

Fall 2024

# Combat Edge

*Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine*

## A-N-C pg 4

Aviate | Navigate | Communicate

U. S. AIR FORCE



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# Combat Edge

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COVER PHOTO BY YASUO OSAKABE

# ACCent

## A Reflection of Learning

Over the course of a day, how many decisions do you typically make? I recently read an article in the Harvard Business Review that suggested the average adult makes as many as 35,000 decisions every day. It is fair to assume that these are not “life or death” decisions, but most of them do carry some level of risk with them. Some of you may be wondering how choosing a pair of socks involves risk management. Let me explain.



Col Jesse Doyle  
Director of Safety

It is important to share some definitions relevant to the topic per Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-802, Risk Management. A hazard is a condition with the potential to cause injury, illness or death of personnel, damage to or loss of equipment or property, or mission degradation. Risk is the probability and severity of loss or adverse impact from exposure to various hazards. Risk assessment is the process of detecting hazards and their causes, and systematically assessing the associated risks. Finally, risk management is the systematic process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, making control decisions, implementing control decisions, and supervising and reviewing the activity for effectiveness.

Using the sock example, assume that in your sock drawer you have two options: threadbare socks that are soft and comfortable, or new socks that are too warm for the conditions and a bit scratchy. Additionally, you know that your boots are new and not fully broken in. Finally, your schedule for the day will drive up your step count. Stepping through the risk management process, you identify the hazard as the socks. The risks are developing a blister and ruining the threadbare socks, or having sweaty feet and being uncomfortable with the thick, itchy socks. Making and implementing control decisions involve reducing the risks by bringing an extra pair of socks to change into, applying foot powder, preemptively using a bandage to prevent a blister, etc. Last is assessing your feet throughout the day and ensuring your choice was the best option or adjusting during the day to better manage the risk and prevent injury, no matter how minor it may be.

Making the decision of which socks to wear is an example of the risk management process and why risk management is vital to decision making on a daily basis. Within ACC, every day Airmen are making decisions both big and small and risk management is how we can all achieve “People First – Mission Always.”

# A-N-C

Aviate | Navigate | Communicate

By Lt Col Jonathan P. Dixon

From the beginning of our flying careers with the Air Force, the phrase “Aviate, Navigate, Communicate” has been drilled into us. This order of operations is designed to prioritize and execute the essential tasks to accomplish the mission safely. On 25 September 2023, it helped us safely handle an emergency and protect our crew, our aircraft, and our formation.

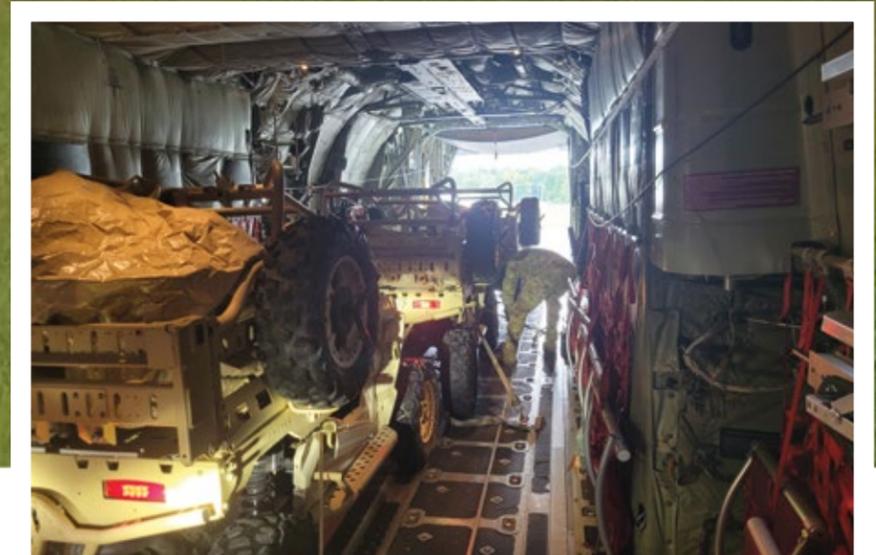
We were lead of a 3-ship of C-130Js for the 29th Weapons Squadron, launching a Weapons School student sortie at Blackstone Army Airfield in Virginia. Onboard our 3-ship were elements from the 3d Marine Raider Battalion. We would be performing an airfield seizure nearby.

The lead-up to the mission involved a formation brief, then crew briefs and rehearsals at the aircraft with the Marines and their vehicles. There was a strong wind and a ceiling just above the limits for our Visual Flight Rules formation departure. After our rehearsals and emphasis on ensuring all members of the combined Marine and Air Force team were on the same page, we hustled through preflight checks to remain on timeline.



# “Never lose sight of the constant prioritization cycle of Aviate-Navigate-Communicate”

Marine vehicles offloading C-130J at Blackstone Army Airfield  
Photo by Maj Mark Wilson



Marine vehicles on C-130J at Blackstone Army Airfield  
Photo by Maj Mark Wilson

Prior to taxiing out, our wingman advised their rudder felt sluggish. We checked ours and also felt it to be slightly abnormal. The leading edge of a front was currently passing through, and we discussed the strong tailwind and changing wind direction. After multiple cycles we determined the rudder to be working well, and confirmed with our wingmen that theirs were working, also. As an extra precaution, we re-attempted the flight control checks once we repositioned without wind directly at our tail, and all checked good.

C-130 formation takeoffs occur in 15 second intervals. When lead advances power and begins to roll, the second aircraft hacks a clock in the HUD and then

advances their power 15 seconds later. This allows us to depart relatively quickly and assemble at our standard 4,000 feet of spacing.

As our formation begins to gain airspeed on the take-off roll, the pilot flying will transition from nosewheel steering (a knob left of the pilot's seat) to rudder control. The rudder on a C-130 is massive and has a great deal of control authority even at relatively low speeds. A major part of our training involves balancing the competing forces of the propellers, the straight wings (that also receive extra lift from the propellers), and the rudder.

On this particular takeoff, as we reached the transition speed

(approximately 70 knots, within 1-2 seconds of aircraft liftoff) it immediately became apparent something was wrong. When the pilot flying released the nosewheel, the aircraft began an aggressive turn to the left and was immediately at risk of departing the runway laterally.

Aviate, Navigate, Communicate immediately went into play. Feeling the loss of control of the rudder, the pilot instantly rejected the takeoff by pulling the power levels to idle. Simultaneously the pilot applied hard differential braking to keep the aircraft on the runway and now correcting back to centerline.

Navigation in this instance wasn't as important other than

maintaining the runway confines and perceiving the distance to the end of the paved surface. Communication then became most important. With the second aircraft already starting their takeoff roll, and the third aircraft pulling into position to start theirs, we immediately radioed "lead's aborting, lead's aborting" over interplane and tower frequencies. This action and condition are briefed as a contingency and action for all formation takeoffs to ensure it is always in the back of our mind for a safe and effective formation abort. Furthermore, despite the mission profile involving encrypted communications, we always ensure such a call is

executed in the clear, in order that it can be heard by other aircraft.

The number-two aircraft saw our aircraft veer hard left. They saw a large puff of white smoke when we applied differential braking. Simultaneously, they heard the "lead's aborting" call. The visual and aural cues paired with pre-flight emphasis on this possible contingency meant that both number two and number three safely rejected their takeoffs without issue.

With the aircraft stopped, we were able to determine that a critical linkage in our

rudder assembly had sheared catastrophically. It is difficult to speculate the outcome of this event had we continued airborne. But we are thankful to have kept it on the ground. We do not know if it occurred prior to or after the flight control checks we ran, but it led to a fleet-wide inspection of the component that failed.

The key takeaway is never to lose sight of the constant prioritization cycle of Aviate, Navigate, Communicate. By quickly working through this loop, we were able to bring the incident to a safe resolution. ✈️



# Building a Safer Future: Insights from the 2024 ACC Safety Summit

By Maj Davy M. Braxton

The 2024 ACC Safety Summit, hosted by Col Joseph Augustine, Air Combat Command Director of Safety, and the ACC Safety Team, began on 11 June 2024, at HQ ACC, Joint Base Langley-Eustis. The 3-day event promised to be an engaging and informative gathering, bringing together esteemed safety professionals from across the MAJCOM, and serving as a platform for the exchange of insights, best practices, and innovative strategies aimed at enhancing safety protocols within Air Combat Command. Over 70 attendees, both in person and virtual, from four Numbered Air Forces (NAFs) and 21 Wings gathered at Creech Conference Center on Langley AFB for the momentous occasion. The event showcased briefings, guest

speakers, and top representatives from Occupational, Weapons, and Flight Safety, highlighting the professionalism and dedication of each division.

The summit kicked off with a keynote address by the ACC Deputy Commander, Lt Gen Michael Koscheski, who highlighted the importance of Agile Combat Employment (ACE) and the ability to make real-time risk assessments to enable the mission. The senior leader perspective set the tone for the event, emphasizing the need for readiness in a resource-constrained environment while reoptimizing for the Great Power Competition.

Col Augustine welcomed the diverse group of safety personnel from all corners of the globe, and expressed gratitude for the overwhelming turnout.

He outlined the itinerary for the summit and encouraged attendees to take advantage of the opportunities the meetings present. In his initial invitation to attendees, Col Augustine assured the summit would be a valuable and memorable experience for all by fostering meaningful discussions that will shape the future of Air Force Safety. Since its formation, ACC has placed a strong emphasis on safety as a means of guaranteeing mission success and safeguarding its personnel and resources. The command built upon the robust safety practices established by Tactical Air Command, which had been a fundamental part of USAF operations since its inception in 1947. The ACC Safety Summit has been a cornerstone of that legacy, and has played a key role in the successful reduction

of mishap rates across the board. The Safety Directorate's Mission statement is "Enhance combat capability by enabling Airmen to actively mitigate risk and decisively prevent mishaps." The goals set out by the Director's vision drive home the need to promote a culture of risk management, increase education and training, and enhance communication between MAJCOM, Wings, and NAFs.

On Day 1, attendees were treated to a hangar tour, showcasing an innovative fall protection concept devised to mitigate the risk of performing an essential mission while emphasizing the safety of our Airmen. A team comprised of members from Headquarters Air Force (HAF), The Air Force Safety Center, ACC, and the 1st Fighter Wing worked together to

design a series of platforms and airbags that precisely surround the F-22, allowing the freedom of movement required to perform complex maintenance tasks. With the new fall protection design, maintainers are now able to perform their required duties while avoiding risk and injuries.

Briefings and breakouts formed the core of the summit, with topics ranging from formal safety manager training to proactive safety programs. One particularly engaging briefing was led by a senior pilot and veteran safety professional, Maj Joshua "Crowdaddy" Crawford. Maj Crawford shared his experience and insight into the flight safety community while reviewing current safety trends for the A-10 Warthog and HH-60 Jolly Green II. The afternoons of the summit were dedicated to discipline



ACC Deputy Commander, Lt Gen Michael Koscheski  
Photo by MSgt Ryan J. Pottmeyer

Col Joseph Augustine, Combat Command Director of Safety hosts ACC's 2024 Safety Summit. Photo by MSgt Ryan J. Pottmeyer



breakouts. Members from Flight, Occupational, and Weapons Safety broke off into separate groups to discuss issues such as manning and operational necessities. The individual breakouts permitted attendees to focus on unique topics and deep-dive into the areas that were relevant to their particular career fields. The detailed discussions were found to be extremely beneficial and received positive feedback from attendees.

Attendees were invigorated on the third day of the summit by two guest speakers from Headquarters Air Force Safety. Mr. Christopher Davis gave a detailed brief on the newest AFFORGEN ATF deployment cycles, and how safety professionals will meet the needs of downrange commanders. Col Michael Thomas, HAF Deputy Chief of Safety, gave a passionate speech unveiling the Department of the Air Force's Safety Strategy 2024-2027. He laid out the critical ways DAF Safety enables mission success and bolstered the DAF position that the execution of ACE with Mission Ready Airmen will revolutionize how we fight. Additionally, he reiterated the sentiment that resonated throughout the summit that "Safety is an operational imperative." The deployment discussions continued with the formation of an AEF Tasking Panel consisting of experts from HAF and ACC. Recent changes to policy and guidance have created confusion and consternation throughout the safety community, and the panel hoped to clear the air on some of the issues. The panel talked through the AEF tasking process in great detail and answered questions from the audience. The panel was well received with great reviews and will be repeated in future summits.

The summit wasn't just about learning; it also was about recognition. The ACC Safety Team showed gratitude to the safety professionals from the NAF and Wings who are going above and beyond and allow the enterprise to succeed. Promotion results dropped during the event and the senior enlisted members of the summit made sure to congratulate the newest TSgt Selects within the safety community. Throughout the summit, the ACC



Safety team acknowledged all individuals and units for their dedication and hard work in ensuring that every mission is as safe as possible.

The Conference concluded with a bittersweet changing of the guard. Col Augustine thanked the attendees for coming and introduced his successor Col Jesse "Shogun" Doyle, current Chief of ACC Flight Safety. Col Doyle thanked the planning committee and attendees, then began laying down the framework to tackle some of the important issues and concerns he will address during his tenure as the Air Combat Command Director of Safety. The ACC Safety Team is grateful for the opportunity to engage with a large and responsive audience, and looks forward to hosting the next Safety Summit in 2026. 🗨️



AFFORGEN Panel. Photo by MSgt Ryan J. Pottmeyer



*“My mind raced as I realized the gravity of the situation.”*

Photo of damaged engine  
by SSgt Samuel Bornemann

# Uncovering the Truth



By SSgt Jeffrey T. Prasad

For a seasoned Aerospace Propulsion Craftsman, each day on the flightline brings its own set of new challenges and unique surprises. Whether battling an aging fleet of tired birds that tend to break more than fly, or enduring the desert heat of the Arizona summer, we flightline personnel have done and seen it all; however, I was not expecting the discovery I made one early morning that would challenge our maintenance procedures and policies.

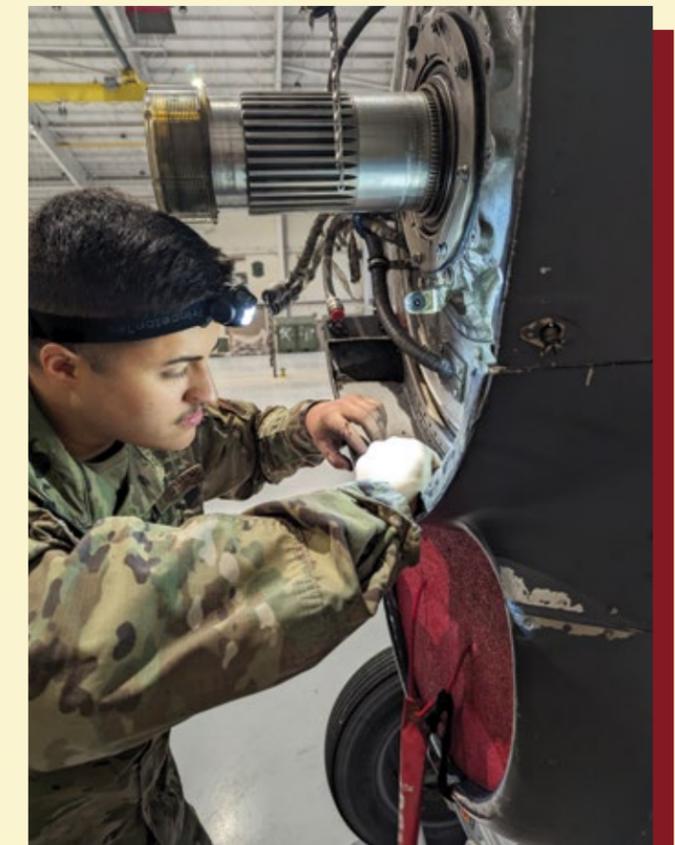
It was a cold, late night when I arrived on shift, ready to continue an engine change for one of our EC-130Hs on which we had been working over the last couple of days. The previous shift had let us know they already had accepted and helped deliver the new engine to the hangar. We were to install the engine that night on the wing. This was to be like any other engine change, and we didn't have any other reason to think otherwise. Nevertheless, I decided to take another general look at the new engine before installing it, even though it was already accepted and cleared for installation.

I briefed my team and set out with them to inspect the engine and confirm its airworthiness. As I evaluated several areas of the engine compartment and structure, I noticed something amiss. There appeared to be impact damage on the forward face of the engine air inlet scoop. The dent and distorted ridges under a thick layer of sealant were difficult to see, but undeniable. There was damage, and it appeared to be significant.

My mind raced as I realized the gravity of the situation. This wasn't just any minor flaw; it was a potential show-stopper. There was no way for that engine to be deemed safe for flight. With a growing sense of urgency, I immediately dove into evaluating the extent of the damage. I carefully

removed the exterior sealant covering the majority of damage, and realized the true nature of the situation. This engine had in fact suffered damage severe enough that it was no longer safe for flight. I halted the engine change immediately, and notified our Production Team. They swiftly responded and I explained and presented my findings to them.

What followed was a flurry of activity, as local maintenance teams sprang into action to determine



SSgt Jeffrey Prasad inspecting damaged EC-130H engine  
Photo by SSgt Samuel Bornemann

the extent of damage and possible explanations for it. We even examined the trailer that the engine was transported on, and found it to be damaged, as well. This only led to more theories and possible explanations for it all. However, after digging further into the situation, we unearthed a startling revelation: This was not an isolated incident.

Further investigation showed several other engines in our fleet had been delivered to our base from the same location. It was a sobering realization that more engines could have suffered a similar fate as the one we rejected. Our tried-and-tested maintenance procedures were suddenly called into question.

In light of this discovery, a paradigm shift was inevitable. Our team, in collaboration with several on base agencies and the Wing Safety Office, embarked on a comprehensive review of our maintenance protocols. We scrutinized every step of the process, leaving no stone unturned in our quest for improvement.

The most pivotal change came in the form of a re-evaluation and implementation of a new, more

extensive one-time inspection of all spare engines in our inventory, especially for those sent from that particular off-base site. It was a monumental undertaking, requiring coordination with several shops and meticulous attention to detail. Yet, it was a necessary step in safeguarding the integrity of our fleet.

The experience was a humbling reminder of the ever-evolving nature of our profession. In an industry where safety reigns supreme, complacency is not an option. Our mission is too important, as are the lives of the people who fly these aircraft, for us to take chances. It took a single damaged engine to prompt a reevaluation of our practices and a renewed commitment to excellence.

As I reflect on that day, I'm reminded of the invaluable lesson we learned: vigilance is the cornerstone of aviation safety. Though the road ahead may be filled with challenges, I take comfort in knowing that our collective efforts will continue to soar, ensuring our Aircrew remain safe. ✈️

SSgt Jeffrey Prasad inspecting damaged EC-130H engine  
Photo by SSgt Samuel Bornemann



Photo by A1C William Turnbull

# Safety Enterprise Announces New Mission, Vision, Goals in 2024 Strategic Plan



By Ms. Ashley N. Segura

The Air Force Safety Center released a new Strategic Plan outlining new goals and focus areas to align with Department of the Air Force priorities.

The DAF Safety Strategic Plan establishes the requirements for the enterprise to achieve its vision in support of National- and Department-level guidance. The plan will be used to identify resource requirements, prioritize activities, align manpower, and provide the insights necessary for Safety professionals to make decisions at their level as appropriate.

The new mission statement, Increase Combat Power through Risk Management, Training, and Analysis, highlights the need to exploit the latest technology and professional expertise to analyze mishaps and operational trends, building support for risk-informed decisions at all levels of leadership. While the new vision, an operational force maximizing readiness in any environment, acknowledges we are foremost an operational force responsible for defending our homeland and national interests against our adversaries.

“As Safety leaders, it’s our job to ensure the Safety enterprise is trained, agile, and ready to integrate new Air Force operational concepts

to deter and, if needed, defeat, great power competitors,” said Maj Gen Sean Choquette, DAF Chief of Safety and commander of the Air Force Safety Center. “Safety’s job is to prepare our forces with the resources and skills to make risk-informed decisions at home or in combat.”

The Strategic Plan outlines six goals Safety will prioritize going into the future:

1. Fully Integrate Risk Management into All Training and Operations—Ensure safety principles and Risk Management are infused into all facets of planning, preparation, execution, and assessment.
2. Integrate Risk Management into Agile Combat Operations—Develop and deploy the tools and training needed to help make informed risk decisions in ACE and future operating concepts.
3. Evolve Support to the Space Enterprise—Develop and implement plans, policies,



and engagements to evolve support to the growing Space Enterprise.

4. Strengthen Nuclear Surety—Continue ensuring Nuclear Safety and Surety, as well as weapons mishap prevention, explosive safety risk management, and system safety and design certification are robust, comprehensive, and responsive.
5. Optimize Analytical Ecosystem and Data Fabric—Employ emerging and innovative technology to provide predictive, and eventually prescriptive, analytical products to drive risk-informed decisions to operational commands across the DAF.
6. Evolve and Modernize the Safety Workforce—Evolve DAF Safety University, creating courses that touch on Air Force and Space Force safety, and employ modern training methods and tools.

The Strategic Plan also described Risk Management and the role it plays in the Safety enterprise.

While there are inherent risks in all we do, DAF Safety incorporates policy development, systems acquisitions and testing, operational procedures, and data analysis to manage that

risk and to support our Airmen and Guardians. Risk Management is not evaluating risk and deciding whether or not to take action. Combat requires action. Risk Management entails utilizing an assessment and decision process to determine how to best mitigate risk in execution of the mission.

As part of our commitment to follow through, the DAF Safety enterprise will be engaged and involved in both the execution and oversight of this strategy. To succeed we must execute, track, assess, adjust, and evaluate our Strategic Plan. This iterative process will drive information and analysis upwards to ensure tactical execution achieves planned strategic outcomes.

Choquette also described Safety’s importance and why these focus areas are important.

“Safety is an operational imperative,” Choquette said. “Our work directly impacts Airmen and Guardians every single day. Ultimately, our Safety mission relies upon the disciplined approach of individual Airmen and Guardians—they are the key component in our enterprise.”



## COMPOUNDED INTEREST

By TSgt Rico S. Gardner

In accomplishing today's complex mission, incorporating effective safety measures and promoting a "safety first" culture is always important. When Airmen cut corners, the results can be significant, impacting their well-being, military resources, and overall mission-effectiveness.

While supervising on the flightline, I received a call via radio from one of my Airmen, who informed me that he had backed into an F-16. The special-purpose vehicle he was driving had made contact with munitions loaded onto the aircraft, causing them to detach and fall to the ground. To make matters worse, the Members were unsure as to whether the munitions were live or inert. An evacuation of the area was ordered.

Air Force Instructions and Technical Orders (TO) require the use of a spotter when backing vehicles toward multimillion-dollar aircraft. On this occasion, both individuals involved had received the proper training, and knew about the spotter requirement. Nevertheless, they made the decision not to follow

the TO. It turned out that the munitions were inert, and there was minimal damage overall.

The incident highlights the importance of promoting a culture of zero tolerance for cutting corners. We must demonstrate to our Airmen the significance of following TOs while performing all tasks, from cleaning out the workplace microwave at the end of the day, to maintaining and flying warfighter aircraft.

Why the title "Compound Interest?" Creating a culture that prioritizes safety begins with the simple tasks. Defining and highlighting the importance of completing simple tasks effectively without cutting corners will set the stage for common practices amongst our Airmen as they increase in rank and responsibility. We can do this in hopes that these types of behaviors will become contagious throughout our units setting high standards and expectations enabling our Airmen to accomplish more as we are faced with new challenges in the future. ✪

# Do You Have Hidden Bombs?

By TSgt Sarah Gonzalez

During the annual safety inspection of a Civil Engineering Squadron, a fellow Occupational Safety Technician and I arrived at the Pavements & Roads section, commonly referred to as the Dirt Boyz. We had a long list of requirements on our minds as we entered the vast industrial area, filled with welding machines, an array of vehicles, drill presses, mezzanines, industrial shelving packed with various items, and stored hazardous materials.

In my previous work as an F-16 Crew Chief, I didn't really know much about the various symbols used when dealing with hazardous chemicals. I could decipher the flammable symbol on chemicals, and assumed the skull symbol probably alluded to death, but other symbols remained a mystery. After I went through training on the Global Harmonized System (GHS) for chemicals during my 3-level

Safety technical school, I could recognize all the symbols and explain the hazards associated with each one.

Fast forward to the present: I was standing in front of two giant lockers of flammable materials stored next to each other, right up against the Dirt Boyz's warehouse (They called it the Snow Barn). I asked the Unit Safety Representative and the Flight Safety Representative to open both lockers, as I had noticed the symbols and warning labels on the doors. As the lockers swung open, revealing the hazardous chemicals within, my suspicions were confirmed: Flammables and oxidizers were stored next to each other. "Do you realize you have hidden bombs stored away right here?" I asked.

The moment became an opportunity to educate them about the significance of distinguishing between two particular chemicals—with similar GHS symbols—that often are mistaken for each other: flammables and oxidizers. Explaining that they should never be stored together and must

be kept at least 20 feet apart if stored in the same area, I highlighted their critical differences. Flammables, identified by a flame symbol, are chemicals that can emit flammable gas or self-ignite when exposed to air. Oxidizers, identified by a flame over a circle, intensify fires, making them burn hotter and longer. While having a fire right up against their warehouse would have been bad enough, the presence of oxidizers would have increased the fire's power level to over 9000. The results would have been catastrophic.

With the new information, the Dirt Boyz were able to defuse their own hidden bombs. They learned the importance of fully understanding the hazards of the chemicals they utilize and store. ✪



# ACC RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS SAFETY AWARD



By Dr. Richard E. Cook

**A**ir Combat Command recently received a major award recognizing the accomplishments of its 2023 flight safety program. On Monday, July 14, 2024, the Major General Benjamin D. Foulois Memorial Award was presented to ACC Flight Safety by the Order of Daedalians.

The award is presented annually to the Air Force major command determined by the Air Force Chief of Staff to have achieved the best flying safety record during the award period. Maj Gen Oscar Westover, then chief of the Army Air Corps, approved establishment of the award as the original Daedalian Trophy, and made the first presentation on Sept. 21, 1938, at an informal ceremony held outside the post headquarters building at March Field, California.

The 2023 award was presented by Lieutenant General Richard "Tex" Brown (retired), Interim National Commander of the Order of Daedalians, and was accepted by Lieutenant General Michael G. Koscheski, Deputy Commander of ACC, at a ceremony held at HQ ACC, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. Also present to receive the award were Colonel Jesse S. Doyle, ACC Chief of Safety, as well as Major Davy M. Braxton and MSgt Ryan J. Pottmeyer, from ACC Flight Safety.



ORDER OF DAEDALIANS  
MAJOR GENERAL BENJAMIN D. FOULOIS  
MEMORIAL AWARD  
2023  
AIR COMBAT COMMAND

## Mishap Statistics Scoreboard

### FY24 Flight

Thru 30 Jun 2024

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
15 AF	0	✈ ✈ ✈	✈
16 AF	0	0	0
USAFWC	0	0	✈
ANG	0	0	✈
AFRC	0	0	0
CONTRACT	0	0	0
COCOM	0	0	0

### FY24 Occupational

Thru 30 Jun 2024

	Class A Fatal	Class A Non-Fatal	Class B
AFCENT	0	1	0
USAFWC	1	0	1
12 AF	0	0	0
15 AF	1,1	1	1,1
16 AF	2	0	1

### FY24 Weapons

Thru 30 Jun 2024

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
ACC	0	0	5	4	6

#### Legend

Class A - Fatality; permanent total disability; property damage \$2.5 million or more  
Class B - Permanent partial disability; property damage between \$600,000 and \$2.5 million  
Class C - Lost workday; property damage between \$60,000 and \$600,000  
(Class description effective Oct. 1, 2019)

(RED) = On-duty (BLACK) = Off-duty

#### Symbols for Mishap Aircraft



### Flight Notes

ACC did not have a Class A mishap during the third quarter, but we have had a total of six Class A mishaps for this fiscal year. Every mishap matters, regardless of how minor the impact seems. Preventable mishaps are even worse, and therefore it is vital to make every rep count. Adherence to TOs and disciplined execution are critical, but it is also important that every Airman executes risk management to preserve our vital combat assets. Commanders at all levels must champion safety initiatives, fostering a culture of accountability and vigilance. The demands on our Airmen are high, but they are empowered to creatively manage near-term risks and communicate upward when needed.

### Occupational Notes

During the third quarter of FY24, ACC sustained two Class A off-duty mishaps and one on-duty and one off-duty Class B mishap. Both Class A mishaps resulted in fatalities when one 4-wheel vehicle was struck by another. The on-duty Class B property damage mishap involved ingestion of a foreign object into an aircraft engine during an engine run. The final Class B occurred off-duty, when a motorcyclist lost control, was ejected from the motorcycle, and struck a fixed object. As we move forward into the fall months, everyone must take it upon themselves to stay alert to their surroundings, and to use good judgment and sound risk management when making decisions. Remember: You are the key to your own safety, as well as the safety of your family, friends, and coworkers.

### Weapons Notes

In the third quarter of FY24, ACC experienced a total of six incidents, including three Class C's, one Class D and two Class E mishaps. Three incidents resulted in personal injuries from working with explosives or from negligent handling. This is a recurring theme in weapons and continues to be the greatest danger to our Airmen. The other mishaps occurred during handling, when an APKWS rocket struck an AGM-65, shattering the radome; and when LUU-2B/B flares inadvertently armed, resulting in EOD having to dispose of the assets. Although these mishaps may seem minor in the broader context, it is imperative that we remain vigilant in addressing even the smallest issues to avert more significant accidents. Let's prioritize attention to detail, and ensure that tasks are completed correctly. Your dedication to the ACC Weapons Safety community is greatly appreciated.

# 2nd Quarter FY24 Awards



## Aircrew Safety Award

Capt Stuart B. Leonard & SrA Jonathan R. Meredith  
867 ATKS, 432 WG  
Creech AFB, NV



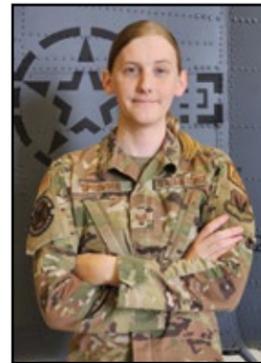
## Aviation Maintenance Safety

TSgt Robert E. Arantz & TSgt Da Wei Yang  
355 MXG, 355 WG  
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



## Explosives Safety

SSgt Cody T. Lewis  
332 EMXS, 332 AEW  
APO AE



## Flight Line Safety

SSgt Stella D. Springer  
41 RGS, 23 WG  
Moody AFB, GA



## Safety Career Professional

MSgt Omar A. Salih  
820 RHS/SEG  
Nellis AFB, NV



## Pilot Safety

Lt Col Timothy M. Mitchell  
357 FS, 355 WG  
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



## Weapons Safety Professional

TSgt Richard D. Olney  
325 FW/SEW  
Tyndall AFB, FL



## Unit Safety Representative

SSgt Job A. Hernandez, Jr.  
820 RHS  
Nellis AFB, NV



## Unit Safety

Weapons Standardization  
57 MXG, 57 WG  
Nellis AFB, NV

*Congratulations*



**OVER** the  
**Edge**  
MAGAZINE



**Keeping Safety**  
**in Sight**



PAGE 8

# Being Safe this Thanksgiving

## Holiday Safety Tips

### Travel

**Flying:** Pack light, most airlines charge extra for checked bags, use a carry-on to avoid the cost and the risk of bags getting lost

Book flights early to avoid higher costs or sold out flights

Arrive early to be sure you won't miss your flight, chances of getting another flight is unlikely

**Driving:** Leave early in the morning to avoid traffic

If traveling through a big city, use a traffic app to check traffic conditions



Pack extra snacks and water for the trip to keep from frequent stops

Get vehicle maintenance done before you leave check tire pressure, fluids and fill your tank before leaving

### Cooking

Wash your hands and surfaces often with warm soapy water

Separate foods, never cross-contaminate

Always cook foods to the correct temperature, check them with a food thermometer



Keep raw turkey separated from all other foods

Fry a thawed turkey outside only, and away from your home and do not overfill or over-heat the oil in the turkey fryer.

Never leave cooking food unattended on the stove.

Refrigerate promptly if not eating right away

### Fire

Keep all flammable items away from the stove and oven.



Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, teach your family how to use it

Never wear loose fitting clothing when cooking, open sleeves could ignite and catch fire from a flame or hot burner

Have a "kids-free" zone of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot foods and drinks are prepared or carried

Have smoke alarms on every level of your home; test them monthly and replace batteries twice a year and replace alarms that are 10+ years old

Place burning candles away from flammable items, and blow them out before leaving the room

# SCHOOL BUS SAFETY



## STOP FOR SCHOOL BUSES

Many students rely on school buses to get them to and from school safely.

Did You Know: School buses are the most regulated vehicles on the road; they're designed to be safer than passenger vehicles in preventing crashes and injuries; and in every state, stop-arm laws exist to protect children from other motorists.

If you are driving, remember these simple rules:

- Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. You should slow down and prepare to stop your vehicle.
- Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. You must stop your car and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving, before you can start driving again.
- Even when lights aren't flashing, watch for children, particularly in the morning or mid-afternoon, around school arrival and dismissal times. Be alert as you back out of a driveway, or drive through a neighborhood, school zone or bus stop.

Parents - talk bus safety with your children:

- Your child should arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.

Teach them to play it **SAFE:**

- **S**tay at least ten feet — five giant steps — away from the curb.
- **A**lways wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver signals for you to board.
- **F**ace forward after finding a seat on the bus.
- **E**xit the bus after it stops and look left-right-left for cars before crossing a street.



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Photo by L.A. Shively

<https://www.safety.af.mil/Divisions/Occupational-Safety-Division/Fall-Safety/Thanksgiving-Safety/>



OVER the  
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MAGAZINE

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# Better Late than Never

By TSgt Kevin L. Tuskey

**S**rA Smith had been in the unit for 10 months. She had settled in quickly, and immediately had excelled in her duties. She was performing so well she was placed in a more challenging position, where she continued to impress ... with one exception: She had shown up late for work a couple times in a month. Her new position was in the command section, and her tardiness had been noticed by the commander.

Her leader set up a meeting to discuss the expectations and how she had failed to meet them. She was given a verbal warning that if she was late again, she would face disciplinary action. SrA Smith acknowledged her tardiness, and promised that she would not be late again. Another month passed without issue, and no further discussions took place.

One dark, gloomy, unusually rainy morning, things took a turn. The Chief came into the office, asking where SrA Smith was. Her supervisor phoned to ask why she wasn't at her desk yet. A man answered the phone. He sounded panicked and out of breath. "It's so bad—there's been an accident—it's so bad" were the only words he spoke. Then, the pictures start to come through.

*"It's so bad—there's been an  
accident—it's so bad"*

**“Attempting to arrive two minutes less late for work doubles one’s chances of being involved in a fatal vehicle accident.”**



All-terrain fire truck flipped on its side at the site of the accident.

SrA Smith’s morning had begun normally. She got ready for work, and even managed to leave a little early to allow for the weather. Halfway to the base, she realized her Common Access Card wasn’t in her card holder. She turned around and headed back home to retrieve it. As she headed out to work for the second time, she realized she was going to be cutting it close. Worried about being late, and not wanting to call and get in trouble, she sped up and raced toward the base. She figured if the gate wasn’t too busy, she may be able to slip in right on time.

Her plan failed as she rounded the big curve just before the overpass. SrA Smith entered the curve too fast. This was especially dangerous because of the slick, muddy conditions. Her car lost traction and began to skid. She over-corrected, and slammed into the guardrail on the right side of the overpass. Her vehicle went into a spin and, rolling backwards,

crossed the centerline into oncoming traffic. An all-terrain fire truck traveling in the opposing lane was unable to stop or avoid her vehicle. The large tires of the truck crushed the rear passenger side of the car, tearing through the length of the car before striking the frame behind the passenger side dashboard. The fire truck flipped onto its side and slid to a stop on the overpass.

SrA Smith was fortunate, and walked away from the

crash. She went through days of medical screening and observation, weeks of having to catch rides everywhere, and months of dealing with her insurance company—all for the sake of arriving at work one minute sooner.

Most of us have been in SrA Smith’s position at one time or another. We’ve taken the same risks at least once. Was the benefit worth the risk, in light of the fact that speeding almost never results in a

significant savings in travel time? For example, someone with a 20-mile commute travelling at 65 mph would take approximately 18 and a half minutes to get to work. Increasing the speed to 75 mph would reduce the time to 16 minutes. That resultant time savings of two and a half minutes shrinks significantly when the commute includes stop signs and traffic lights.

What is the risk? Attempting to arrive two minutes *less late*



SrA Smith's car after the accident

for work doubles one’s chances of being involved in a fatal vehicle accident. According to Risk Improvement Engineer Kevin Clayton, the risk doubles with every 10-mph increase in speed.

Is it worth the risk? Of course it isn’t, and we all know it. We know the danger that

comes with risky behavior. The problem arises when we don’t believe it will happen to us. We believe we’re the exception, that we’re in control, or that we’re lucky. Don’t wait for a tragedy to prove you wrong. Plan your commute, allow for occasional problems, and drive safely. 🚗

# Keeping Safety in Sight

By TSgt Michael J. Dillard

In the sport of hunting, one can easily be lured into the wild without giving due consideration to the importance of preparedness and safety measures. It is during these moments that Mother Nature often teaches us the harshest lessons, leaving an indelible mark on our memory and, in some cases, our faces. Today, we recount the tale of a novice hunter (yours truly) who learned the hard way about the crucial role of experience, training, and proper equipment in ensuring a safe hunting expedition.

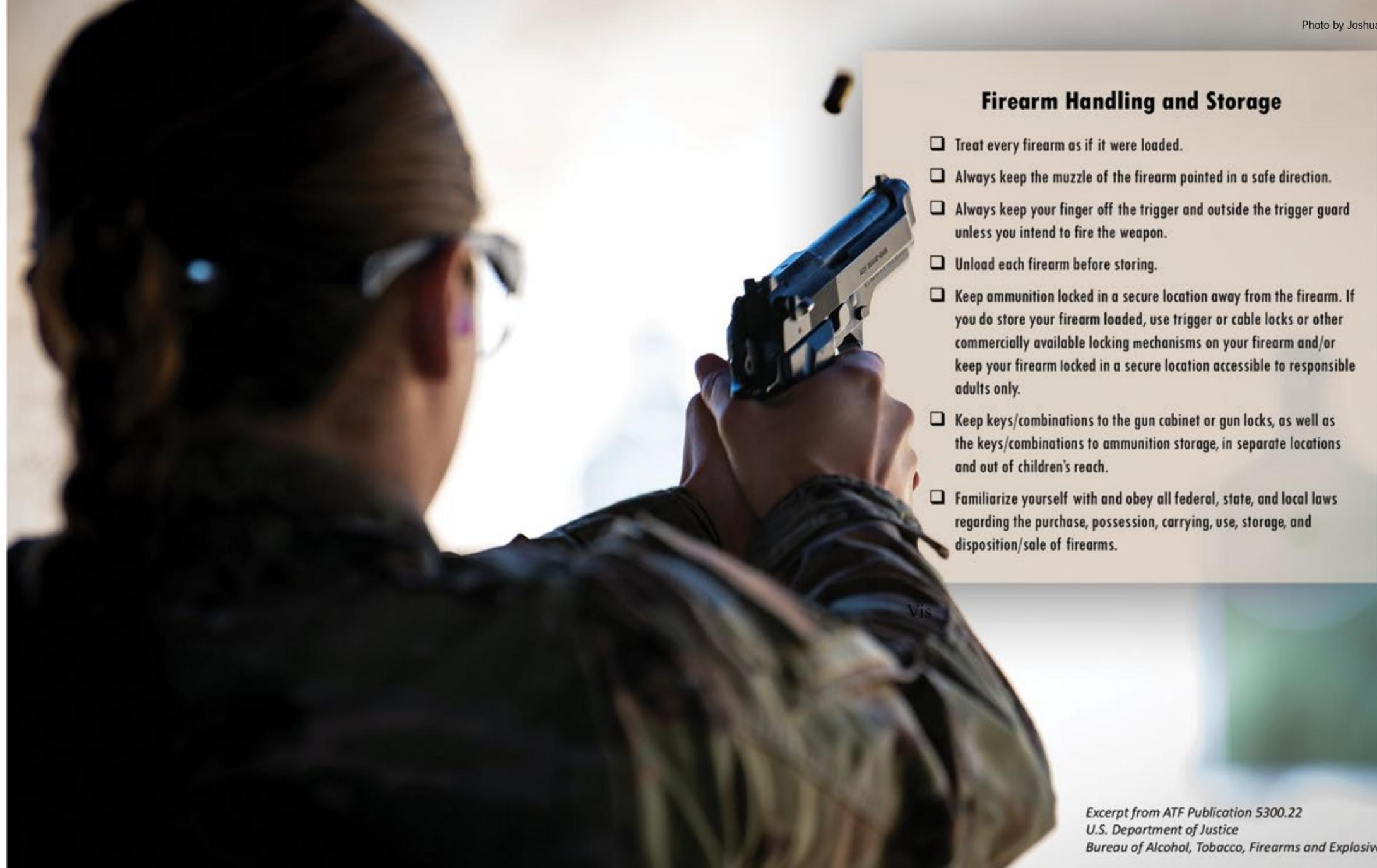


**Lesson Learned: The Scope That Scoped Back (i.e., Scope Bite)**

Picture this: an eager, wide-eyed hunter, motivated by romanticized notions of adventure and triumph, stepping into the wilderness for the first time. Unbeknownst to our protagonist, the stage was set for an unfortunate and preventable accident that would leave them nursing a ghastly facial wound.

In the world of hunting, preparation is paramount. It is not merely a case of loading a rifle, setting one's sights, and hoping for the best. Sadly, our intrepid hunter failed to acknowledge this fundamental principle, and paid the price.

As our hunter lined up the shot, the powerful recoil from their rifle caused the scope to recoil as well, slamming into his unsuspecting face. The result? A painful and gory reminder that ignorance can be both unforgiving and physically scarring. The hunter would later recount the incident with an uneasy smirk, but they were left with a memento in the form of eight stitches to seal a gaping wound. The timing was perfect: It was the first day of Christmas vacation, and retelling the story to friends and family was second in humiliation only to the numerous family photos that documented the injury.



**Firearm Handling and Storage**

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Always keep the muzzle of the firearm pointed in a safe direction.
- Always keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard unless you intend to fire the weapon.
- Unload each firearm before storing.
- Keep ammunition locked in a secure location away from the firearm. If you do store your firearm loaded, use trigger or cable locks or other commercially available locking mechanisms on your firearm and/or keep your firearm locked in a secure location accessible to responsible adults only.
- Keep keys/combinations to the gun cabinet or gun locks, as well as the keys/combinations to ammunition storage, in separate locations and out of children's reach.
- Familiarize yourself with and obey all federal, state, and local laws regarding the purchase, possession, carrying, use, storage, and disposition/sale of firearms.

*Excerpt from ATF Publication 5300.22  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives*



Illustration composited with photos by Matthew Clouse and gan chaonan/Shutterstock.com

**The Aftermath: Reflections on the Importance of Preparedness**

Adversity has a way of awakening the dormant wisdom within us all. It was within the throes of agony and regret that our hapless hunter began to appreciate the critical lessons they had overlooked: experience, training, and proper equipment.

Firstly, experience is a master teacher in the realm of hunting. Novice hunters should consider embarking on their hunting journeys under the guidance of seasoned mentors. By absorbing their knowledge, learning hunting techniques, and understanding the intricacies of firearms, novice hunters can reduce the risk of accidents and cultivate a deep respect for the art of hunting.

Secondly, training is the armor that shields hunters from unnecessary harm. Engaging in comprehensive safety courses and familiarizing oneself with the mechanics of firearms and scopes can help prevent incidents such as the one our hunter encountered. Safety always must be the bedrock upon which hunting adventures are built.

Lastly, proper equipment can mean the difference between success and calamity. In this case, a recoil-absorbing scope mount or proper eye protection could have prevented the rifle's scope from exacting its painful toll on our hunter's face. Investing in quality gear tailored to individual needs should be non-negotiable, as well as adhering to maintenance protocols.

**Conclusion: The Scars That Teach Us**

Our misfortunate hunter's tale serves as a vivid reminder that a haphazard approach to hunting can result in severe consequences. The pursuit of wild game should never be taken lightly, nor should it be rushed. Instead, it demands careful preparation, respect for nature, and an unwavering commitment to safety.

To all hunters, novices and veterans alike, let this cautionary tale resonate deeply. Learn from the scars etched upon the faces of those who have paid a painful price for their ignorance. Remember, it is only through preparedness, training, and the right equipment that we can hope to avoid becoming cautionary tales ourselves. 🦋

# Before a **DISASTER** or **EMERGENCY**



September is Emergency Preparedness Month. Autumn weather is often unpredictable, and often violent. Don't wait for disaster to strike—follow these tips to prepare before it happens.

## Prepare an Emergency Food Supply

A disaster can disrupt the food supply, so plan to have at least a 3-day supply of food on hand.

Keep foods that:

- Have a long storage life.
- Require little or no cooking, water, or refrigeration, in case utilities are disrupted.
- Meet the needs of infants or other family members who are on special diets.
- Meet pets' needs.
- Are not very salty or spicy, as these foods increase the need for drinking water, which may be in short supply.

For a list of **suggested emergency food supplies** visit <https://www.ready.gov/food>.

## How To Store an Emergency Food Supply

- When storing food, it is not necessary to buy dehydrated or other types of emergency food.
- Check the expiration dates on canned foods and dry mixes. Home-canned food usually needs to be thrown out after a year.
- Use and replace food before its expiration date.
- Certain storage conditions can enhance the shelf life of canned or dried foods. The ideal location is a cool, dry, dark place. The best temperature is 40° to 70°F.
- Store foods away from ranges or refrigerator exhausts. Heat causes many foods to spoil more quickly.
- Store food away from petroleum products, such as gasoline, oil, paints, and solvents. Some food products absorb their smell.
- Protect food from rodents and insects. Items stored in boxes or in paper cartons will keep longer if they are heavily wrapped or stored in waterproof, airtight containers.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of floodwaters.

## Prepare an Emergency Water Supply

- Store at least 1 gallon of water per day for each person and each pet. Consider storing more water than this for hot climates, for pregnant women, and for people who are sick.
- Store at least a 3-day supply of water for each person and each pet.
- Make sure to store your emergency water supply where it will be as safe as possible from flooding.
- If your bottled water has an odor, do not drink or use it. Instead, dispose of it, or if applicable, call your bottled water provider to get a replacement.
- Observe the expiration date for store-bought water; replace other stored water every 6 months.
- Store a bottle of unscented liquid household chlorine bleach to disinfect your water and to use for general cleaning and sanitizing. Try

to store bleach in an area where the average temperature stays around 70°F (21°C). Because the amount of active chlorine in bleach decreases over time, consider replacing the bottle each year.

## Preparing for a Power Outage

- Make sure you have **appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer**.
  - Check to ensure that the freezer temperature is at or below **0° F**, and the refrigerator is at or below **40° F**.
  - In case of a **power outage**, the appliance thermometers will indicate the temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer to help you determine if the food is safe.
- Purchase or make **ice cubes in advance**, and **freeze gel packs** and **containers of water** to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers in case the power goes out. Store all of these in the freezer for later use in the refrigerator or in coolers. The melting ice in the containers of water will also supply safe drinking water.
- **Freeze refrigerated items** such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately. This helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- **Group food together** in the freezer. This helps the food stay cold longer.
- **Have coolers on hand** to keep refrigerated food cold if the power might be out for more than 4 hours.
- Check out local sources to know where **dry ice and block ice** can be purchased, in case it should be needed.

During an emergency, if you use food or beverage containers to hold non-food substances like gasoline, dispose of them after use and do not recycle them. ❗

Source: [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

# What's Your Story?

With age comes wisdom. Share yours with us.

You've spent years training to be a member of the world's greatest Air Force. Not only do you have skills, but you also have experience—and the wisdom that comes with it.

There have been countless times when you were confronted by challenges you met, obstacles you overcame. Each of them made you grow as an Airman.

Share a tale from your experience. Tell us about the time when \_\_\_\_\_. Write a "There I was ..." account of a mishap. Help other Airmen learn and grow. Give us the benefit of your wisdom.

Throughout the long history of our safety magazine, from TAC Attack (1961) to The Combat Edge (1992), the message of safety has remained the same. Help keep it current by telling it in your own, unique way. Write your safety story and send it to us at [thecombatedge@us.af.mil](mailto:thecombatedge@us.af.mil).

You have something to say, and we're listening.

# Drunk Driving The Hard Facts



Photo by A1C Kyle Johnson

Every day, about 37 people in the United States die in drunk-driving crashes — that's one person every 39 minutes. In 2022, 13,524 people died in alcohol-impaired driving traffic accidents. All these deaths were preventable.

### How alcohol affects driving ability

Alcohol is a substance that reduces the function of the brain, impairing thinking, reasoning, and muscle coordination. All these abilities are essential to operating a vehicle safely.

Even a small amount of alcohol can affect driving ability. In 2022, there were 2,337 people killed in alcohol-related crashes where a driver had a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .01 to .07 g/dL.

### Consequences

Driving a vehicle while impaired is a dangerous crime. Tough enforcement of drunk-driving laws has been a major factor in reducing drunk-driving deaths since the 1980s. Charges range from misdemeanors to felony offenses, and penalties for impaired driving can include driver's license revocation, fines, and jail time. It's also extremely expensive. A first-time offense can cost the driver upwards of \$10,000 in fines and legal fees.

Many states require offenders to install ignition interlock devices at the driver's own expense. An ignition interlock device is a breath test device

connected to a vehicle's ignition. The vehicle cannot be operated unless the driver blows into the interlock and has a BAC below a pre-set low limit, usually .02 g/dL. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration strongly supports the expansion of ignition interlocks as a proven technology that keeps drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel.

### BEING A RESPONSIBLE DRIVER IS SIMPLE: IF YOU ARE DRINKING, DO NOT DRIVE.

1. Plan your safe ride home before you start the party, choose a non-drinking friend as a designated driver.
2. If someone you know has been drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. Take their keys and help them arrange a sober ride home.
3. If you drink, do not drive for any reason. Call a taxi, a ride-hailing service, or a sober friend.
4. If you're hosting a party where alcohol will be served, make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.
5. Always wear your seat belt — it's your best defense against impaired drivers.
6. If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact local law enforcement. Your actions could help save someone's life.



# HUNTER SAFETY

By Mr. James K. McNeil

**H**unting has been a big part of my life since I started at the very young age of seven. It was my grandfather who single-handedly contributed to my catching the hunting bug. Once I reached my teenage years, I began to hone my skills.

One day, I got out of school early and went hunting. I was walking through the woods and came upon fresh scat in the path. Being inexperienced, I had to stop and try to examine the scat in order to identify the species of animal that had left it. I got closer, bent over to examine the scat, and stepped on a stick. The stick broke and flicked the scat at me. It got stuck to the right corner of my mouth and smelled horrible. I stood there, bent over, and talking to myself out the left corner of my mouth, saying “Oh, crap.” I grabbed the nearest branch in order to remove it. That was the end of my animal feces identification days. Those are the kinds of experiences you have when you are young and dumb.

As I reached my twenties, my dumbness continued. I climbed trees, used rickety wooden stands, and my favorite: the 30 ft up-a-tree-with-a-lock-on tree stand and no fall protection. I would hunt all day, then climb up

that tree and get in that lock-on to wait for a deer to come by in the evenings. One day, after getting into the stand to wait for a deer, an hour or so had passed. The sun started going down, followed by my eyelids. The next moment, I dozed off and had a panicked wake-up (hypnic jerk), complete with the feeling of falling to the ground. That’s one scare that got me to stop using lock-on stands for many years, until I started using a fall protection harness.

When I was growing up, there was no talk about hunting safety, except what I learned from my grandfather. Some of the things he taught me were never to point a loaded/unloaded gun in the wrong direction, to unload your gun before you put it in the truck, and never to shoot something you cannot identify. By the early 90s, hunter safety products started popping up everywhere. We had a great deal of technology at our disposal. We had YouTube to teach us—hunting safety, gun safety, firearm maintenance and cleaning, weapons training—it’s all a click away. You could also purchase fall protection from the ground to 30 ft up a tree.

Why, then, do we still have injuries? It’s simple: People fail to use risk management in

everything they do. Isn’t that what we teach us? When I climbed up that 30-ft tree, I knew it was dangerous, and I knew that if I dozed off up there with no protection, I could fall out of the tree and hurt or kill myself. I did the assessment 20 years ago before the Air Force ever started talking about risk management. I knew the risk, and accepted it in order to get the edge on my prey. Was the prey I was hunting worth my life? No.

I will summarize my life experiences in the following two main points:

- Uneducated on the dangers—I screwed up because I didn’t know the hazards that existed for the high-risk activity of hunting.
- Educated on the dangers—I screwed up because I knew the hazard existed and took a chance, and the Risk vs Reward did not work out in my favor.

What we have is a “thinking” problem. We think we can beat the odds. The truth is that the more chances we take, the more likely it is the odds eventually will catch up, and usually not to our benefit.

This thought process applies to every aspect of our daily life, not just hunting. It applies to my drive to the hunting area, how I handle my



gun, whether I point it in the right direction, and whether the safety is on or off. When I use a stand, I must consider these: Is it safe, is it connected to a dead tree, and do I need a harness? If I kill something, how am I going to get it out of the woods without getting a hernia? Is it going to be hot today, and am I hydrated enough? Is my clothing going to be enough for the weather conditions? Can I start a fire if I become lost in the woods? Do I have a compass back-up, not just my phone, which doesn’t work very well deep in the woods? Am I hunting with a buddy? If not, does my buddy know exactly where I am? Do I use a find-me app with my family and friends?

You have to have a plan and a backup plan. If you don’t, you could end up in a potentially bad situation. My goal in sharing this article was to make you think! I wish you well and a safe hunting season. 🦋