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The Safety Chain

Kentucky Wing CAP

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Risk assessment is a proactive process designed to ensure CAP members are protected. One Kentucky squadron I can speak about gives a safety briefing for every activity as well as performs an ORM assessment. But how far must this go? Let us take a look at an activity. Squadron members are going to complete a *run* as part of their physical fitness training. Due to the number of participants the activity director has decided to break the group into two smaller teams who will run simultaneously, but at different locations. Will a single safety briefing suffice? Probably so. Will a single ORM suffice? Probably not. As part of ORM, both locations need to be looked at for potential hazards. For an activity such as this run a checklist should be developed for each location identifying potential hazards that may find on the course, and update the list on an ongoing basis as new hazards appear. For example, one team is running on all grass while the other team is running on a sidewalk and will be stepping off of a few curbs. Same run, two different environmental areas. Therefore, you need an ORM assessment for each location. After completing the risk assessments, the assessments should be reviewed regularly to ensure the accuracy for each location.

As you review the risk assessments please keep in your mind the “Five M’s.” One of the M’s represents man or the person. When assessing the risk and looking at the persons involved in the activity be sure to look at items such as fatigue, medication, nutrition, well-being and so forth. Cadets will be returning to school shortly and some do get up quite early to catch the school bus, spend long days at school and return home only to go to a CAP unit in the evening. The same goes for senior members who may get up early to go to work, who may work overtime throughout the week, come home with more work to complete. For each individual this requires an open and honest assessment of our self. Sometimes we may be tired but we don’t want to *wimp* out due to being sleepy or tired. Pilots accomplish this with the IMSAFE checklist.

Boiling it all down, ORM is used to determine the risk level for all activities. ORM aides us in locating hazards and allows us to minimize the hazards to make the activity completion safe. ORM is alive. Just because we have completed ORM it does not end there. ORM goes on forever as long as the activity or task is being performed. ORM can be modified as new risks are identified which were not detected earlier. Remember, ORM is a loop, and a loop goes on forever.

Remember, if you don’t think it’s safe, it probably isn’t.

Semper Vigilans