



The Safety Beacon is for informational purposes. Simply reading the Beacon does not satisfy your monthly safety education requirements but unit safety officers are encouraged to use the articles in the Beacon as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions.

August 2016

What's New In August?

George Vogt, CAP/SE

This issue is a bit shorter than most. Col Castle and I were quite busy preparing for, and attending, the 2016 National Conference in Nashville TN. As always it was great to see old friends and meet some new ones, and talk about the Safety Program.

One of the best parts of the Conference is the opportunity to speak to different audiences and spread the word about where we're going with our new CAP Safety Program, along with a frank discussion about the challenges we face along the way. I spoke to the Board of Governors, the Command Council, and multiple Learning Labs, along with attending a meeting of the CSAG.

But, we don't just teach at the Conference. We also learn. We learn what your concerns are, what help you need, and how we can do better in our safety education and training. I want to thank you for being involved and I ask you to continue to tell us when you see things that could be improved ... we won't know what you're thinking unless you let us know.

- We have all heard discussions about the definition of a "safety culture" but we rarely hear about how to change a safety culture. Read about what makes up a good safety culture and some of the "science" behind our new Safety Management System.
- Check out a few Risk Management "shortcuts" in the article on Everyday Risk Management. I'd like to have EVERY unit try these out in their monthly safety meeting, coming up with examples of how to apply the shortcuts. Let us hear your stories about how they worked!
- There's a great new smart phone App that helps you assess the current heat index and give you some tips on how to prevent, and treat, heat-related problems. Check it out!

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CAP Safety Culture

A Journey

George Vogt, CAP/SE

At each National Safety Officer College I teach a course on Safety Culture. Last week I touched on our CAP Safety Culture when I spoke to the Board of Governors, and I talked about it in a learning lab. In the past you've probably heard lectures about safety culture, but very few of them talk about how an organization can actually change their safety culture for the better. That's where I like to put my focus. If we take the time to discuss what it takes to create a strong positive safety culture in an organization, you will have a better feel for what is guiding our work as we put our Safety Management System in place and try to improve our CAP Safety Culture.

As I've mentioned numerous times, my approach to Safety is from the viewpoint of a psychologist; a person interested in why people behave the way they do, and what we can do to help our members learn how to personally reduce risk in their missions and their daily lives. I firmly believe that "safety" is not about telling people what they shouldn't do; it means teaching them how to affirmatively and positively do things in a safe way. We have to design risk management into everything we do.

One of the most renowned safety experts of modern times is Dr. James Reason, Psychology Professor Emeritus at University of Manchester in England. He is a widely acclaimed teacher, author, lecturer and research scientist. I'm going to relate some thoughts from his well-known book, *Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents*. In this book he discusses the components required to have a positive healthy safety culture in an organization. His concepts apply to what we're trying to accomplish in the Civil Air Patrol.

The first step to a healthy safety culture, committed to reducing risk, is "Awareness." When Dr. Reason discusses this he sums up safety by saying, "In short, it means not forgetting to be afraid." When we embrace the use of risk management in our safety program, we are admitting that there are hazards out there that bring risk. The first step in minimizing risk is the awareness that hazards and risks abound. They must be managed.

Next, Dr. Reason emphasizes the need to have an *Informed Culture*. The way to sustain the "awareness" and the wariness of the hazards unique to our missions and activities is to collect and analyze data about mishaps and occurrences. Our mishap management system in SIRS is a good start, but it simply doesn't catalog or analyze the information we need to fully assess the vulnerabilities we may have. We are working on that with a full overhaul of SIRS in the coming months.

How do we get that *Informed Culture*? We have to make sure we have a *Reporting Culture*. Members of our organization need to actually WANT to report mishaps, near-misses and unplanned events so they are participating in the system to improve the way we do business. Our members need to know and trust that they won't be punished just for reporting (that's the reason we don't give awards for "zero mishaps"). That being said, we can't have a blameless culture either. People need to know they will be treated fairly when they step forward to take accountability for their actions.

Fairness and accountability result in a *Just Culture*. If a person makes an honest mistake, they need to know that they will get the training they need to get back on the step. If the mistake came from confusing guidance, we can help improve the guidance to make it more clear. Everyone needs to know that members will be held accountable for their actions and each mishap will be reviewed and dealt with fairly and consistently across the organization. That's all one could ask for.

When our processes are put in place, and all our members know how and when to use Risk Management properly, we have graduated to a *Flexible Culture*. Safety programs built only on requirements, compliance, and inspections seem to come from on high and always require a lot of supervision. A truly flexible culture ensures that the vertical structure gives way to a lateral on-the-spot culture. This is SO important for CAP, where our members are routinely called on to act on their own or in small groups in remote situations ... the goal is to have everyone applying the same standards of risk management.

If all these "subcultures" are working together, we end up with a *Learning Culture*. As an organization we need to be willing to look at the information we've collected, examine our weaknesses, assess our strengths, and make changes when the need for change is indicated. The attitude of wanting to do this must reside in every one of us. The methods for doing this will be built into our Safety Management System approach to Safety.

In the science of safety, there is always debate on whether a strong safety culture is something "we have" or something "we are." As Dr. Reason points out, it is hard to change who we are, so engineering a strong safety culture involves changing what we have ... putting the pieces in place. Once the pieces are in place, and everyone knows and understands their role in making them work, then our safety culture can evolve from "something we have" to "something we are." The first step is to put the system in place, and we are trying to do that with our Safety Management System. The next step is up to leadership and members at every level. At that point, Dr. Reason asserts, the "using and doing ... lead to thinking and believing."

Just putting the pieces together is not the finish line. Safety and risk management is a constant process, and that also holds true for a strong positive Safety Culture. As Dr. Reason sums it up ...

"Finally, it is worth pointing out that if you are convinced that your organization has a good safety culture, you are most certainly mistaken. Like a state of grace, a safety culture is something that is striven for but rarely attained. As in religion, the process is more important than the product. The virtue -- and the reward -- lies in the struggle rather than the outcome."

Join me in the struggle as we work to put the pieces together and then strive for the safety culture we want. I will work hard to let you know how each piece fits as we go forward.

"...if you are convinced that your organization has a good safety culture, you are most certainly mistaken."

Everyday Risk Management

Shortcuts You Can Use

George Vogt, CAP/SE

Whenever I get a chance, I talk about “Everyday Risk Management.” I hope to share tools on how we can integrate risk management into our daily lives to help us keep ourselves safe.

Looking at some of these techniques, I realized that each of them is either a shortcut for the risk management process, or a trigger to make sure you’re aware of the need to practice sound risk management. Let’s face it, some people can make risk management sound very confusing and cumbersome, with lots of charts, worksheets, and reports. I want to make risk management easy for every member.

The best shortcut I’ve come up with for the risk management process is one I started using when I was a Squadron Commander at Randolph AFB, TX, quite a few years ago. I wanted an easy way to explain risk management to my young Airmen so they could carry it with them. I told them to pause before they started any task, and ask themselves two simple questions about what they’re going to do:

- 1) What’s the worst thing that can happen?
- 2) What am I doing to prevent it from happening?

In those two steps they actually identify hazards, assess risks, devise risk mitigations, and determine how to perform the task safely. If they weren’t able to reduce the risk down to an acceptable level, they asked themselves a third question: 3) Is it really worth doing?

There’s another shortcut you’ve heard before. Once the planning steps are done, and you’re ready to get started, don’t just start. Begin your task with the idea that you are going to do it “...without getting hurt.” Don’t just cross the street. Cross the street “...without getting hurt.” Don’t just run the fastest mile you can. Run your fastest mile “...without getting hurt.” That will ensure you stay aware of your surroundings and the hazards around you.

There is another very simple way of keeping complacency from taking your attention away from the task at hand. Remind yourself that “You are Responsible for You.” YOU control your own actions. YOU keep yourself safe.

At the National Conference last week, I had just finished addressing the Command Council when a good-natured CAP Lieutenant Colonel approached me. He said he understood the concept of Everyday Risk Management but wondered if risk management really worked for everything. “Show me,” he challenged. I thought for a second then looked at the cup of coffee in my hand. I said, “Hot coffee is a hazard. There is a risk of spilling it on myself. To mitigate the risk I’ll lean forward slightly and drink slowly.” I took a sip from the cup. “We’re not through!” I said. “Let’s assess how well the mitigations worked. I didn’t spill, so I guess the plan worked, and the Risk Management process is complete.”

I enjoyed talking to that gentleman, and I enjoy every chance I get to teach risk management to you. Spend some time at your next meeting talking about how you can use these shortcuts.

***“You Are Responsible
For You”***

Heat Safety Tool!

A GREAT FREE APP!!!!

WONDER WHAT THE CURRENT HEAT INDEX IS?
NEED SOME REMINDERS ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE THE HEAT?

OSHA and the Department of Labor have released a great App to help you out. Based on your temperature and humidity, this app will tell you if your current heat index is at the Lower, Moderate, High, or Very High risk level. Don't know your temperature or humidity? You can enter your zip code, or allow your smart phone to use your current location, and the app will find it for you.

Not only does the app tell you your heat index and risk level, but it gives great advice on preventing heat stress and what actions to take at each risk level. There is also a lot of information on training, response, signs and symptoms, first aid, and links to more information ... too much to mention here!

Go to your app store and search for "OSHA Heat Safety Tool." It is available for iPhone and Android users. For more information on the app, go to the OSHA website: [OSHA WATER REST SHADE](#)

We Need Your Help!

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We have a lot of work ahead in Safety, and we can use some help. We need experts but we also need willing people with good ideas and a willingness to dive in and be part of a team.

At the National Conference we met some very interesting people with some incredible talents in the area of safety and risk management. We'd like to meet more of you and offer you a chance to be involved.

If you work with Safety Management Systems, risk management, mitigations, or process assessments in your daily lives, please consider dropping us a line. No guarantees, but we just may put your expertise to work to ensure our new Safety Management System covers all the bases.

Drop us a line at Safety@capnhq.gov .