

BICYCLE SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy and Marine Corps losses involving bicycling mishaps for FY 91 through 95 include 5 fatalities. Injuries commonly involve the shoulder, head, face and knee.

BACKGROUND

A review of bicycle mishaps shows a variety of factors contribute to the typical mishap. Identifying hazards such as inattention to obstacles in the bicycle path, losing control because of excessive speed, maneuvering to avoid other vehicles or pedestrians, consuming alcohol and violating a law or safety rule is one step of risk assessment and risk management process to eliminate bicycle mishaps.

EXAMPLES

The following are typical of mishap reports submitted to the naval Safety Center:

- a. A SNM was riding his bicycle and fell off when he appeared to have a seizure. He died from massive head injuries. According to the investigator, a bicycle helmet would have reduced the severity of these mishaps.
- b. A LCPL was riding his bicycle through an intersection when a motor vehicle struck him. He died from impact.
- c. While riding a bicycle, a 1st Class was struck and ran over by a motor vehicle. He died from massive internal injuries.
- d. LT was riding his bicycle on a rural road. An intoxicated motor vehicle operator struck him. LT died as a result of this collision.
 - e. A 3rd Class was riding a bicycle and was struck from behind by a motor vehicle. He hit the hood of the vehicle and rolled off to the pavement. He died.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessing the risks along with making risk decisions and implementing controls to eliminate bicycle mishaps are as follows:

- a. Wear an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or Snell Memorial Foundation approved bicycle helmet. OPNAVINST 5100.25A requires wearing an approved helmet while riding on Navy installations.
- b. Dress for the weather. In cold weather, it's better to wear several layers of clothing than one bulky item. To be more visible, wear bright or light colors, and at night, wear reflective clothing in accordance with OPNAVINST 5100.25A.
- c. Use clips or rubber bands to keep long pants out of the chain.
- d. Wear comfortable, lightweight low cut shoes with firm soles to protect your feet.
- e. Check for proper air pressure and tire tread.
- f. Adjust the seat and handlebars to fit and tighten loose parts.
- g. Clean and oil moving parts, keeping oil off rubber.
- h. Check the brakes. They should allow you to make a quick, smooth stop.
- i. Obey all traffic signals, signs and pavement markings.
- j. Ride on the right side of the road, close to the edge. If in a group, ride in single file at least one bike length apart. Infants under the age of one year should not be carried as bicycle passengers.

k. Avoid for potholes, bumps, ice and oil slicks, loose gravel or sand, and sewer grates.

l. Watch for parked cars with people in them – someone could open a door unexpectedly and constantly look for cars pulling out into traffic.

m. Do not carry passengers on a one-person bicycle. Keep packages in a luggage carrier so both hands can be on the handlebars.

n. Be alert. Give pedestrians and vehicles the right of way. Walk your bicycle across busy streets.

o. At night, ensure you have a working headlight visible for 500 feet, a red rear reflector and side reflectors.

p. Stop before entering a roadway from a sidewalk or driveway.

q. Ride only on authorized streets or highways. Select streets with low traffic usage whenever possible. Use bicycle paths where available.

SOURCES:

Bicycle Federation
1818 R St., NW
Washington, DC 20009

U.S. Cycling Association
1750 East Boulder St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909