



## VMM-263 Commanding Officer's Safety Policy

Safe conduct to prevent injury to personnel and damage to equipment is a critical part of mission accomplishment and force preservation. My intent is that we execute all missions to obtain maximum results while minimizing risk and loss. Therefore, my Safety Policy boils down to two key principles:

**1. Safety is a byproduct of our individual professional conduct and our collective operational excellence.** I charge each of you to become duty experts in all that you do. Whether at work or at home, study and know the guiding publications, manuals, and directives for the task at hand. Ask the duty experts and learn from their experience. Apply critical thinking in all tasks. Build your own experience by challenging yourself and others. My goal is for every person in the squadron to know their job beyond just technical expertise—I want you to strive for a level of mastery where you see beyond the task at hand to the consequences of your actions in the 'bigger picture.'

Mishaps often come from minor details that are overlooked by individuals or from cutting corners to save time. Conditions such as these arise from Marines not holding themselves and others accountable as professionals and placing their actions in a short-sighted view of completing the assigned task rather than the context of how that task will lead to mission accomplishment. We have a form of check-and-balances in place which serves to reduce this risk and to ensure the best quality of work is completed in a safe and timely manner. As a team we can catch and correct unsafe acts and practices which an individual may have missed. Remember that the performance of VMM-263 is a summary of our collective actions, so make that performance something you and your fellow Marines will be proud of.

**2. Safety is an essential part of our Force Preservation Plan.** Our purpose as Marines is to provide a force that is most ready when our nation is least ready. There are far too many Marines injured or killed and far too many aircraft damaged from non-combat situations. Whether from falling off of a work platform while conducting maintenance or from a motorcycle accident while on liberty, personal injury and death have a direct and negative impact on our combat readiness. Likewise, damage to equipment and aircraft from not following proper procedures or by not using the appropriate tools for the job degrades our combat readiness.

Force preservation begins with individual steps and progresses out to collective actions. As individuals, we must all do our part by ensuring we follow the appropriate steps, to include following proper procedures and conducting good risk assessment. As a squadron we shall ensure the highest state of combat readiness through regular training and the professionalism discussed above. Ultimately, whether in combat or in garrison, it comes down to Marines protecting themselves and each other from dangerous situations. Take charge of your own personal force protection, and look out for your fellow Thunder Chickens at all times.

Subj: SAFETY POLICY

In summary, I will not tell you to "be safe". Instead, I charge you to be consummate professionals in all things you do. By doing things the right way ALL the time, safe practices become second nature. The high standards of professional and safe practices are your responsibility to maintain and your contribution to our squadron's force preservation and combat readiness.

  
T.P. MITALSKI  
Commanding Officer