

USMC Suicide Activity Report

CY2012 - Summary of February Suicides

Marine Corps February 2012 suicide trends

There were four probable active duty Marine suicides in February 2012.

- A 25-year-old, married, Caucasian, male, Corporal, with no prior deployments in support of OEF/OIF.
- A 20-year-old, single, Caucasian, male, Lance Corporal, with no prior deployments in support of OEF/OIF.
- A 22-year-old, single, Caucasian, male, Lance Corporal, with one prior deployment in support of OEF/OIF.
- A 27-year-old, married, African American, male, Corporal, with three prior deployments in support of OEF/OIF.

	CY10	CY11	CY12
Confirmed or probable suicides in February	2	2	4
Confirmed or probable suicide attempts in February	20	21	15
Confirmed or probable suicides through February	9	4	8
Confirmed or probable suicide attempts through February	41	35	27

Table 1: Monthly suicide data through February 2012

Leader takes creative prevention approach

Col Brent Willson, Headquarters Battalion, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, in cooperation with Combat Camera, devised a suicide prevention poster campaign as part of a local suicide prevention effort.

He said, "I wanted an alternative to plain, ineffective suicide prevention posters. Marines ignore those posters and an opportunity is lost to promote awareness."

Col Willson encouraged the Combat Camera team to be creative, and involve other Marines in the process.

"Part of our approach was to use our own top-performing Marines as actors," he explained, "the idea being a Marine is more likely to look at and read a poster if they recognize

Suicide Prevention Media Guidelines:

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center offers the following guidelines when using media to prevent suicide:

- Themes should be positive (e.g., "Life is worth living") versus negative (e.g., "Don't kill yourself").
- Depictions should not contain graphics or descriptions of methods of suicide (e.g., guns, pills, etc.) because that has been shown to lead to copycat suicides.
- The word 'suicide' should not appear in titles or headlines.
- Scenes should depict desired behavior (e.g., Marines talking to other Marines), not undesired behavior (e.g., sitting isolated in a corner).
- Actors or models should not appear disheveled, depressed, or in obvious distress. They should appear normal, because there are often no obvious warning signs of distress, and close engagement is required to tell if someone may be at risk.

someone's picture. And it worked."

Marines stopped and read the posters featuring their friends and acquaintances, and dozens of conversations were sparked on the topic of suicide prevention, exactly the point addressed in one poster's title:

"Talking About It Is Preventing It."

In two cases, posters prompted Marines who had been contemplating suicide to come forward and receive help.

Marines outside of Combat Camera helped shape poster (Continued on back)



CY 2008 national suicide rate adjusted for MC demographics

The 2008 national suicide rate adjusted for Marine Corps demographics is 20.7 per 100,000.

Calculating an adjusted national rate is important to accurately compare Marine Corps and national suicide rates, as in Figure 1.

The national adjusted suicide rate is calculated by taking Centers for Disease Control data, and changing the data to look more like the Marine Corps (mostly young and male). Adjusted civilian rates for CYs '09 and '10 will be calculated when the data is available.

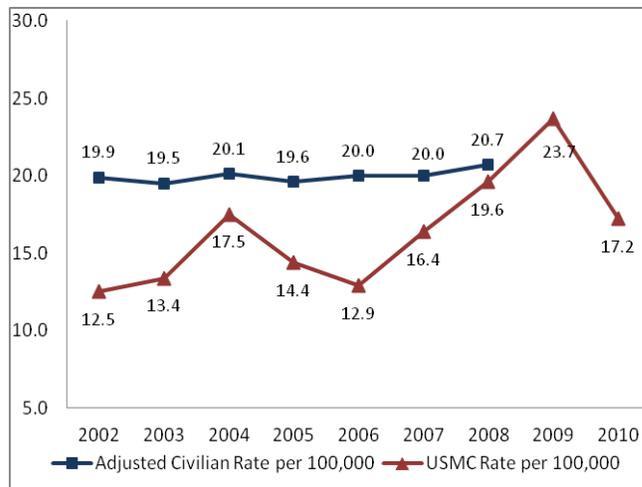


Figure 1: 2008 Adjusted civilian suicide rate

(Continued from front)

content through review and critique.

“When developing media for Marines, you must involve the target audience at every stage of development,” said Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program Manager LCDR Andrew Martin.

“Marines will tell you if your idea is no good, and they’ll often

come up with the right answer,” he added.

Col Willson offered, “Posters can’t be the whole program. You’ve got to constantly set a tone so Marines will ask for help when they need it.”

“For example,” he explained, “I make it a point at formations to say that stress is normal, and

everybody can use help sometimes.”

Col Willson said that help can be talking with another Marine, talking to a Chaplain, or meeting with a medical officer.

“It doesn’t matter as long as you get help,” he said.

CY	Total Suicides*	OEF/OIF/OND Deployment History**	No OEF/OIF/OND Deployment History	Rate Per 100K	Army Rate	Navy Rate	Air Force Rate	Marine Corps Attempts
03	26 (8)	6 (2)	20	13.4	11.4	10.8	9.6	80
04	34 (2)	15 (7)	19	17.5	9.7	10.0	12.6	85
05	28 (3)	12 (4)	16	14.4	12.7	9.5	9.3	112
06	25 (0)	10 (4)	15	12.9	15.2	10.1	12.3	99
07	33 (0)	18 (6)	15	16.4	16.7	11.1	9.6	103
08	42 (2)	29 (7)	13	19.6	19.6	11.0	12.4	146
09	52 (1)	36 (11)	16	23.7	22.3	13.1	12.4	164
10	37 (1)	21 (5)	16	17.2	21.8	10.8	15.5	172
11	33 (1)	17 (2)	16	***				171
12	8 (0)	4 (0)	4	***				27

Table 2: Annual suicide data through February 2012

* The numbers in () denote reservists on active duty and are included in the total suicides.

**The numbers in () denote in-theater suicides.

*** Final rate to be calculated 90 days after close of calendar year per USD(P&R) Memorandum dated June 16, 2006.