



# SAFETY TIPS

## 2023 Independence Day Weekend



This 4th of July commemorates the 247th anniversary of America's Independence. Holiday weekend celebrations generally involve driving to visit family or friends, attending parades, barbecues, fireworks, picnics, and pool parties. The Marines, Sailors and Civilian Marines of Fleet Marine Force Atlantic are urged to have fun, relax and unwind. Be sure to employ risk mitigation tactics so that your holiday weekend events are executed safely. The following Safety Tips are offered to enhance your 4th of July weekend activities:



**MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY:** The 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend is one of the most traveled weekends of the year. Be advised, with the high volume of traffic on our roadways, you should expect delays. Be cautious and courteous, and avoid actions which could lead to potential road rage incidents. Take precautions to mitigate common vehicle mishap causal factors: Distractions, Speed, Alcohol, Lack of seatbelts/PPE, and Fatigue. Adhere to your command travel policy. Use vehicle inspection checklists prior to long distance travel. Take rest breaks often and avoid driving during normal sleep times. Supervisor's, require "TRIPS" for your personnel for planning POV travel. Maintain safe following distances. Plan ahead and stay alert!

**PARADE SAFETY:** Holiday parades are fun and exciting events for the whole family, but all too often (and when least expected), injuries occur. Monitor kids closely during parades. Establish a meeting place should someone get separated from the group. Avoid getting too close to parade vehicles, animals or participants. Do not allow kids to run into street to pick up candy thrown by float riders until safe to do so; Post a watch for approaching traffic. Consider bringing ear plugs or headphones for younger children not use to loud noises. Position chairs or seating area to avoid being blocked or stepped on, and far enough away from street to avoid potential emergencies. Use handrail if climbing or descending bleachers. Wear sunscreen, hats and sunglasses. Remember to keep hydrated and reapply sunscreen regularly.



**GRILLING SAFETY:** Grilling and picnics are a big part of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. Before firing up the grill ensure it is clean and inspected for leaks and sturdiness. Place grills a safe distance from flammable materials - to ensure the fireworks don't start early. Keep kids and pets from coming in contact with hot grills. Ensure hands and fingers are well clear prior to opening or closing grills or smoker lids. Never use unapproved accelerants to start or enhance a fire. Use long-handled utensils to prevent burns to arms and hands. Ensure all food is cooked thoroughly; check for optimal temperature before serving. Shut off gas when done grilling. Allow grill to cool before securing. Place leftovers in the refrigerator within an hour of eating. Provide hand sanitizer for guests use. Bon appétit!

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**RECREATIONAL SAFETY:** Beaches, pools, water parks and water sports are a welcomed activity, especially when it's hot outside. Never swim alone. Watch children closely. Avoid swimming or boating if consuming alcohol. Wear a life jacket when boating or jet-skiing. Inspect bicycles before riding. Wear helmets and light clothing and use proper hand signals when riding with traffic nearby. Avoid wearing ear buds or inserting anything into the ear canal that may prevent hearing approaching vehicles. Stretch before and after riding; hydrate and wear sunscreen. Follow unit/installation protocols regarding personally owned firearms. Never handle a weapon if alcohol is involved. Adhere to the tenants of firearm safety: 1) Treat every gun as if it is loaded; 2) Keep gun pointed in a safe direction; 3) Know your target and what's behind it; 4) Keep finger off trigger until ready to fire.



**ALCOHOL AWARENESS:** If you will be drinking this holiday weekend, do so responsibly. Set a limit, and don't exceed it. Never get behind the wheel if you've consumed any alcohol. Avoid engaging in high-risk activities if alcohol has been consumed. Monitor and control party attendee's alcohol in-take. Plan ahead to ensure guests get home safely or allow them to stay until sober. Remember, Marines take care of our own!



**FIREWORKS SAFETY:** Celebrate the birth of America safely. Every year thousands of people are injured handling fireworks, and many find their way into local emergency rooms. Over 80% of fireworks injuries involve hands, eyes and face. Never point a firework at a person or animal. Ensure kids do not have access to fireworks. If lighting off fireworks, keep a bucket of water or hose readily available. Pick up debris when done with fireworks. Know and follow your city and state firework ordinances. Do not use fireworks if consuming alcohol or near flammable material. Consider pets; animals have very sensitive ears and can be easily scared during fireworks; Keep our furry friends indoors during firework displays. Firearms should not be used in lieu of fireworks.

**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY MISHAPS:** The following mishaps involved MFC Marines over the last few 4<sup>TH</sup> of July weekends:

- Sgt, drove off road at 2300 and into a ditch. Found several hours later; suffered a fractured leg.
- PFC, walked across road at 0145 while inebriated, and failed to look for oncoming traffic. PFC was struck by car and suffered head and spinal injuries.
- Cpl, arrived at a local hospital with an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound to the groin; lost a testicle.
- LCpl, sustained facial burns while setting off illegal mortar-style fireworks. Taken to hospital for treatment.
- Cpl, involved in a motor vehicle crash while intoxicated. Hospitalized with internal injuries.
- LCpl, shooting .22 rifle at friend's house; suffered eye injury from shrapnel when weapon malfunctioned.

**RISK MANAGEMENT (RM):** Incorporate RM process to all holiday weekend activities. Exercise discipline in avoiding needless risks and their consequences. Use the 'Battle Buddy' system and maintain situational awareness. Self-evaluate stress and fatigue levels often. Avoid engaging in demeaning or disrespectful behavior. Make smart decisions and continue to watch out for one another.

**RESOURCES:**

- [A Public Plea for Road Safety: We Take This Journey Together - National Safety Council](#)
- [Fireworks Safety - National Safety Council](#)
- [www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2022/follow-these-steps-for-a-safe-4th-of-july.html](http://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2022/follow-these-steps-for-a-safe-4th-of-july.html)
- [TRiPS \(army.mil\)](#)

**Manage the Risk**



**Protect the Force**