



**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## **MARINE SAFETY ALERT**

### ***Inspections and Compliance Directorate***

June 7, 1998 (reformatted 2014)  
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 08-98

### **SAFETY IS PROPER COMMUNICATION**

Parents, the media, government, military, industry, schools, ad infinitum, regularly alert us to hazards associated with unsafe practices. Why then do so many preventable accidents occur every year? Is it just human nature to take unnecessary risks or is it a breakdown in proper communication? Most likely it is a combination of both.

There are those few unfortunate people who refuse to listen to anything concerning their well-being. They recklessly race through life until one day the odds catch up with them and they end up as accident statistics. Too often innocent bystanders are killed or injured because of these people.

Thankfully, the great majority are safety conscious and make every attempt to follow the rules and regulations of the activity in which they are participating. However, it is sad to note that, on occasion, even these people lower their safety guard and take chances which lead to mishaps. How can they be persuaded not to throw caution to the wind? Through proper communication, that's how.

There are few people who never have the opportunity to counsel others on the safest and most efficient way to accomplish a given task. It's during these direct confrontations with individuals and groups that the right words must be used. This ensures that those listening understand what was said and if called upon to perform a related task, they would know how to do it.

When dealing with safety, everyone must be a leader. Whatever your position, if you see someone doing something in a unsafe manner, call it to his or her attention. Actually, you're doing them a favor.

When you show someone how to do a job, make sure they fully understand you. By the same token, when you're learning a certain task, make sure you fully understand the procedures.

This is what it's all about. This is proper communication. This is safety.

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