

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

Safety Awards Program By the National HQ Safety Team

It is that time of year when decorations go up, fancy food is prepared, and goals to improve during the upcoming year are pledged. One thing that probably does not come to mind is getting ready to submit Civil Air Patrol's annual safety awards.

CAPR 62-1 is the guiding document for safety awards and it is important for commanders at all levels in CAP to remember that awards and recognition are the only "pay" we can offer our members. With that said, here is a quick review of CAP safety awards as well as a few tips to increase chances of success in winning one.

There are two key takeaways from this article: First, nominations must contain as many specifics as possible. Second, any nominee to the Region or to National for a particular award is the winner of that award for the unit that nominates the individual. For example, the Oregon Wing nominee to Pacific Region for the national-level Safety Officer of the Year Award is the ORWG Safety Officer of the Year. The Middle East Region nominee for the Paul W. Turner Safety Award is the MER winner. Speaking of Safety Officer of the Year and Paul W. Turner, let's review those awards and nomination criteria.

The Paul W. Turner Safety Award is a Unit Award for the wing with a combination of the best safety program and the best safety record. So, a wing can not win the award by having zero mishaps if there is no safety program documented to round out the nomination.

The Region Turner Safety Award is a plaque presented annually to each region's Turner winner: The wing from each region that has the best safety program and record. This is also a unit award reflecting great team effort.

The Safety Officer of the Year is an individual award that filters up from the squadrons in CAP. Each region nominates one winner to compete for the national award. Each unit (flight, squadron or group) should nominate a deserving unit safety officer (primary or assistant), or

 CAP Safety Team	Col Robert Diduch CAP/SE BobDKateB@aol.com	Col Charles Greenwood GLR/SE cgreenwo@bsu.edu	Lt Col David Plum NCR/SE savdoc@centurytel.net	Maj Bill Woody SER/SE wawoody@att.net
	Col Robert Alex Asst CAP/SE ralex@cfl.rr.com	Col Charles Glass MER/SE csglass@juno.com	Lt Col Paul Mondoux NER/SE paul@nhplm.org	Maj Alex Kay PCR/SE bcat417@aol.com
	Lt Col Bruce Brown Asst CAP/SE bbrown@cap.gov	Lt Col Melanie Ann Capehart SWR/SE MelanieCapehart@peoplepc.com	Lt Col Donald Johanson RMR/SE johansonon@msn.com	

mission safety officer. Those unit-level winners compete against others in their group (if applicable) and group winners become nominees for the wing competition. Regardless whether the wing competition is for squadron or group safety officers, the winner of the wing is then forwarded to the competition at the region level. This is how it is supposed to be. Do you know what usually happens? Everyone scrambles at the last minute to get something to the next higher HQ. Sometimes that package is rushed out the door, is the only one, and gets forwarded unopposed to the next level for consideration. Try to recognize your stellar performers at each level of CAP with an appropriate award as well as a thanks for a job well done. This means putting some thought into nomination packages, selection boards, and leaving yourself with enough time to do this right! Remember, the deadline to National HQ is 15 March!

The period of performance must fall between 1 January and 31 December of the nomination year. Each nomination package must be postmarked no later than 15 March. E-mailed nominations must be time-stamped prior to midnight on 15 March in the local time zone where they originate.

The newest award in the safety program portfolio is the Distinguished Aviator Award. This is an airmanship award, pure and simple. There are a few rules with this award and the number one criterion is that pilots can not be nominated for outstanding feats of airmanship that avoided a disaster they created themselves. Additionally, the emergency must have resulted from one or more of these situations:

1. Mechanical difficulty with the aircraft while in flight or on the ground.
2. Errors made by others, in the air or on the ground.
3. Environmental factors beyond the nominee's control (poor planning or no weather briefing are not factors beyond the pilot's control).

Nominations must be initiated by the unit commander immediately following the incident and forwarded up the chain of command (with endorsements along the way) to NHQ CAP/SE. An awards board is convened to consider each nomination package throughout the year.

The Distinguished Aviator Award is awarded on a case-by-case basis so there is no deadline for submission.

There is one last area to address for safety awards. Writing the nominations must be done with enthusiasm for the nominee's accomplishments. Be specific. This might sound uncaring, but no one should get a medal or award for simply doing his or her job. We are all in the same boat, performing our very best and volunteering our time to serve community, state and nation. Awards are intended for those who are performing above and beyond the baseline to which everyone else performs. Therefore, the award nomination must reflect that "above and beyond" character of service. Too many times the nominee is someone who wears the uniform properly, gives lots of safety briefings, and has a

really good attitude, and this should be all of us. What sets this nominee apart from the rest of us? Why should this person get the award instead of the other 50 who are competing? Numbers are always a good thing. Stating that a safety officer trained 450 cadets and officers, performed 82 aircraft inspections, performed risk assessments that avoided unsafe situations at 26 major activities, improved safety culture for the wing's largest squadron and created a safety web site that had 102,000 hits are examples of numbers-driven award bullets that justify serious consideration of an award. The numbers themselves are not important as long as they are honest. The nominee's effort and achievement must be quantifiable. The Air Force uses a model called "Fact – Impact – Result." If your award nominations can show what the nominee did, the breadth and depth of the effort and the end-state (what was achieved) then you have taken care of your people. It is fair for a nominee to share in the credit for a group accomplishment. It is also accurate to confer individual credit for team accomplishments if that leadership was a driving force for the group accomplishment.

Remember: Conduct awards boards early enough to submit your very best to the next level for consideration. Your nominees to higher HQ are the winners in your unit. Finally, remember to write strong nominations that include specifics and numbers that tell the story of your nominee's accomplishments...and don't miss the 15 March deadline.

Annual Safety Surveys Due! By the National HQ Safety Team

The New Year brings new work! Remember that the annual unit safety survey must be completed on-line no later than 31 January for the previous fiscal year. The period to accomplish these surveys runs from 1 October through 31 January, so there is no excuse for not logging into e-Services to accomplish your unit's safety assessment. The safety officer's job takes an entire year, but this survey (a snapshot of all those efforts) only takes 5 or 6 minutes to complete. Col Diduch, the National Safety Officer, has tasked regions and wings to get the surveys done no later than 31 December. The National HQ Safety Team would like to thank the hundreds of units that have completed their surveys early in the reporting period. Also we would like to recognize the region headquarters units which have already completed their surveys. In chronological order, they are:

Date Completed	Charter Number	Unit Name
1 Oct 09	PCR-001	Pacific Region Headquarters
16 Oct 09	RMR-001	Rocky Mountain Region Headquarters
4 Nov 09	NCR-001	North Central Region Headquarters
10 Nov 09	NER-001	Northeast Region Headquarters

Getting them done 1 month early is a goal that minimizes the risk for a missed deadline; and it still gives you 3 full months to accomplish the report! Contact your wing safety officer with any questions. If you're a wing safety officer with a question, then contact your region safety officer. And yes, region safety officers can contact the National HQ Safety Office, toll free, at (877) 227-9142 ext 229.

Remember to use the organizational chain of command. If wing or region safety officers can not answer your question, then elevate the issue. Just make sure everyone in-between is kept in the loop on the person you contact. Finally we want to emphasize the main point here: Missing the 31 January deadline for these surveys is not an option; you have 4 months to complete a 5-minute on-line survey! We urge you to please get the surveys done early, to avoid a missed deadline.

Close Calls – A Golden Opportunity to Prevent Mishaps By the National HQ Safety Team

A close call is sometimes called a near miss. What is a near miss? It's a euphemism for 'almost hit.' The term 'Near Miss' is disliked by safety professionals because it tiptoes around the intent of the term: You almost had the Big One. So in this article we are going to refer to this category of 'almost a mishap' as a 'Close Call.'

Why do we care about close calls? Because close calls are underreported indicators, which are almost never recorded. Yet the data is clear: Most accidents can be predicted from the quantity and severity of close calls. The National Safety Council states 75% of all accidents are preceded by one or more close calls. Another key point is that the difference between a close call and a catastrophic accident might only be measured in inches, seconds, or a couple miles per hour.

As an example, suppose you were walking along an aisle and found a box that had fallen off a shelf. Recognizing this as a tripping hazard, you pick up the box and put it back on the shelf, making sure it will not fall again. But what if you had been walking by when the box fell. You might have been hit by the box and injured. The difference in time between when you actually walked by and the time the box fell may have been the difference between a close call and a catastrophic accident.

A close call is a red flag that something is wrong that requires immediate attention. A close call, or several close calls, represent the tip of the iceberg...you know, when most of the danger lies hidden beneath the surface of the ocean. A good leadership technique is to call a meeting or short huddle as soon as a close call is identified. That means that close calls must be reported up the chain immediately...not to place blame on anyone, but to identify the problem, its root cause

(not just the obvious cause), and implement appropriate corrective action. The discussion should cover what happened (***risk identification***), what could have happened (***risk assessment***) and how to make sure that it does not happen again (***risk mitigation and management***).

Some areas for improvement identified by analyzing close calls are: poor work area layout, need for increased maintenance, poor storage or housekeeping habits, insufficient training or poor processes.

Remember that when a unit has a close call, it is too easy to shrug off the event and be thankful that a more serious mishap did not occur. Maybe the person tripped and caught himself before falling; it could be that the door opened outward and the person jumped back before it hit her; maybe the bird struck the aircraft but did not shatter the windshield. When close calls are ignored, someone eventually will be injured by that hazard. So communicate within your units, report close calls internally, and fix problems at the lowest level. Be vigilant and be safe!

Holiday Safety By Lt Col Bruce Brown, Assistant National Safety Officer

Regardless whether you celebrate the holidays during this season, it is important to protect yourself and loved ones from hazards unique to this joyous time of year. There is nothing sadder than a family left homeless because a fire destroyed their safe haven. Do you know how to make your home fire resistant? Do you know what to look for in your neighbors' behavior that could alert you that their lack of fire smarts could ruin your holiday season?

Make sure electrical outlets are not overloaded and that lights are not strung together with too many strands. Do you know how many strands of lights can be safely connected in a row? Usually the limit is three and you can look for those kinds of limitations on the packaging.

Do not plug lights, decorations, coffee makers, microwave ovens or any other appliance with a cycling motor into a power strip (including surge protectors). Those types of electrical equipment are designed to be plugged directly into a dedicated wall socket. Don't walk on extension cords and never use extension cords as a substitute for permanent wiring. Once the holiday season is over, remove the extension cords from the area. Do not "daisy-chain" extension cords or power strips. One final electrical cord word: Do not allow wiring to get pinched or crimped in passing through windows or doors. That crimp impedes electrical flow, allows the wiring in the cord to overheat and may damage the protective insulation.

Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in working order. Avoid purchasing the cheapest decorations, extension cords or

smoke detectors. Never before have there been so many counterfeit products on the market with fake "UL" holograms and fake "Made in the USA" labels. There is nothing wrong with a bargain basement deal, but just not with your car's brakes and not with something that could start a fire in your home in the middle of the night!

One final word is saved for chemicals. If you have a fire in your home, will any burning materials give off noxious (perhaps fatal) fumes? I helped investigate a fire once in military family housing where a home business was operated. The business was a hair/nail salon. The fire never made it to the chemicals used for that business, but there was significant risk that residents or firefighters could have been seriously injured by the fumes or accelerants spread out all over a counter in a family room of that home. So, inspect your residence and work area (to include...hint, hint, hint...your CAP squadron building) and remove flammables and noxious chemicals from the occupied parts of the structure. If you are unable to store flammables somewhere away from occupied spaces, then consider turning those items in for proper disposal. Many local governments or fire departments operate hazmat drop-off points.

Remember to stay safe this holiday season. Look out for yourselves, your neighbors and fellow CAP members. We'll see everyone back here in January 2010!