



# The Fatal Four

WEEK 10: 26 JULY, 2021

## 1. SPEEDING

**“A LCpl was on his way to work when a pickup truck made a left hand turn across a highway in order to enter a public access area. SNM crashed into the side of the pick-up truck, was transported to the hospital, and died of his injuries the following day. Excessive speed and rapid lane change were contributing factors”.**

Speed reduces the amount of available time needed to avoid a crash, increases the likelihood of crashing and increases the severity of a crash once it occurs. Speeding endangers everyone on the road: In 2019, speeding killed 9,478 people, accounting for more than a quarter (26%) of all traffic fatalities that year. Even so, speeding is rampant on highways, interstates, and roadways throughout the country. Drivers need to remember that there is a reason for posted speed limits. Roadways are dangerous places and speed

limits are designed to protect everyone. Learn about the dangers of speeding and why faster does not mean safer. Speeding behavior and aggressive drivers may not only affect the speeder—it can also affect other drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

**Here are some tips for encountering speeders on the road:**

- If you are in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move over and let them by.
- Give speeding drivers plenty of space. Speeding drivers may lose control of their vehicle more easily.
- Adjust your driving accordingly. Speeding is often tied to aggressive driving. If a speeding driver is tailgating you or trying to engage you in risky driving, use judgment to safely steer your vehicle out of the way.

Call the police if you believe a driver is following you or harassing you.

## THE FATAL FOUR

**Each year, thousands of people die on our roadways due to one, or a combination of, the Fatal Four actions executed by motorists. These actions are as follows: speeding, failing to wear a seatbelt, drinking and driving, and fatigued driving. These are not the only reasons that accidents happen; however, they are the most common. The examples listed at the beginning of each article are real. They represent a short narrative of how we have lost Marines due to one or more of these fatal actions.**

**Drive smart, drive safe,  
and look out for your  
fellow Marines.**



## 2. NOT WEARING A SEATBELT

**“Two Marines were involved in an automobile accident. The driver was not wearing a seatbelt and was pronounced deceased at the scene. The passenger, who was wearing a seatbelt, lived”.**

Seatbelts are the most effective means of saving lives and reducing serious injuries in traffic accidents. Wearing them properly is also the law in most states. Every year, Marines, Sailors, family members, and friends are killed, or maimed simply because they did not “buckle up”. Failure to use seatbelts contributes to more fatalities than any other single traffic safety-related behavior. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that 47% of roadway fatalities were unrestrained. The NHTSA, also estimates that in 37,792 potentially fatal and fatal crashes, 29,517 people survived due to wearing a seatbelt.

The consequences of not wearing, or improperly wearing, a seatbelt are clear:

1. Buckling up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas not buckling up can result in being totally ejected from the vehicle in a crash, which is almost always deadly.
2. Air bags are not enough to protect you; in fact, the force of an air bag can seriously injure or even kill you if you're not buckled up.
3. Improperly wearing a seatbelt, such as putting the strap below your arm, puts you and your children at risk in a crash.

Despite all the hazards we face every time we get behind the wheel of a vehicle, wearing a seat belt is still the single most effective thing you can do to save lives and reduce injuries on our nation's highways and roads.

## 3. DRINKING AND DRIVING

**“While on leave, a LCpl died in a single-vehicle accident at 2000. Substance related incident.”**

The criminal penalties for a DUI conviction in San Diego depend on how a DUI is being charged, how many prior convictions a defendant has, and other circumstances. Penalty enhancements may be made if the DUI resulted in injury to others. The DUI penalties in California include fines, court costs, probation, jail time, alcohol treatment programs, and the possibility of being required to have an ignition interlock device installed.

When a civilian driver is arrested for driving under the influence (DUI), known in California as a violation of California Vehicle Code (CVC) §23152(a) or §23152(b), they are informed that such a charge requires fighting a two-front battle. First, you are fighting a civil/administrative battle with the Department of Motor Vehicles. Second, you are fighting a criminal battle with the charging District Attorney’s office that is prosecuting your case.



When members of our Armed Forces are arrested for DUI, there are additional penalties they are facing because of their being a member of the military. The primary DUI laws and penalties imposed on members of the military are established in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the Manual for Courts Martial (MCM). These military enhanced consequences are **IN ADDITION** to the civilian penalties and consequences if the military member is convicted of DUI. You could be facing discharge from the Marine Corps.

Planning is critical when alcohol is involved. Don’t let your pride get in the way of making the right decision for not only yourself, but for those around you.

**Save lives by sharing a ride with a sober driver.**

## 4. FATIGUED DRIVING

**Two service members were involved in an accident when their car went off the road into a culvert, then struck a tree. The driver was pronounced dead at the scene. The passenger sustained serious injuries and was airlifted to the hospital. The report indicated that the driver fell asleep at the wheel.**

NHTSA estimates that in 2019, 697 fatal crashes involved drowsy drivers. Sleep-related crashes are more likely to happen at night, between the hours of midnight and 0600 or during the midafternoon, when drivers are more likely to be sleepy. These crashes often involve a single vehicle going off the road, with no evidence of braking or other attempt to prevent the crash.

Some ways to prevent drowsy driving include:

- Planning ahead by getting good rest before driving.
- Avoid driving between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Take breaks every two hours if on a long road trip.
- Drive with a companion who can make sure you are staying awake and alert or who can take over when fatigue sets in.
- If necessary, pull over at a rest area and

take a short nap.

- Make sure to be fully hydrated. Dehydration can lead to decreased mental acuity.
- Rolling the window down, turning on the air conditioner, turning up the radio, or drinking caffeinated or energy drinks may temporarily reduce fatigue - but they are NOT the recommended solutions for long distance driving.

**Use Risk Management and get some sleep before hitting the road!**

**Saturday is the deadliest day for driving. July is the deadliest month.**



### CAMP PENDLETON SAFETY CENTER

We provide a wide range of safety support services aimed at preserving combat readiness by identifying hazards and reducing risk to people and resources. We perform inspections, provide technical support, assist with safety program implementation, conduct mishap investigations, and offer safety training opportunities for all base personnel to include tenant commands. We want to empower all Sailors, Marines, civilians, and their families to embrace a proactive culture of risk identification and management to achieve zero preventable mishaps.

Have a question? Email us at: [Cpen\\_safety\\_help@usmc.mil](mailto:Cpen_safety_help@usmc.mil)

Commanding General’s Safety Hotline: 760.763.7233