



# **SEMPER SAFE**

## **Negligent Discharges (ND's)**



The Marine Corps has recently experienced a rise in negligent discharge mishaps resulting in both serious injuries and loss of life. A negligent discharge is a discharge of a firearm involving carelessness and negligence. In judicial and military technical terms, a negligent discharge is a chargeable offence.

Last year, troops mistakenly fired their weapons 24 times in Afghanistan, injuring 18 and killing four. All of these incidents were preventable. Most of these mishaps often occur during weapons cleaning or during subsequent functional tests of a weapon after cleaning with live ammunition present. Complacency is also a primary causal factor in many of these mishaps, Marines must get “back to basics” and follow the simple rules of safe weapons handling.

Leaders and Marines at all levels should never consider any weapons-related activity to be low risk. Safe weapons handling procedures are critical at all times - on the range, in combat, and at home. If proper weapons handling procedures are not followed, a Marine potentially risks his or her own life and the safety of their fellow Marines and family members.

During combat, Marines must react quickly, safely, and be mentally prepared to engage targets. However, they must also utilize the same safe weapons handling procedures they are taught on the range, at home, or when handling or cleaning weapons to avoid becoming a statistic.

After a negligent discharge occurs, the worst thing we can do is simply say “It happens” and move on. That kind of attitude in itself is negligent. Just as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigates airplane crashes to determine the root cause to try and prevent the same crash from happening in the future. So, we must be responsible trainers and professional gun carriers and investigate what led up to the Negligent discharge to prevent it from happening again.

Some ways to prevent yourself or family members from having a negligent discharge would be to follow the simple tips below.

- Treat every weapon as if it were loaded at all times.
- Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you are ready to fire.
- Keep the weapon on safe until you intend to fire.
- Know your target and what lies beyond it.
- Know how to operate your weapon and know its safety features.
- Keep guns unloaded, locked, and out of reach of children at home.
- Keep ammunition stored separately and secured in a locked container.

**As Marines, Sailors and Civilian Marines we live by our ethos. So think before you jeopardize the safety of yourself, your fellow Marines, Sailors, civilian employees or family members, and remember SEMPER SAFE!**