

**COMMANDING OFFICER'S**  
**VMAT-203 SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**



There is a saying that "a ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for." Tactical aviation brings with it a certain level of risk. It is up to professionals to manage that risk in order to accomplish the mission. Consequently, risk aversion cannot dominate our decision making. Instead our operations should be defined by risk mitigation. This involves utilizing a cost versus benefit, risk versus reward thought process in all that we do to optimize training while mitigating any hazards. We utilize a methodology articulated in the principles of Operational Risk Management (ORM) to

identify potential risks before they occur and implement mitigations in our preparation and execution to reduce risk. These are not buzz words or checklists to be followed; they are a state of mind.

We emphasize safety in everything we do at VMAT-203, not for safety's sake - but for the preservation of our assets. These assets include our aircraft, equipment, and personnel. Of this list, the Marines and Sailors of this squadron are our most valued asset, and ensuring their safety on and off duty must be part of our daily focus. Good leaders keep Marines in good health and are tireless in ensuring their welfare.

Our challenge is to continuously identify risk and mitigate it through sound judgment and decision making. Whether in the air, in the hangar or on liberty, making sound decisions will require your leadership and moral fortitude to ask hard questions, and when necessary break the chain of events that might otherwise lead to tragedy.

Each member of this command has a duty to act. By our very nature Marines have a bias for action. If we witness something that is not correct or runs contrary to safe and sound practices (i.e., anything Dumb, Dangerous, or Different), it is our duty as Marines to take immediate corrective action. If in doubt, there should be no doubt. Stop what is going on and seek guidance from higher. Move out aggressively and don't wait on someone else to handle it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. C. Wirth".

C. C. WIRTH

