



# CAP Safety Beacon

April 2021

*The Safety Beacon is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers are encouraged to use the articles in the Beacon as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go to [eservices Learning Management System](#), click on “Go to AXIS,” search for this month’s Safety Beacon, take the quiz, and receive safety education credit.*

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## Vigilance and Safety: Pay attention and keep each other safe

There is only so much attention available to us. When we pay more attention to one thing, we pay less attention to another. Neurologically, we have no choice in the matter, and when the demand on attention is high, our capacity for vigilance, to be watchful for unsafe conditions, is reduced.

**Bottom line:** *Attention is a finite resource – use it wisely.*

Vigilance and attention are also linked to a fundamental personality trait: conscientiousness. According to [Psychology Today](#), “conscientiousness...reflects the tendency to be responsible, organized, hard-working, goal-directed, and to adhere to norms and rules...[and] has multiple facets; ...self-control, industriousness, responsibility, and reliability.”

When we act conscientiously, we tackle problems proactively. We plan, look for potential difficulties, and take action to prepare for the challenge. Conscientious people don’t wait for problems to “just happen;” they work to manage issues before they arise. In other words, they pay attention to things that might come up and stay vigilant in the moment to address unknowns.

## What does Vigilance, attention, and conscientiousness have to do with safety?

Vigilance means that we are watchful for possible dangers or difficulties. To maintain the watchfulness needed to keep ourselves, our fellow members, and our resources safe, we must take responsibility and pay attention to the precursors that can cause harm or damage.

We can model “responsible watchfulness,” in part, by following CAP’s safety risk management guidance. Taking the time to identify hazards and associated risk can help proactively prepare us and others for difficulties before they catch us off guard.

### Increasing Capacity for Vigilance

**“Many hands make light work.”** – John Heywood - *Involving participants in assessing and communicating risk will help them know what to be on the lookout for and will encourage them to speak up when something is potentially unsafe*

**“The status-quo habits for 'grandfathered' vulnerabilities do not legitimize them.”** – Stephane Nappo – *Just because “we have always done it this way,” does not mean it is not a risk. Challenge the status-quo and encourage others to do the same!*

**“Risk management? With pleasure!”** – John Alejandro King – *Show your team or group that safety risk management is the right thing to do and not just a “box-checking exercise.”*

**“You have to always be vigilant and make sure you’re ready to get on the bandwagon as a need for any new change arises.”** – Pooja Agnihotra – *Be flexible when things change or circumstances shift toward the unexpected; adjust your plans as necessary and communicate with others involved.*

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***Bend your knees!*** *Standing in formation with your knees rigidly locked cuts off blood flow to the brain and can cause you to pass out. **Relax your knees and stay upright***

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# April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says that distracted driving resulted in a 10% increase in fatal highway accidents from 2018 to 2019. More than texting, distracted driving includes other activities that rob you of vital seconds that could mean avoiding an accident. Examples include:

- Setting GPS navigation
- Adjusting the radio or other listening media
- Drinking a beverage or eating
- Talking to passengers
- Pets riding in the car

Commit to not drive distracted! *#justdrive*

- Protect lives by never texting or talking on the phone while driving.
- Be a good passenger and speak out if the driver in my car is distracted.
- Encourage my friends and family to drive phone-free.
- Eliminate other non-phone distractions when driving.

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## Improving the Quality of Action Planning

*“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”* – Benjamin Franklin

The intended result of Safety Risk Management Action Planning is to get to the “ounce of prevention.” Out of all the possible interventions that could be implemented, which ones have the best chance of successfully preventing a future mishap – or worse, a more serious mishap?

Often, when identifying mishap corrective actions, we tend to default to training, briefing, or reading to address root causes. These actions, while certainly useful in addressing problem areas, lack some key additional actions to make them successful in addressing problems long-term.

Tips for designing effective actions to potentially prevent the root causes of mishaps:

- **Share the root causes with others who have a stake in the solution** – the perspectives others can offer may include unconsidered options that can improve the likelihood that interventions will succeed.
- **Brainstorm a list of possible interventions** – brainstorming with others can generate a list of potential interventions that might not be considered if generating them alone. TIP: *generate the list BEFORE discussing any particular item – no matter how off-the-wall it may seem*
- **Decide together which items in the brainstormed list will most likely address root causes** – which ones will most likely address the root causes, especially more than one of them?
- **Determine if all the applicable root causes are addressed by the interventions** – for those root causes over which you and your team have direct influence, will the interventions identified address them adequately? For those interventions that only others have influence over, share your findings with them and involve them in the process.
- **Include reinforcing actions that go further than conveying information (like training)** – how will you follow up to ensure the training, briefing, etc. resulted in the expected change?
- **What needs to be communicated and to/with whom?** – communicating once in a “one-way” medium misses the opportunity to ask others what you may be missing!