



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

**intercom:**

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Alaskan Region  
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Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7587  
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May 1989

# 89-07

## ***Transportation Safety Awareness Month***



(left to right) **Bill Schmidtman** (Flotilla Staff Officer for Public Education Auxiliary, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary), **Val Aron** (Accident Prevention Coordinator, Federal Aviation Administration), and **Lt. Pat Kasnick** (Director's, Staff, Community Services Bureau, receive their official Executive Proclamation signed by Governor Steve Cowper declaring June as "Transportation Safety Awareness Month" in Alaska.

(Story on page 2)

**CIVILAIR CLUB CORNER**

Anyone who has purchased a lifetime membership in the CivilAir Club, please call Hal Eward (263-6521) or June Hardin (271-5891). They are trying to prepare a complete list of all lifetime members and don't want to miss anyone.

For those of you who are interested in joining this group, the lifetime membership fee is only \$20. If you want to join for only one year at a time, the fee is \$2.

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**ATTENTION GOLFERS!**

The Annual FAA Golf Tournament is scheduled for Sunday, June 25 at Settlers Bay. Anyone interested in joining the fun can make reservations through Charlie Muhs. Call Charlie after June 5 at the

intercom:

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INTERCOM is published for the employees of the Alaskan Region by the Public Affairs Office. Articles and photographs are welcomed.

If you have questions, suggestions, or complaints, please call the Editor at 271-5293.

Anchorage FSS, phone number 263-6528. Remember to call in advance of the tournament for reservations because the teams fill up fast. Participants are registered on a first come first served basis, so don't procrastinate.

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**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH**

Today, aviation is one of America's greatest enterprises. Our air transportation system is the largest and finest in the world and the primary public carrier in America.

In recognition of the dedication and importance of the thousands of men and women who are involved in the transportation industry, President George Bush declared May 14-20, 1989, as "National Transportation Week" throughout the United States.

As a follow up to this week of special attention to the transportation industry, Governor Cowper has issued an Executive Proclamation declaring the month of June "Transportation Safety Awareness Month." Members of Alaska's aviation, highway, railroad, and waterway transportation systems are all included in this effort to encourage a higher level of safety awareness among all travelers throughout our huge state.

Special materials are being prepared and functions are being planned by FAA personnel during the month of June to highlight the importance of safety. During the high traffic season that runs from June through September, FAA personnel will continue to focus their attention on creating a higher level of safety awareness among pilots and passengers in Alaska.

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# STATE OF ALASKA



## Executive Proclamation

by

**Steve Cowper, Governor**

The development of our state and nation has been aided by the existence of an efficient, safe and comprehensive transportation system. Federal and state governments and the private sector are united in their efforts to maintain safe recreational and commercial transportation systems.

Land, sea and air transportation are necessary and enjoyable activities, but can bring danger to those who are unfamiliar with the possible hazards of the environment.

Alaska has eight times as many pilots and 15 times as many aircraft on a per capita basis as the rest of the U.S. and aircraft accidents and incidents annually increase during the June through September peak summer flying season.

Boating for both commercial and recreational purposes is a growing enterprise in Alaska and is rapidly gaining popularity throughout the state.

Usage of our highways continues to increase, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data indicates that lap and shoulder safety belts, when used properly, reduce serious occupant injury in motor vehicle accidents by nearly 50 percent.

The Federal Aviation Administration and citizen aviation support groups sponsor Aviation Safety Seminars, special training activities and public education programs designed to address aviation safety issues.

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary offer boating safety equipment checks for mariners at all levels, and public education programs on safe boating.

The Alaska Highway Safety Planning Agency provides information and educational programs on Alaska's Child Safety Seat Law and Alaska's Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) statutes.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Steve Cowper, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim the month of June 1989 as:

**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH**

in Alaska.

DATED: May 9, 1989

Done by —

**Steve Cowper, Governor,**  
who has also authorized  
the seal of the State of  
Alaska to be affixed to  
this proclamation.



**VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM**

**by Jean Pershall, AAL-16B**  
**Employee Relations Specialist**

If you are a Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) covered employee thinking about investing in the voluntary contribution plan that is paying 9.125% interest, you should look at new rulings on the taxability of refunds taken before you reach 59 1/2 years of age. In most cases, earnings from the voluntary contribution accounts will be subject to a 10% early distribution tax.

Also, in most cases, employees will not be able to defer taxes on interest from the voluntary contribution refunds by rolling them over into individual retirement accounts. (There are exceptions.)

First, a brief explanation of the voluntary contribution program. Most Federal workers covered by the CSRS are eligible to apply for the voluntary contribution program. It is separate from the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). TSP is open to nearly all employees and all money contributed to TSP is tax-deferred.

Under the voluntary contribution plan, employees make deposits by personal check to the Office of Personnel Management. They may invest up to 10% of their lifetime Federal pay in increments of \$25 or more. Only the earnings on deposits are taxable.

Participants have two options: Use the money to modestly boost their lifetime monthly pensions (\$100 on deposit equals \$7 per year additional annuity), or take it out in a lump-sum refund before retiring. Participants may make only one withdrawal, and it must be the entire amount in the account.

Interest paid on voluntary contributions are subject to a 10% surtax if the employee receives them as a lump sum before age 59 1/2. Some exceptions are: Payment after separation from service during or after the year in which the employee

attains age 55; or voluntary contributions paid out in the form of an annuity under the CSRS. The 10% tax doesn't apply to payments as a result of an employee's death or disability.

The agency is seeking IRS clarification on the question of rolling over voluntary contribution lump-sum interest into your IRA and avoiding the 10% surtax. It appears that when the refund is made because of separation from service, or death, and the entire lump-sum credit (all deductions and deposits) is paid at the same time, the refund would be eligible for rollover into your IRA and will be tax deferred.

As more information is received on this subject, I will keep you informed through the INTERCOM.

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**DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER**

**FAA RETIREES REUNION--JUNE 23, 1989**  
 Anchorage Federal Office Building  
 9:00 a.m.

**CIVIL AIR CLUB PICNIC--JUNE 24, 1989**  
 Mat Su Resort  
 Starts at Noon

**FAA GOLF TOURNAMENT--JUNE 25, 1989**  
 Settler's Bay Golf Course  
 9:00 a.m. SHOTGUN START

## FAA DOESN'T WANT DRUGS

by Mary Grindrod, R.N., AAL-300  
Aviation Medical Division

During the past few weeks, members of our medical staff have been attending lectures about drugs. This topic prompted us to use the caption "FAA DOESN'T WANT DRUGS" on our Medical Bulletin Board in our office. Due to the interest prompted by this statement, and the questions we have been asked, we felt it would be appropriate to talk again a little about drugs. Everyone isn't "street smart" on this subject. Sometimes we just don't know!

**MARIJUANA:** Perhaps you have been invited to a party and know that pot is available. Friends may say that it is no worse than having a few drinks. There is really no real harm. After all, it's not the same as using hard drugs. Fifteen years ago, much debate raged over the benefits and the hazards of smoking marijuana. Part of the problem was that scientists had trouble identifying the principal psychoactive ingredient of cannabis (marijuana). The key ingredient they discovered is referred to as THC. Measuring the amount of THC now puts marijuana research on a sound scientific basis. Remember that the amount of THC actually absorbed by a specific individual is difficult to measure. The areas of the brain most effected by THC are the relay centers for sensory perception and emotional response. Marijuana causes changes in personality, memory, thought formation, mood, and motivation. The most disastrous effect of marijuana is what it does to cell chromosomes. Exposure to THC brings a large-scale breakage of chromosomes. Marijuana's THC becomes embedded and accumulates in the fat structure of the brain and body cells.

**COCAINE:** This drug became illegal when the Harrison Narcotic Act was passed in 1914. It is also called "coke," "snow," "nose candy," "flake," "snort," and the names go on and on. It is an unpredictable and addictive drug. In the past, cocaine was known as the symbol of success. Not

anymore! Almost anyone can buy "crack" for a few dollars. Cocaine may be inhaled, injected, swallowed, or smoked. While injecting and freebasing carry the greatest risk of dependence and overdose, any method can lead to addiction and possible death. Cocaine can cause dramatic changes in blood pressure, as well as heart and breathing rates. Small amounts may cause the body to exceed its own limits, sometimes resulting in death. Other effects of cocaine use may include nausea, vomiting, insomnia, anxiety, tremors, and convulsions. Snorting cocaine may severely damage nasal tissue. Freebasing may damage lungs or cause burns if an explosion occurs during processing or heating. Cocaine abuse is preventable through education about drug abuse.

The above two drugs of abuse are certainly not the only ones, but they are the two that are most prevalent in our local area. Never think you know too much about drugs and what they may do to your body and mind. Continue to take action against illegal drugs in your family situations as well as in the work site and community.



You can ask our friendly nurses any additional questions you might have on this subject. Patricia Sanders, R.N. (left) and Mary Grindrod, R.N. have a wealth of information they are happy to share with you.

**FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH PROGRAM**

**by Jean Pershall, AAL-16B,  
Employee Relations Specialist**

The nation's biggest company health plan -- the Federal Government's \$11 billion annual package -- will come under scrutiny this month. It will almost certainly lead to new premiums and new coverage for the 10 million members of the Federal family.

In May, the House Compensation subcommittee, led by Rep. Gary L. Ackerman (D-N.Y.), presented a report on the Federal health program by the fact-finding Congressional Research Service (CRS).

A CRS study several years ago led to the replacement of the Federal pension program with the new Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). FERS now covers 800,000 Federal workers and virtually all new employees. When the CRS speaks, everybody on Capitol Hill listens.

It is generally agreed that the Federal health program has problems. Premiums paid by the government and employees are rising, and coverage in many areas is slipping. In 1986, the government share of health premiums was \$3.4 billion. Today, it is \$7.6 billion. Federal agencies, on an average, pay about 60% of the total premium for employees and retirees.

Representative Ackerman is expected to introduce legislation to overhaul the program, which covers 10 million civil service members, from retirees, to State Department personnel in Africa, to dependent children of Defense Department workers in Panama.

One of several proposals is a voucher system whereby the Government would give employees and retirees a check once a year to buy their own insurance. Those who pick plans that cost less than the voucher could keep the money. Those who want more expensive plans would pay the difference.

Most members of Congress -- who, incidentally, are covered by the health program -- don't like the voucher idea. They believe it could lead to inadequate coverage for employees and retirees, who might be tempted into lower-cost, low-coverage plans.

Because of the complexity of the Federal health program, any overhaul of the system is at least a year away. The CRS report in May listed flaws in the current program, and options for changes that spell out the kind of coverage you are likely to have and premiums you can expect to pay in the 1990's.

As information becomes available on program changes, we will keep employees informed.

## **DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE** **Are They a Problem?**

by Marge Cholometes, AAL-16C,  
Drug Program Manager

People don't check their substance abuse problems at the door when they enter the workplace. Employees caught up in substance abuse tend to be absent from the job up to 16 times more often, claim three times as many sickness benefits, and file five times as many workers' compensation claims.

Significantly, the costs of substance abuse are also reflected by the working family members who are not themselves abusers. A nonalcoholic member of an alcoholic's family uses an average of ten times as much sick leave as normal.

It is difficult to put a price tag on low morale and impaired judgment in decision-making at work caused by substance abuse. Nor is it easy for an organization to figure the costs of pilfering, high turnover, recruitment, and training. No one knows how much is being lost in this way because of undetected or untreated substance abuse.

To dismiss these as "the cost of doing business" is to accept a norm that does not have to be accepted. It is worth challenging, as many large companies have seen.

Corporations are turning increasingly to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) to deal with employees' substance abuse problems. An EAP is a work-based strategy for early identification of employees' difficulties that are adversely affecting job performance.

Giving an EAP the responsibility for helping employees with substance abuse problems that adversely impact job performance helps all members of the workplace team. Executives and managers know they have professional help available if an employee's abuse problem impacts the workplace. And workers know they have somewhere to go for professional assistance.

When someone makes excuses for a co-worker's drowsiness or watery eyes, those excuses may serve to hide a more serious problem. Subtle changes in behavior may be written off or not recorded because no one wants to admit that her friend or a person he hired has a substance abuse problem. Behavioral changes may be written off or not recorded because no one wants to confront the problem.

Most workplace leaders are not experts on medicine, drugs, and psychological assessment. But when they ignore or excuse behaviors or attitudes that diminish work performance, they may be closing their eyes to a problem and enabling workers who are harmfully involved with alcohol or other drugs to continue the risk to themselves and their co-workers.

Refusal to admit the possibility that alcohol or other drug use might exist at a worksite could be a missed opportunity to help an employee get help. If there is a problem, ignoring it will not make it go away. Drug and alcohol problems do not usually get better if left alone -- they get worse.

Even if the leaders of organizations are convinced that "none of my people do drugs," they are interested in helping employees who are experiencing other personal problems that affect work performance. The EAP is an excellent mechanism for providing that help.

For the past nine years, FAA has had an active, ongoing EAP. If you, a family member, or a co-worker need help, our EAP Contractor, Human Affairs of Alaska (4300 B Street, Suite 606, 562-2812), is just a phone call away. Outside Anchorage, call 1-800-478-2812. Remember! You are not alone!

# CIVIL AIR CLUB PICNIC

Saturday, June 24, 1989

Mat Su Resort

Start at Noon

Food at 1PM

Baked Beans

Beer Wine

Hot Dogs

Soda Pop

Hamburgers

Coffee

Halibut

Salmon

PLEASE BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH  
IF LAST NAME BEGINS WITH A THRU M

BRING A DESSERT

IF LAST NAME BEGINS WITH N THRU Z

BRING A SALAD

DISPOSABLE CONTAINERS SUGGESTED

\*\*\*\*\*DOOR PRIZES\*\*\*\*\*

PADDLE BOAT RENTALS  
GAMES FOR ALL AGES

SEE YOUR REP FOR  
TICKETS

	MEMBER	NON-MEMBER
ADULT	\$3.00	\$5.00
UNDER 12	\$1.50	\$2.00