



Marine Unmanned Aircraft Squadron 3 (VMU-3)

Policy on Safety

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To our Phantom family, there are different reasons that people decided to serve in our nation's military, but regardless of service, rank, MOS, or billet we all have the common mission of defending our great nation while upholding the honor of our service. This is no easy task; it requires courage, discipline, and at times taking risks and going into harms way (i.e., Combat). **We will NOT choose to take unnecessary risks.** We will do everything in our power to keep our people out of harm's way, but when we do have to take risks, we will mitigate them in every way we can through our training, planning, procedures, and equipment. Our goal in training and garrison should be to have "Zero Preventable Accidents". I do not have a "Zero Defects Mentality", but there will be NO tolerance for negligence, ignorance, or lack of professionalism. We operate in a demanding environment where we are not only training our Phantoms to operate in expeditious conditions, but we are also part of a community that is evolving at an unprecedented pace.

Safety is an enabler for mission accomplishment, not a barrier. Efficiency and Proficiency will come through discipline and training, not by "Bending" rules or cutting corners. When rules and procedures are not followed, risks to our mission, people, and equipment are increased. Deliberate deviation is not something I take lightly.

Though our profession involves risk, **mishaps are NEVER inevitable; they are NOT the "cost of doing business". Risks result from common human errors such as inattention, inadequate preparation, unnecessary haste ("cutting corners"), poor communication, or weak supervision.**

"Unmanned" does NOT mean that humans cannot be killed or injured by what we do. We can easily cause more harm than good to non-combatants (civilians), friendlies, and ourselves. We must be professional and conscious of everything going on around us. When something doesn't seem right "Stop it" and "Fix it".

We will NOT tolerate: ROGUE ACTIONS, RECKLESSNESS, UNECESSARY RISK TAKING, or TOTAL DISREGARD of established procedures (and ignorance of the established procedures is not an excuse). We are professionals in the greatest military in the world, and we didn't get this way by accident or being just lucky. Unfortunately, too often we let our guard down to many of the hazards that surround us and our families every day. **The greatest risk to our force in peacetime is poor decision making on leave and liberty. Sound judgment is all that it takes to avoid most driving and recreational accidents (i.e., water safety, motorcycle riding, rock climbing, partying, etc.).** Specific principles I expect all hands to follow: Identify Hazards and take action to correct them. Be assertive. Anyone can call a "knock it off" when an unsafe situation develops. At no time will operational tempo be used as an excuse to cut corners. Good decisions can be made at all levels and I expect, that as Phantoms, all of us understand it is up to us to prevent accidents. **I applaud the courage that it takes to stand up and stop unsafe situations regardless of age, rank, or experience.** Often the most challenging situations can be when we are stopping our friends and family members from doing something unsafe. Regret should never come from speaking up; it often comes too late when nothing was said and an accident has occurred.

"HEROIC" is how we describe actions in combat or when an individual has the courage to intervene in dangerous situations on behalf of another. "STUPID" or "IDIOTIC" is how we describe actions of reckless recreational decisions and careless actions. "BE AGGRESSIVE, BUT NOT RECKLESS!"

The established procedures are one of our best ways to reduce risks. Taking shortcuts, modifying procedures, or changing processes away from the established procedures induces more risk. We will continue to hone our skills through smart aggressive training. We must continue to fly and maintain the best aircraft in the Corps. **If there is a rule or procedure, have the discipline to "Follow it". If there is a checklist "Use it". If there is protective equipment "Wear it properly". If you see a situation that is unsafe or a deviation from the established procedures "Stop it and say something". Failure to act when a risk has been identified is just as bad as failing to recognize the risk at all.** Our ORM process has six steps, the most important of those is to Identify Hazards. Once a hazard is identified people do not usually continue to dance with it. They avoid it and move on; it is usually when the hazard goes unnoticed or ignored that it bites. In summary, do NOT take any unnecessary risks (and it is the CO's call on what risks we will take).

Story of Two Buckets: One starts with an unknown supply of luck, the other you can fill up with knowledge and skill. Rely on the knowledge and skill because you never know when your luck will run out. The only time you will know you are out of luck is when you were relying on it.

A true professional does it all and will accomplish the mission effectively, efficiently, and safely in order to preserve their resource; thus allowing him/her to bring them to bear against our adversaries again another day. Help me preserve our Phantoms, families, and equipment.

The Marines, Sailors, and family members of VMU-3 are our most precious assets and we will protect them through our courage, discipline, and high standards. We are an organization of performance and pride and we will not tolerate things that jeopardize our mission, our ranks, the fair treatment of others, or the standards of our services. **"Phantoms are: Maximum Impact - No Drama...On Time – On Target"**

*"The great German General Erwin Rommel once made a distinction between a gamble and a risk. Both cases involve an action with only a chance of success, a chance that is heightened by acting with boldness. **The difference is that with risk, if you lose, you can recover.** Your reputation will suffer no long term damage, your resources will not be depleted, and you can return to your original position with acceptable losses. With a gamble, on the other hand, defeat can lead to a slew of problems that are likely to spiral out of control...If you encountered difficulties in a gamble, it becomes harder to pull out – you realize that the stakes are too high; you cannot afford to lose. So you try harder to rescue the situation, often making it worse and sinking deeper into the hole that you cannot get out of...**Taking risks is essential; gambling is foolhardy.**" – 33 Strategies of War*