It Takes Only One Person to

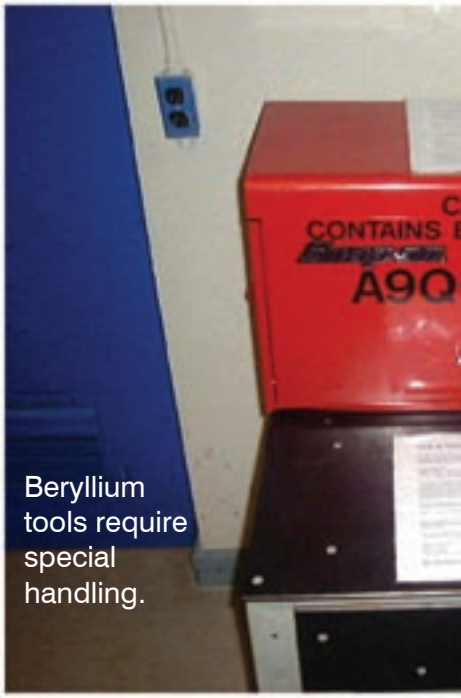
Mishap Reduction Opportunity

Trips and Falls FY99 through FY03

These preventable mishaps sound simple, yet they injure many people each year. The dollar cost is not tremendous, but the injuries and damage included one Class C, 47 five or more lost workdays, 12 one-to-four lost workdays, and 10 first-aid injuries. We must do better in every mishap category, and these statistics give a simple but costly place to start.

Rate	Total Injuries
ABs	13
AOs	11
ADs	11
ASs	3
AEs	6
ATs	15
AKs	2
AWs	2
AMEs	1
AZs	1
AMs	9
PRs	1

Overlooking hazards is an easy thing to do, especially if they've always been there, and nothing ever has been said about them. Three examples of easily overlooked hazards are: a poisoning danger, a hearing hazard, and a potential tripping risk. The avionics department at AIMU Rota, Spain, recently had to resolve these three problems.



Beryllium tools require special handling.

Many obvious dangers exist in commands around the world. To face our hazards, we used a common-sense (ORM) approach.

Hazard 1: A poisoning danger.

Non-magnetic tools are needed to maintain APS-116 radar transmitters. After researching the alternatives, we decided to purchase copper and beryllium tools. The old, salty dogs warned us not to etch any of the new tools because the dust is dangerous. One of the tools, an adjustable wrench, had a hinge that potentially could create this dust when the parts rubbed together. The tool-control petty officer noticed this problem and began to wonder just how dangerous beryllium is.

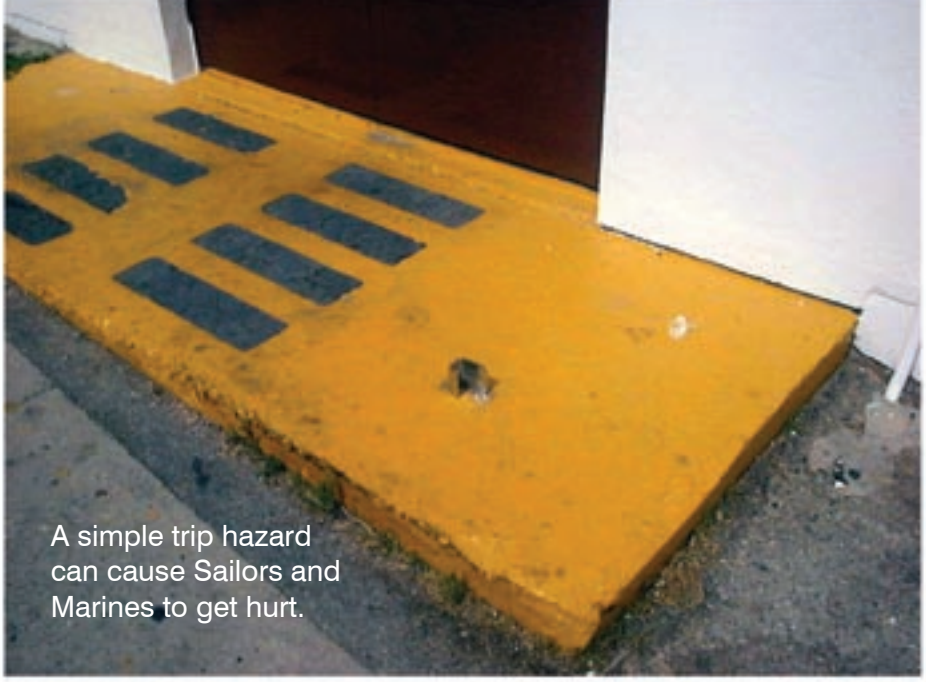
Our first step was to search for the Navy's MSDS. Unable to find it, we turned to other resources. We searched the Internet and asked everyone who had experience with beryllium tools. We found no definitive answers related to our use of the item. Our next step was to speak with the tool's manufacturer. They assured us that, with normal use, the tools were not harmful,

A loud, constant noise can be distracting and can cause hearing loss.

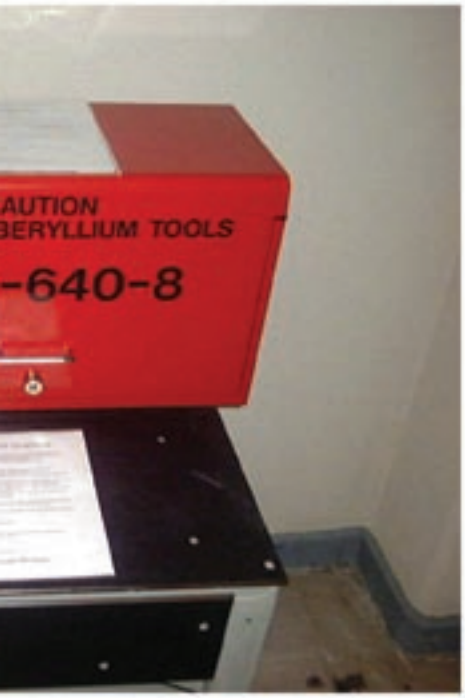
"World-class organizations do not tolerate preventable accidents." –Donald Rumsfeld, SecDef

Notice

By AT2 Benjamin Mathe and AT2 Daniel Lehmann



A simple trip hazard can cause Sailors and Marines to get hurt.



and any dust released at the hinge point is negligible. The manufacturer went on to remind us not to etch, grind, sand, machine, or re-sharpen any of the tools. These actions could release enough beryllium dust to become airborne and, if inhaled or absorbed through the skin, could cause lung cancer or other illnesses.

As a result of our efforts, every radar technician received training on the proper use of these tools. Also, a warning was posted next to the toolbox that holds the beryllium tools.

Hazard 2: A hearing hazard.

The avionics division uses five air conditioners to control the temperature and humidity in our shops. This cooling capacity is necessary to lessen the chance of ESD damage and corrosion to avionics gear. One unit always was louder than the others, and a technician, who works near that AC unit, asked if we could make it quieter.

This question brought attention to a potential hearing hazard, especially because the workcenter's computer stations were so close to the loud unit. We asked base safety to take decibel measurements, and we found those levels were just below the Navy's limit of permissible hearing exposure. However, we decided the computer stations were too close to the AC unit for prolonged exposure and moved them 20 feet away. The decibel level was safer in this new location.

Hazard 3: A potential trip hazard.

The doorstop for one of the exits from the avionics shop stuck up out of the ground about 4 inches. For the people working in this space everyday, this condition didn't pose a serious problem because the maintainers were familiar with the area. However, new workers or visitors were faced with a clear trip hazard.

One visitor almost made this possibility a reality. Not seeing the doorstop as she left avionics, this person scraped her foot on it. She was a bit lucky and didn't fall, but she could have dropped onto the cement, causing a serious injury. This near-accident highlighted a potentially life-threatening hazard.

We called in a trouble report, and workers came the next day to replace the doorstop with a pneumatic hinge. This fix allows the door to open or close slowly and prevents the trip hazard.

The doorstop and air conditioner had been ignored for years, and the beryllium tools could have been overlooked. In each case, the action of one person speaking up was all it took to remove the dangers.

Petty Officers Mathe and Lehmann work in the avionics department at the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Unit, NAS Rota, Spain.

This is a simple story about simple problems that have simple solutions. How many hazards are in your spaces, and what are you doing about them?—Ed.

The Naval Safety Center is dedicated to reducing mishaps by 50 percent in two years.