

# 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2014

Risk management has a role in everything we do, both on and off duty. It continues to be the job of the safety professionals to provide guidance to all Airmen about the dangers of the season. Airmen use sound risk management every day on duty and, while the main focus of the Critical Days of Summer campaign is off duty activities, Airmen must use the same risk management techniques in all circumstances.

*Chapter 3*  
*June 6, 2014*



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## Chapter 3: Zero Tolerance

### Topic: Drinking & Driving/Other Activities

According to the National Safety Council: “in 2010, there were 10,228 deaths in crashes involving a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher – 31 percent of all traffic fatalities for the year. While it is illegal to drive with a .08 blood alcohol concentration in all 50 states, driving ability can be impaired below the legal limit too. If you are drinking, do not drive. If you plan to drink, designate a non-drinking driver.” This applies to other activities also. And in the hot weather, alcohol is dangerous even if you’re just relaxing on a boat, the beach, or your backyard.

“Alcohol and [caffeinated beverages] constrict blood vessels near the skin reducing the amount of heat the body can release. Although beer and alcohol beverages appear to satisfy thirst, they actually cause further body dehydration,” reports the National Weather Service.

Last summer, the Air Force lost two Airmen to alcohol-related incidents; one in a car and one during a sports activity. In 2012 and 2011 data shows eight and 10, respectively. While this is a sizable decrease – it is not zero! Furthermore, the potential for horrific injury also exists when alcohol is involved as evidenced by this recent mishap:

Two Airmen decided to ride a motorcycle after consuming a significant amount of alcohol – one operating the bike; the other a passenger. Neither wore helmets nor any other required personal protective equipment.

They were speeding when the motorcycle went off the road and struck a drainage culvert. Both Airmen were thrown into a roadside mailbox, struck the ground, slid approximately 100 feet through the road’s shoulder and then back onto the highway. A motorist came upon the mishap, stopped and called 911.

Emergency personnel arrived and the Airmen were airlifted to a regional hospital where they were admitted for multiple injuries. The Airman operating the motorcycle underwent surgery for multiple head injuries and was placed in intensive care. He remained in the hospital for several weeks and was eventually released with a permanent total disability. The Airman who was the passenger on the motorcycle spent a week in the hospital before being released.

No matter what summer activity you’re planning, if alcohol is involved, be responsible and apply risk management steps:

1. Identify the hazards – are you going to drink?
2. Assess the hazards – is this an activity I should do with alcohol involved?
3. Develop controls & make decisions – is there a designated driver/boater, etc.?
4. Implement controls – the designated person is driving, etc.
5. Supervise & evaluate – did the previous steps work effectively? Should different plans be made for the next activity?

Judgment is always impaired which results in poor decision-making. In the incident above, the motorcycle operator had not completed the Air Force required training; making the poor choice to ride even more dangerous.



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For more information:

<http://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/>

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/?n=safety-summer-summersafety>

<http://www.glennellis.com/uncategorized/alcohol-water-and-hot-weather/>

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/SummerSafety/SummerSafety.htm>

