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# The Safety Chain

Kentucky Wing CAP  
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Between January 1, 2018 and March 31, 2018, **ALL** units are required to perform the annual ORM briefing to squadron members; and, conduct one unit meeting devoted only to safety. This is the annual safety stand-down day. Safety officers be sure to record these events in SIRS. Group Safety Officers please provide assistance to your units completing this requirement.

## Fainting

Mr. George Vogt, CAP Chief of Safety has written about this in an earlier issue of the Safety Beacon. Somewhere over time it has become an accepted fact if a cadet “lock” their knees, they will faint. So I have decided to review this issue once again. So I did some searching on this topic using the Internet.

For my first search I used “why soldiers faint after standing at attention for long periods of time.” Here is what I found. “Standing still for so long cramps up all your muscles and blood does not flow properly and this starves your brain of much needed oxygen so as a defence it shuts down to protect it from damage.” I also found “It can also be because you are dehydrated or more commonly among soldiers.” Also mentioned is the fact that it is easier for the heart to pump blood to your lower extremities than it is to pump blood to your brain. This is mainly due to gravity. So according to this hit on the Internet, the legs cramp robbing the brain of oxygen, therefore the brain shuts down and the person faints.

Also mentioned is dehydration. Dehydration causes an imbalance in the body’s electrolytes. It is the ratio of electrolytes like sodium, calcium and potassium, along with the amount of water in your system, that is responsible for keeping your muscles functional. Solution: stay hydrated, drink plenty of fluids.

A second article I read states 10 health reasons for fainting. They are dehydration, coughing, cardiovascular conditions, medication, hunger, diarrhea, panic & anxiety attacks, diabetes, anemia, and seizures. So, which of these ten reasons may cause a cadet in your unit to faint while standing in formation? The three that sticks out in my mind are dehydration, hunger, and possibly medication. So let's talk for a moment about the other seven. Diarrhea as well as panic & anxiety attacks may be ruled out rather easily. Is the cadet making excessive restroom stops. If you have been working with a cadet

that fainted and the cadet was performing an activity that he/she has completed before successfully, you probably can rule out panic attacks as well. The same for seizures. Unless the cadet suddenly developed a medical condition that causes seizures, this too can be ruled out, and the same for anemia. These are diagnosable medical conditions that parents should have made the unit commander aware.

This leaves three. Again we see hydration at the top of the list with hunger a little further down. Is the cadet drinking enough fluid? Has the cadet eaten a sufficient meal to provide his/her body with enough energy? And lastly, medication. Squadron leadership needs to ask and find out if the cadet is taking any medication. When doctors prescribe a new medication it may take the body some time to acclimate to the medication. Don't hesitate to ask.

When putting this in terms of the 5 M's, (member, medium, machine, mission, management), this falls under the Member category. And, this applies to senior members as well as cadets.

Fainting may be a symptom of a more serious illness, so please don't hesitate to see your healthcare provider.

*Semper Vigilans*