

CAMPING SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy and Marine Corps losses involving camping mishaps for FY91 through 95 include numerous injuries. Injuries commonly involve the shoulder, head, face and knee.

BACKGROUND

A review of camping mishaps shows a variety of factors contribute to the typical mishap. Identifying such hazards as adverse weather conditions which can result in hypothermia, heat stroke, or flash floods, carbon monoxide poisoning and other hazards such as fires, poisonous snake, plants or ticks and improper shoes are some steps of risk assessment and risk management process to eliminate camping mishaps.

EXAMPLES

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

- a. MM2 was camping in woods. He started a campfire and later on that evening he went to sleep. Unfortunately for him he fell asleep too close to the fire. MM2 suffered first and second degree burns.
- b. Service member and his shipmate started a fire supplemented with some coal found inside the cabin. During the day, member complained of a headache and took some Tylenol. Upon retiring for the evening, the generator was cut-off, which also disabled the electric fan. Both members experienced dizziness, nausea and vomiting. Fortunately both members survived this near tragedy.

RECOMMENDATION

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

- a. Carry tents and sleeping bags made of water repellent and wind resistant material.
- b. Check all cooking equipment prior to leaving to ensure its operation.
- c. Obtain weather forecasts before departing. Additionally, during camping keep posted on regular weather forecasts and be prepared to leave when there is a threat of flash floods, tornados, or windstorms.
- d. When using a recreational vehicle have access to a cooler for storing perishable foods.
- e. Carry insect repellent and mosquito netting.
- f. Other necessary equipment is a flashlight, compass, matches, rope, extra dry clothing, and rain gear.
- g. Wear proper fitting clothing which is warm and worn in lightweight layers. Shoes should be ankle high with composition soles and well broken in. Also caps or hats are recommended to prevent hypothermia or heat strokes.
- h. Always clear the area of combustible material within ten feet in diameter before starting a camp fire. To start a fire use only commercially prepared lighter fluids and once started never spray on burning material. Before leaving make sure the fire is out.

- i. Stay on marked trails.
- j. When backpacking carry nutritious nonperishable foods.
- k. Be able to recognize and avoid poisonous snakes and plants, ticks, etc,. Applying clear nail polish can relieve infestations of ticks and chiggers.
- l. Know tool safety. Can opener are made for opening cans; knives are not.