Practice Safety Precautions

Proficiency Code: A

All AF units will comply with applicable safety guidance while executing all AF operations. MAJCOMs, direct reporting units (DRU) and field operating agencies (FOA) may supplement Air Force Occupational Safety and Health (AFOSH) guidance when additional or more stringent safety, fire prevention and health criteria are required. *Always* use the guidance that provides the *most* protection when there is conflicting guidance.

The Air Force publishes industrial and general ground safety guidance as AFIs, which implement OSHA standards. Technical orders (TO) and area-specific instructions may include other safety criteria. When AFOSH guidance or safety criteria do not cover a situation, use non-AF standards including national consensus standards, professional safety and health standards, and other federal agency standards. Air Force activities must comply with OSHA requirements at all times unless the military-unique exemption applies according to Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 6055.1, *DOD Safety and Occupational Health (SOH) Program.*

NOTE: AFOSH guidance *must be* followed at all times.

Commanders, functional managers, supervisors and individuals must support and comply with all applicable safety programs. An effective program depends on individual integration of mishap prevention mindset throughout the AF. We all must be safety minded all day every day.

Your commander and supervisors at all levels will establish specific procedures and measurements to ensure compliance with program standards.

Are all mishaps preventable? The answer is not as simple as you might think. The answer is yes all accidents are preventable, but there is a caveat. All accidents are preventable up to a certain point at that point they are no longer preventable.

According to OSHA's web site, "more than 4,600 died on the job in 2014." That is an average of about more than 80 per week and more than 12 deaths per day in the United States. The good news is this is the second lowest number since OSHA began tracking in 1992.

Human factors are not just about humans. It is about how features of people's tools, tasks and working environment systemically influence human performance. Mishaps are rarely attributed to a single cause, or in most cases, even a single individual. Every organization should work to identify what factors and conditions create potential hazards, and if/when a mishap occurs, determine why and how to prevent it from happening again. Human factors are further broken down into three sub-categories physiological, physical, and organizational factors.

Physiological factors such as unhealthy emotions, job or domestic pressures, distractions, job knowledge, shift-work, hurrying or feeling rushed can contribute to an unsafe attitude and negatively affect worker performance. Examples include workers:

- With insufficient training and lack of awareness, that is inattention to tasks and lack of familiarity with the work area.
- Ignoring directions from supervisors and work leaders.
- Failing to use PPE or proper tools.
- Performing a task while distracted by personal problems or interpersonal situations.
- Using equipment when not properly trained or qualified.
- Being unaware of the hazardous properties of flammable and combustible liquids or materials and their proper control.

Physical factors such as fatigue, strength limits, lack of sleep, ergonomic design constraints, and the influence of alcohol/drugs may contribute to behavior that leads to a mishap. Examples include workers:

- Not following established procedures or taking unauthorized shortcuts to save time.
- Performing job tasks while taking prescribed medications that may cause drowsiness.
- Performing job tasks while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Potential for a machine-related mishap is greater when a worker is physically fatigued.

Organizational factors such as inadequate staffing, emphasis on production over safety, and lack of workplace supervision can also lead to a mishap. Examples include many of the errors listed in the paragraphs above.