

CENATNSF ANSWERS CALL TO REDUCE SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS
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VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. - The Center for Antiterrorism and Navy Security Forces (CENATNSF) began tackling the increase in post 9-11 explosive mishaps over a year ago and the Fleet is beginning to reap the benefits of those efforts. The increase in mishaps was partially created by a rapid increase of armed sailors and small arms in the Navy. In the last two quarters the number of Small Arms Explosive Mishaps has decreased by 50%, (Figure 1) and will continue to decrease as personnel receive standardized training and follow mandated procedures.

Figure 1. FY01-04 SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS

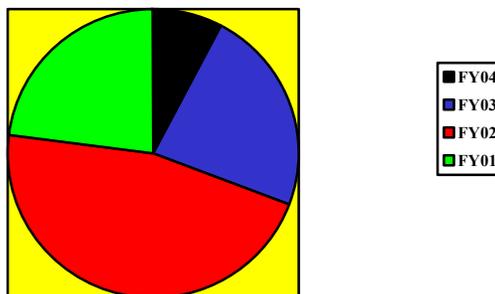


NOTE: FY04 DATA IS PROVIDED UP TO 1 MAY 2004
Average number of Explosive Mishaps per month:

FY01 – 2
FY02 – 4.14
FY03 – 2.57
FY04 – 1.29

As a result of the Small Arms Explosive Mishaps there were a number of injuries sustained. The number of incidences has significantly decreased (Figure 2) in the last two quarters.

Figure 2. FY01-04 INJURIES CAUSED BY SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS



(FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF EACH YEAR)

FY04 Injuries – 1
FY03 Injuries - 3
FY02 Injuries - 6
FY01 Injuries - 3

Along with developing a number of new courses to assist in training Navy Warriors in the fight on terrorism, CENATNSF took the lead in the development of the Navy Tactical Reference Publication, Force Protection Weapons Handling Standard Procedures and Guidelines 3-07.2.2 that was approved by the Naval Warfare Development Command and mandated for use by Fleet Forces Command in August 2003. This publication, lists weapon systems commonly employed by the United States Navy. The NTRP contains detailed procedures for weapon employment techniques commonly performed when duties are assigned requiring the arming of Naval personnel. One of the more important sets of procedures contained in the NTRP are the description of clear, concise, and standardized procedures for loading and unloading firearms when on a range or at a clearing barrel. The NTRP is organized by specific weapon and each chapter contains:

Standard nomenclature	Safe weapons handling procedures for the range
Characteristics	Safe weapons handling procedures for clearing barrel
Remedial actions	Safe weapons movement procedures
Weapons condition codes	Weapon assembly and disassembly
Weapons handling and associated commands	

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words! CENATNSF took on the task of developing Standardized Weapons Handling Interactive Courseware that provides visual step-by-step procedures and is aligned with NTRP 3-07.2.2. The Center first developed courseware that provided procedures for the Service Pistol, Service Rifle and Service Shotgun. Courseware has to date been completed on the M9 Pistol, M16A3 Rifle and the M500 Shotgun. A sample of what is contained in the Pistol Courseware is listed in Figure 3.

The Weapons Handling Courseware is user friendly and works with IT21 & NMCI systems. Simply put the CD in and it will play! One particular feature of the courseware that allows demonstration of a skill is the ability for the user to “click” on a subject and immediately view that subject. The courseware was primarily designed to fulfill pre-requisite training that will soon be required by OPNAVINST 3591.1D prior to live fire. A sailor can view the courseware, answer pop-up quizzes, and then take the final exam (80% required to pass). Each sailor passing the exam will receive a certificate of completion that can be

Figure 3. FY01-04 PISTOL COURSEWARE

Lesson 1 - Introduction	Lesson 2 - M9 Service Pistol	Lesson 3 - Disassembly, Cleaning & Assembly
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Introduction to Pistol Safety	Major Component Groups	Disassembly
Universal Weapon Safety Rules	M9 Cycle of Operation	Cleaning
	Inherent Safety Features	Assembly
	Introduction to Malfunctions and Stoppages	Function Check
	Malfunctions	
	Typical Shooter Induced Stoppages	
	Introduction to Remedial Actions	
	Clearing Stoppages on the Range	
	Clearing a Stoppage During a NHQC	
	Clearing a Stoppage During a HPWC	
	Clearing Stoppages in Tactical Situations	
	Condition Codes	
	Handling Commands	
	Safe Handling Procedures	
	Safe Movement procedures	
	Transports	
	Pistol Carries	
	Clearing Barrel Procedures	
	Pistol Shooting Stances	
	Drawing, Holstering & Reloading	

presented to the Range Safety Officer (RSO). The RSO's should then ask a series of questions, have the sailor perform some dry fire drills and make a determination as to whether that sailor is ready for live fire. The courseware can also be used by an instructor to demonstrate a particular skill. The program can then be paused and the instructor can facilitate practice drills in a sterile training environment free of live ammunition. Repetitious practice and the sailor becoming familiar with and confident with handling a weapon are the keys to success. Instructors use the courseware as well to maintain their knowledge base and hone their skills. The courseware will enhance initial and sustainment training to assist the armed sentry and trainers in maintaining their proficiency. Firearms Training is a perishable skill that is quickly lost if not routinely practiced. Training does not always have to include live fire, but can be a blended approach of classroom, courseware, simulator and dry fire to assist in maintaining proficiency. Remember however, that live fire can never be totally removed from training. Sailors need to shoot real weapons with real ammunition to feel the recoil, smell the gunpowder and to get the downrange feedback they need, to increase their confidence with particular weapon systems.

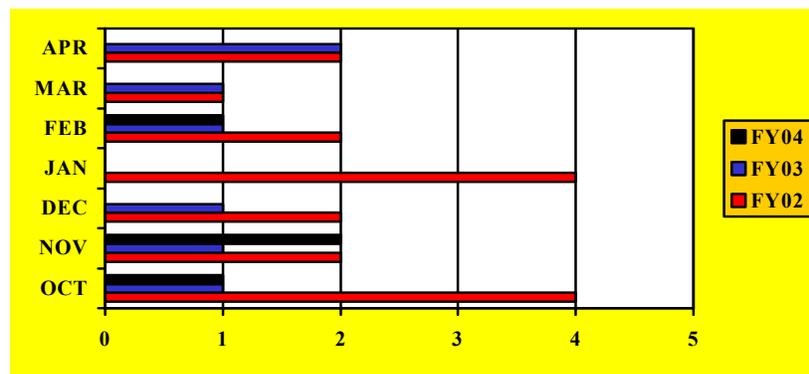
In the fall of last year CENATNSF joined forces with COMNAVSURFOR in the development of additional Weapons Handling Courseware. COMNAVSURFOR has developed a Small Arms PQS and Crew Served Weapon

Courseware Set that will again be in line with the NTRP and will soon be available. This is the beginning of a new era in small arms training and trainers will have a much better toolset than they ever have!

CENATNSF has stayed at the forefront in the creation of innovative methods to train the trainers and has developed a number of courses that provide training to armed sentries and trainers. The Commanding Officers Antiterrorism Course opened its doors in January of 2002. During this course Commanders are briefed on the new set of tools available to trainers and the latest and greatest information on combating terrorism. The Training Supervisors Course began in January 2003 and is geared towards mid level managers who are charged with training sailors. The managers are provided essential training skills and they are provided copies of the tools listed above to assist them in improving sailor readiness and capability.

So as you can see, much has been accomplished in the last few years to better educate armed sentries, trainers and commanders. Currently, CENATNSF is working on the results of trend feedback from a detailed analysis of mishaps. This analysis indicated that an inordinate number of the mishaps were occurring at the Clearing Barrel (Figure 4).

Figure 4. FY 01-04CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURE (CBP) EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS



FY02 17
FY03 7
FY04 5

Why were explosive mishaps occurring at the clearing barrel? The Clearing Barrel is designed as a safe direction to point a weapon while loading or unloading a small arm. It is designed to absorb a round if somehow discharged, while protecting personnel and equipment. There are mandated procedures and policy, but still the following questions must be asked:

Why are some activities loading and unloading small arms without a Clearing Barrel when its use has been specifically mandated?

Why in many instances are Clearing Barrel Supervisors not used when their presence is mandated by instruction?

Why was a Clearing Barrel Supervisor on a cell phone, while a watchstander was unloading a weapon into the Clearing Barrel?

Clearly a level of complacency was indicated along with numerous reports of personnel not following Standard Operating Procedures. This is a trend that we all need to collectively change. Small Arms disable, maim, kill and can damage equipment. Firearms should always be respected and personnel handling firearms should always follow the four universal safety rules. These rules are displayed in the below table and if followed will prevent negligent discharges.

RULE #	SAFETY RULE
2	Treat every weapon as if it were loaded.
3	Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.
4	Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until ready to fire.
4	Keep the weapon on safe until you intend to fire.

The question that needs to be asked now is what can we do to even further reduce the number of explosive mishaps at the clearing barrel? If we follow the simple guidance listed below we will greatly reduce the chances of an explosive mishap occurring. As long as “personnel” carry “loaded weapons” there will be mishaps, but we can all work together to minimize the occurrence. We were asked to reduce mishaps by 50%, we have done that, but we can still do better!



Clearing Barrel Supervisor actively involved. Note that the supervisor is visually and physically inspecting the M9 pistol pictured here to ensure it is clear. Clearing Barrel Supervisors must be senior, knowledgeable personnel who remain focused on the task at hand.

CENATNSF personnel:
MAC Jester and GM1 Cover

CENATNSF has a web portal on Navy Knowledge Online that is filled with the latest news on courses, instructions, training tips, discussion forums, etc. The portal administrator contact information is at the end of this article. The web address is <http://www.nko.navy.mil>. To remain current and in the loop, log on!



Armed Sentry is removing magazine from M16 Rifle prior to locking bolt to the rear.

CENATNSF personnel:
GM1 Cover and AO1 Hecker

In closing, personnel handling small arms, trainers and leadership personnel are all responsible and charged with ensuring that approved procedures are followed. We cannot implement procedures that we saw on T.V. the night before, eliminate steps from procedures because, “we have done this for years” or not use Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards because we have “memorized procedures”. Procedural steps are in place for a reason. If you have not received a copy of the NTRP or the Weapons Handling Courseware, contact the POC listed below. Follow the procedures listed in these tools and you cannot go wrong! First of all they are concise and correct and second of all because they are mandated by instruction. Use the courseware to ensure you are correctly performing procedures and practice, practice, practice in a sterile training environment free of live ammunition. One more note is to ensure that dummy (inert) ammunition used in training is never mixed or in the same training area as live ammunition. Mixing munitions is a recipe for disaster. Let’s continue to work together to better train our sailors to protect our great nation and to make sure safety is paramount in all of our minds when handling small arms. Stay Safe and stay alert.

For inquiries involving the NTRP, Weapons Handling Courseware or Small Arms Issues contact:	For inquiries involving the CENATNSF Web Portal, or courseware operation contact:
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