

# Inspector General of the Marine Corps Ethical Decision Game No. 3 (1-24)

Assessing operational readiness

by IGMC Staff

## Scenario

You are a member of an inspection team assigned to assess the readiness and operational status of a Marine Corps unit. As part of your inspection process, you review the unit's maintenance status reports and compare them with the data recorded in the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). You discover a significant discrepancy between the maintenance status reported by the unit and the actual data in DRRS.

During informal conversations with small groups of Marines within the unit, you learn that there are concerns regarding the accuracy of the reported maintenance status. The Marines express that they have been pressured by the command to present a positive image for the upcoming inspection, even if it means concealing actual maintenance issues. Some Marines reveal that the trucks in the unit are not roadworthy and pose safety risks for highway travel, but they have been instructed to suppress these concerns.

The Marines further explain that the command has adopted a make-it-happen philosophy to ensure the unit appears fully operational and prepared for the next significant training evaluation. This approach includes overlooking safety issues and pushing through despite concerns raised by the troops.

## Scenario Questions

1. What are the ethical concerns raised by the situation described?
2. How might the unit's actions impact

the safety of its personnel and the integrity of inspection processes?

3. What course of action should you take as a member of the inspection team to address these concerns and uphold ethical standards?

## Considerations

1. The situation raises several ethical concerns:

- **Integrity of Reporting:** The unit's deliberate manipulation of maintenance status reports and DRRS data misrepresents the true state of readiness. This compromises the integrity of reporting systems and inspection processes.
- **Safety of Personnel:** The command's decision to overlook safety issues and use vehicles that are not roadworthy jeopardizes the safety of personnel. This poses a significant risk to Marines' well-being during highway travel.
- **Pressure and Retaliation:** The pressure placed on Marines to conceal maintenance issues and adhere to a

make-it-happen philosophy creates an environment where voicing concerns could lead to retaliation or negative consequences.

2. The unit's actions can have serious implications:

- **Personnel Safety:** Using vehicles that are not roadworthy puts the safety of Marines at risk. Inadequately maintained vehicles may result in accidents or incidents during highway travel.
- **Integrity of Inspection:** Manipulating maintenance status reports and data misrepresents the unit's actual state of readiness. This undermines the credibility of inspection processes and the trust placed in reporting systems.
- **Command Climate:** The command's emphasis on appearance over safety and accuracy fosters a negative command climate where the well-being of personnel and ethical considerations take a back seat to meet performance expectations.



**EDGs involve real-world leadership challenges that usually have a significant ethical or legal component. They are typical of challenges that have confronted Marines in the past and could easily be encountered in the future. Readers should analyze the problem carefully and decide what action they would take.**

# Answers to the EDG Questions Presented on Page 75

## Appropriate Actions

As a member of the inspection team, you should take the following steps to address these concerns and uphold ethical standards:

- **Document Findings:** Thoroughly document your findings, including the discrepancy between maintenance reports and DRRS data, as well as the concerns raised by Marines regarding safety and manipulation of reporting.
- **Engage Command Leadership:** Initiate a private conversation with the unit's command leadership to discuss the concerns raised by Marines and the discrepancies in reporting. Present your findings professionally and objectively.
- **Emphasize Safety:** Highlight the safety risks associated with using unsafe vehicles for highway travel. Stress the importance of prioritizing the

safety and well-being of Marines over meeting training evaluation deadlines.

- **Recommendations:** Provide clear recommendations for addressing the reported maintenance issues, accurately reflecting the unit's readiness status, and addressing the ethical concerns raised.
- **Follow-Up:** Monitor the unit's response and actions taken to rectify the situation. Follow up to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address safety concerns and uphold ethical standards.
- **Report to Higher Authorities:** If the command fails to address the concerns and safety risks adequately, consider reporting the situation to higher authorities within the Marine Corps to ensure accountability and appropriate action.

In conclusion, all Marines have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the Marine Corps and the safety of its personnel. Addressing the manipulation of reporting and the neglect of safety concerns is essential to maintaining ethical standards and the well-being of Marines.



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