



How Do We Get Our Safety Message Across?

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As we grew up, we would hear our parents tell us, "Don't do that, you may get hurt." This is the simplest form of a safety briefing. Know your audience, keep the briefing short and to the point. My college professor always told me to keep your messages succinct. As specified in (CAPR 160-1), "Any time a squadron, wing or region activity is conducted for the first time, or at a new venue, or when there is a significant change in members involved in the planning, execution or supervision," a risk assessment must be performed.

Risk management is a continuous process of identifying what could harm us, what could damage equipment, what could reduce mission capability, and what could diminish or restrict an activity. The next step, after identifying the hazards, we would assess the risks. How critical could the hazard harm an individual or damage equipment and the frequency of occurrence? Getting struck by lightning could be extremely hazardous and may cause death or severe damage to equipment. What is the probability of occurrence? Once we have assessed the risks, we would need to develop a set of controls to reduce the hazard. Prior to an event or activity, have as many individuals involved in the event to provide input to developing controls for reducing the risks. This provides a broader perspective to formulate a plan. Accept no unnecessary risk (CAPP 163). When the residual risk is determined as unacceptable, the event or activity should be cancelled or postponed. Who is going to implement these controls to ensure the hazards are minimized is the next step? And how can these steps be evaluated? Would the activity organizer or most senior be the best person to implement the risk controls, or would it be a better choice to have the individual involved in the supervisory role of each task performed?

As an example; "Performing a fire drill at a school." In the event of a fire, the greatest concern is the safety of the occupants. The occupants may panic and want to hide or use the nearest escape route which may include climbing out the window. The difficulty in this situation is accountability of the occupants. Did everyone get out safely and are they accounted for? Therefore, some controls must be established and who will manage these controls? The teacher may provide some guidance that the best and safest action is to exit through the door of the classroom and exit the building through the nearest exit and meet at a prearranged safe location. Timeliness is important in this situation, where within a few moments the room or hallway may be filled with smoke or fumes. Is there an alternate route to an exit? Other considerations may be needed such as stairways, lighting, visual markers to exits, and handicapped or individuals needing assistance. Are these fire drills conducted on a regular basis?

Another event to discuss is "Providing transportation of cadets to an event." The safety officer provided a briefing to the driver and passengers of a van as to what to expect on the trip. This included the length of the trip, the weather conditions, and the use of safety restraints. The driver should now provide additional information on what they expect from the passengers. The duration of the trip was expected to be about an hour long. After an hour and a half, the van and its passengers made it to their destination. The safety officer approached the driver and asked why there was such a delay. Any number of circumstances could have created the delay. A communication plan should also be provided in the briefing. There should be some way to communicate any issues involved with the transportation of cadets.

Risk management is a continuous process of evaluating and reevaluating hazards and mitigating risks (CAPP 163). As the original statement was, "Don't do that you may get hurt" leads to changes in behavior. Parents may have different perspectives and can provide insights to mitigating hazards. Everyone is a safety officer, using our knowledge we can have a safe and enjoyable event.

At Civil Air Patrol, a volunteer organization, individuals come from diversified backgrounds and have different situational understandings. It is our goal to provide specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact and accomplish a common mission or objective (No. 15-02).

Typically, we perform a safety briefing at the beginning of an event or activity. This is usually done by the person in charge. These briefings can be short and simple, advising participants of known risks and how to watch out for each other. Even though most of the individuals have previously performed these tasks, it is a terrific way to ensure and emphasize the importance of risk reduction. Individuals are reminded that safety is always present.

Once a month we perform Monthly safety talks or briefings. During these few minutes, the current month's topics of interest are presented. Our last message suggested that everyone is a safety officer and should take appropriate measures to reduce risks. It begins with discussing an event or activity and considering the "What ifs." This allows the audience to participate and provide a sense of self development.

Once a year we set aside one meeting day a year to perform a Safety Stand-down Day. This is a more formal event where the national safety team provides a set of slides and narration typically discussing the risk reduction process. This is then followed by dialogues of events that occurred during the previous year. Some of the events discussed involved the mishandling of aircraft during ground movement and an individual with a known leg injury trying to overdo themselves in trying to participate in another activity. Recovery from an injury takes time and this should be considered. A slight injury a person may be able to recover in a few days or weeks, whereas a more serious injury may take months to recover. The individual may have a medical note restricting them from certain activities.

Although we want to get our message across, it is a greater opportunity to develop an attitude of positive risk mitigation and awareness. Whatever we do in life we cannot recreate time. It is so much easier to plan accordingly than to incur an accident or incident. I find it difficult to answer to a parent of a lost child that "We did our best!"

List of References:

CAPP 163. (30 September 2019). *Safety Assurance & Continuous Improvement*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: National Headquarters Civil Air Patrol.

CAPR 160-1. (01 November 2019). *Civil Air Patrol Safety Program*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: National Headquarters Civil Air Patrol.

No. 15-02. (January, 2015). *Leader's Guide to Team Building*. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Lessons Learned.