

NAS JACKSONVILLE REACHES THE STAR

On June 23, 2010, Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS JAX) received their Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary



Sailors raise the VPP "Star" flag during a ceremony at NAS JAX. Looking on are OSHA Representative Jeffrey Romeo, right, NAS JAX CO Capt. Jeffrey Maclay; Union Representative Robert Winchester; Bruce Cwalina, Executive Director of Commander, Navy Region Southeast; Rear Adm. Arthur Johnson, commander of Naval Safety Center and Ron Williamson NAS JAX safety officer. (U.S. Navy photo by Kaylee LaRocque)

Protection Programs (VPP) "Star" worksite certification. Less than 1/10 of one percent of businesses in the United States and only 34 other commands throughout the entire Department of Defense have attained this prestigious designation.

VPP "Star" worksites consistently demonstrate excellence in safety and health through reduced number of worker injuries and significantly lower lost workday and medical injury/illness related costs. Additional benefits of participation in the VPP are improved

employee motivation to work safely, better quality of life at work, and positive community relationships.

NAS JAX's proactive Safety Program has yielded the lowest number of total mishaps during any of the previous four years. Mishaps have been reduced more than the 75% required by the Secretary of Defense, and the rates for injuries and illnesses are 60% below the national rate. Government motor vehicle mishaps have also dropped to a 6-year low.

The VPP Star award was presented to NAS JAX Commanding Officer CAPT Jeffrey Maclay and NAS JAX Safety Officer Ron Williamson by OSHA representative Jeffrey Romeo during an all-hands ceremony. The ceremony was also attended by Commander, Naval Safety Center Rear Adm. Arthur Johnson and Commander, Navy Region Southeast Executive Assistant Bruce Cwalina.

"We're very proud of this achievement because it represents a culture of safety that is unsurpassed worldwide," said Maclay.

To attain OSHA's highest level of recognition for safety and health excellence, NAS JAX spent more than four years improving the safety culture aboard the station. In April 2010 a specialized team of OSHA inspectors and government employees from the Department of Labor and Delta Airlines arrived at NAS JAX to inspect all aspects of the installation's safety program. This included reviewing safety records, interviewing employees, and visiting numerous work areas to determine if the station would earn VPP Star certification for excellence in safety and health.

"We did extremely well during the inspection process. In fact, the inspectors didn't find a single discrepancy," said Williamson.

NAS JAX personnel undertook numerous initiatives that contributed to attaining VPP Star status:

- An employees' safety committee (Workers Integrating Safety and Health, or WISH) was re-formed with new direction. Employees who joined this committee came to every meeting stating what they had done in their respective departments for safety during the previous month. Several teams were formed by the WISH committee to reinforce safety:
 - An Inspection Team conducted workplace inspections.
 - A Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Team checked on job hazard analyses and questioned employees.
 - A Q&A team toured the command asking employees questions about the safety program.
- An Integrated Safety and Workers' Compensation Action Committee (ISWAC), composed of the station department heads and executive officer (XO), met quarterly to discuss and review the command's safety goals and objectives; progress on the self-assessment actions; and the latest safety trends and issues.
- All safety bulletin boards were standardized with required safety program information as well as additional beneficial safety information.
- All employees completed a VPP Passport action guide that required specific safety actions. The completed guides were signed by supervisors.
- Additional inspections were conducted under the Management Assessment Program (MAP) that required the commanding officer, XO, department heads and all supervisors to inspect workspaces. Employees were invited to accompany supervisors on their MAP inspections.

NAS JAX initiatives to attain VPP Star status (cont'd.)

- Following the ship board zone inspection model, the CO set up VPP oriented "zoners" conducted by an expertly trained cadre of Chief Petty Officers, Department of Navy civilians, and commissioned officers of all pay grades. This Team JAX cadre conducted over 500 safety self-inspections with impressive results. The team was very effective in identifying deficiencies, implementing corrections, and ensuring the Environmental and Safety Application Management System abatement log accurately reflected actions taken.
- Employee safety was emphasized, and a 96+ percent safety training rate has been the norm for over a year.
- During the mishap investigation process, both employees and their supervisors look at a mishap that occurred involving one of their own. They help the mishap investigator evaluate the mishap and provide input on how to prevent recurrences of the particular and similar types of mishaps. All mishap reports are summarized on a locally developed formatted sheet, and mishap results and recommendations are routed through the employee, supervisor, department head, and to the XO for comments.
- Emergency action guides were formulated for all emergency actions (hurricane, fire, medical emergencies, etc.). The guides were printed so all three bases in the JAX area (Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Naval Station Mayport and NAS Jacksonville) could furnish them to all employees.
- NAS JAX employees and supervisors developed and implemented more than 1,700 specific JHAs, which provide step-by-step guidance on how to safely operate equipment. The JHAs are an additional tool to protect employees from work-related hazards.
- Team JAX conducted over 500 safety self-inspections with impressive results.
- The NAS JAX safety office ensured their professionalism by adding two Certified Safety Professionals to their staff.

At the end of OSHA's VPP review of NAS JAX work processes, paperwork, and safety culture there were no 90 day findings. As one inspector privately stated, "You were the best I have ever seen!"

During a speech given at the award ceremony, Rear Adm. Johnson said, "Your journey down the VPP path has set the example for the rest of the Navy. If we can take more of our unnecessary losses off the table, we'll have more resources to continue our operations. You've proven you can reduce mishaps, save lives, and maximize operations and in doing so,

you are contributing to our Navy-Marine Corps team. As you achieve this certification, you become a model and example for the rest of the naval enterprise to emulate. Your best practices will inspire others to take a hard look at their workplace practices and figure out how to do better and how to operate and prevent mishaps.

"I'd like to commend you all on a job extremely well done, and I challenge you to recommit yourselves to the goal of zero preventable mishaps," said Johnson. "This achievement is a major step forward for our Navy and our journey towards world-class safety. As long as there is one preventable mishap, we still have work to do."



NAS JAX Safety Representative Max Bassett (l) and Commander, Naval Safety Center RADM Arthur Johnson display the plaque designating NAS JAX as a recipient of VPP Star status.

NAS Jax's VPP Star status could not have been achieved without the hard work and cooperation at all levels of the chain of command. NAS JAX Safety continues to be a leader of shore-based safety.