

SKIING SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy and Marine Corps losses involving skiing mishaps for FY 91 through 95 include 1 fatality. Injuries commonly involve the shoulder, head, face, legs and knee.

BACKGROUND

A review of skiing mishaps shows a variety of factors contribute to the typical mishap. Identifying hazards such as inadequate skills, poor condition, bad weather conditions and poor equipment are the first step of risk assessment and risk management process to eliminate skiing mishaps.

EXAMPLES

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

- a. ACDR was on a family ski outing and impacted a tree. He suffered sever trauma to the back of his head and neck. He died.
- b. An ETSN along with two other shipmates were skiing on an intermediate slope. The weather conditions were wet and sticky buy the ski slope was still open. ETSN cam upon a ridge and became airborne. He landed on a level plane. His skies stuck in the snow and his bindings released. His head struck the hard packed snow. He sustained a fractured vertebra that left his paralyzed from the waist down and partial paralysis in his upper torso.
- c. A SN was snow skiing for the first time. He tried to ski the most difficult trail. Halfway down the slope another skier fell in front of him. The SN tried to avoid the down skier and skied off the trail. He fell on his back resulting in broken collarbone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- a. Condition yourself for skiing with preseason exercises.
- b. Take lessons to develop the ability to ski slopes of your choice.
- c. Study trail maps to select suitable runs.
- d. Becomes familiar with hill coding signs and trails markers.
- e. Obey traffic signs and regulations set out by the ski area.
- f. Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- g. Know the location and phone number of the nearest first-aid station or emergency medical service.
- h. Ski with a friend
- i. Secure long hair, loose clothing and scarves. Lift or machinery parts may catch them.
- j. Before making your first run, loosen up your muscles and check bindings on your skis for proper release.
- k. Use properly fitted, adjusted and maintained equipment.
- l. Use safety straps or brakes to avoid having runaway skis.
- m. Ski under control to avoid other skiers or objects on the hill.
- n. When skiing downhill and overtaking others, call out that you are passing to the left or right.

o. Skiers traversing a slope in opposite directions should pass to the right of each other.

p. Always stop in areas where you are visible.

q. Look for approaching downhill skiers before entering a slope from a side or intersection trail.

r. When walking or climbing in a ski area, wear skis and keep to the sides of trails or slopes.