BACs ranging from 0.18 to 0.30 will cause confusion, dizziness, slurred speech and lack of muscle coordination. The site went on to note BACs above 0.25 can cause serious health issues, including death.

The following reports reflect accidents that have happened to Soldiers in their privately owned vehicles, during recreational activities and in other non-tactical environments.

Accident Briefs

POV

Class A

- A Soldier was driving his car with two other Soldiers as passengers when the car left the road, struck a light pole and went into a concrete ditch. The Soldier riding in the backseat, unlike the driver and Soldier in the front seat, was not wearing his seatbelt and suffered life-threatening injuries.
- A Soldier was driving his automobile when it ran off the road and overturned several times. The Soldier was thrown from the vehicle and suffered fatal injuries.
- A Soldier was driving his automobile when it ran off the road. The driver and another Soldier riding in the car were both thrown from the vehicle. The driver suffered fatal injuries and the passenger was hospitalized for 17 days.
- A Soldier was speeding when he lost control of his vehicle, left the roadway, struck a curb, went into the air and crashed into a utility pole. The Soldier suffered fatal injuries.
- A Soldier was turning left in his vehicle when it was struck by another driver who'd run a red light. The Soldier was taken to a hospital, where he later died.
- Three Soldiers riding in a car driven by another Soldier were killed when the vehicle crossed the centerline, collided head-on with a truck and then hit another car. The Soldier who was driving was hospitalized for 17 days.
- A Soldier was crossing a major thoroughway when he was struck by a

POV driven by a civilian. The Soldier was transported to a medical facility for care, but later died as a result of his injuries.

Class A

- A Soldier was driving his sport-utility vehicle (SUV) from his home in Alabama to his unit in Texas when the vehicle left the road and overturned. The Soldier, who was in leave status, died of his injuries.
- A Soldier was driving a pickup truck when it left the right shoulder of the roadway and rolled several times. The Soldier died at the scene.

Class C

- A Soldier driving near an interstate lost control and went down an embankment, crossing the interstate's northbound lanes, median and southbound lanes before hitting a patrol car. The Soldier was wearing his seatbelt and suffered a cut above his eye. The patrolman was shaken up but not seriously injured.

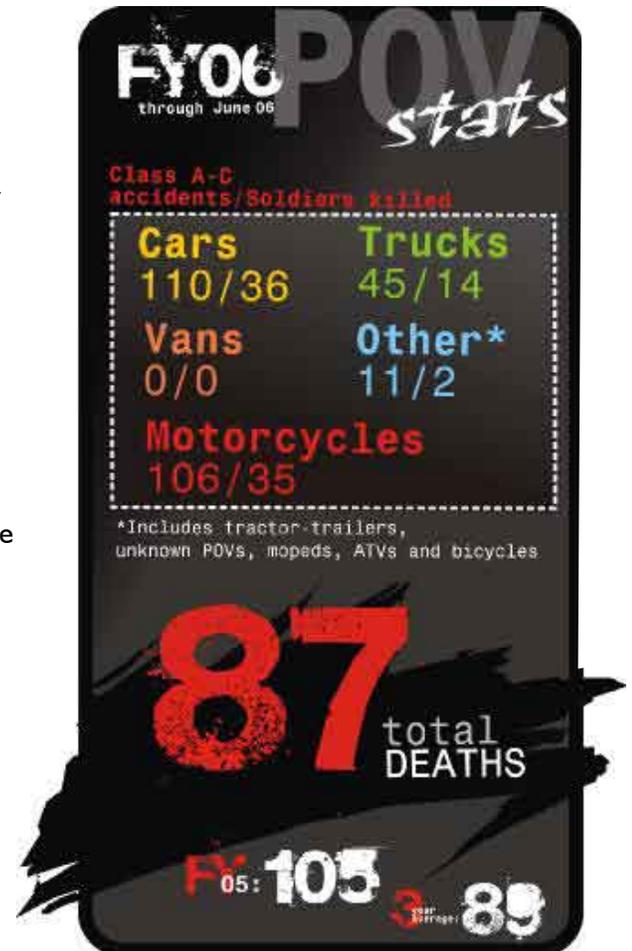
POM

Class A

- A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle in a sharp curve, rear-ended a SUV and then was run over by another vehicle. Helmet and personal protective equipment (PPE) use were not reported.
- A Soldier was speeding on his motorcycle when he struck a rise in the road surface, became airborne and then crashed into a chain-link

fence. The Soldier suffered severe head injuries and died at the scene.

- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle when he failed to stop for a red light and struck a 2005 Hyundai Santa Fe. The Soldier was thrown into vehicle's windshield and suffered fatal injuries.
- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle when an automobile crossed the centerline into the Soldier's path. Upon impact, the Soldier became airborne and landed on a dirt embankment, sustaining severe injuries to his left leg and arm. Soldier was transported for medical treatment but later died as a result of his injuries.



CLASS A **SLOW DOWN!**

- A Soldier was speeding on motorcycle when he struck a rise in the road surface, became airborne and then crashed into a chain-link fence. The Soldier, who was not wearing a helmet, became enmeshed in a 20-foot section of the fence's gate as he rolled end-over-end several times. The Soldier suffered severe head injuries and died at the scene.

- A Soldier was in a right-hand curve on his motorcycle when he lost control, crossed the centerline and collided with an oncoming vehicle. The Soldier died as a result of his injuries.

- A Soldier crashed while riding his motorcycle without wearing his helmet or PPE. The Soldier was pronounced dead upon arrival at a local medical facility.

- A Soldier's motorcycle was discovered on a guardrail alongside the road. The Soldier was removed from the scene and transported for medical treatment. He died 10 days later from medical complications.

Class B

- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle in a group with other riders when he collided with another motorcycle. The Soldier suffered a spinal cord injury

and is permanently paralyzed.

Class C

- A Soldier was riding home from work when he noticed the front wheel on his motorcycle was moving left to right. Before he could slow down and pull over, the wheel locked and threw the Soldier off his motorcycle. He bounced and slid along the pavement, receiving second-degree abrasions to his right shoulder, elbow, knee and ankle, and also sprained his right knee. The Soldier lost two workdays.

- After maintenance had been performed on his motorcycle, a Soldier noticed his front brake was unusually sensitive. While approaching an intersection on a wet road, the Soldier applied his front brakes. The front wheel locked and caused the motorcycle to fall onto the Soldier's foot and break it. He rode home and went to the emergency room the next day. His foot was

operated on and given an external fixture to stabilize it. The Soldier lost three work days and was placed on 28 days' restricted duty.

Personnel Injury

Class A

- A Soldier entered the water from a paddle boat he and two other Soldiers had rented, then drifted from the boat and began struggling. Attempts to assist the Soldier failed and he drowned.

Class C

- A Soldier dove into the shallow end of a swimming pool, hitting his head and fracturing a vertebra in his neck. The Soldier's injuries left him temporarily paralyzed.

Class B

- A Soldier lost a hand when he packed black powder into a training grenade and it exploded. The Soldier was off duty at his home when the accident occurred.

- A Soldier was driving his car with two other Soldiers as passengers when the car left the road, struck a light pole and went into a concrete ditch. The Soldier riding in the backseat, unlike the driver and Soldier in the front seat, was not wearing his seatbelt and suffered life-threatening injuries.

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