

Risk assessment and safety

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There are only three sports: mountain climbing, bull fighting, and motor racing. All the rest are merely games. Ernest Hemingway

Why this quote? All three of those sports can result in death, games do not involve death. This past week it was widely reported that 11 people died while trying to summit Mt. Everest. The deaths were not the result of weather(which can be a huge problem) but inexperience, ill-equipped and over crowded. This made me think about motor racing.

Over the years I have seen drivers with poor safety equipment and poor preparation, such as old faded race suit, no socks, no nomex long underwear and faded worn shoes and gloves. Some of these items are not in keeping with the NASA CCR's others while in compliance with the CCR's are not proper preparation. My suggestions to not end up like the Mt Everest situation are the following.

Wear long sleeve and full Nomex underwear. It should be replaced every 2-3 years.

Replace the racing suit at least every 5 years if not sooner.

Wear Nomex socks

Replace shoes and gloves every two years.

Wear a balaclava that is replaced every 2 years

Why the short replacement cycle, your own sweat, plus UV rays, dirt and grease and washing reduces the effects of Nomex over time. Never wash any of these items with regular laundry soap as it will take the Nomex chemical out of the fabric. Wash in Molecule it works and protects the fabric. Do not wear these clothing items while in the sun for protracted periods of time.

Above all that as I get older friends start to pass away. I race with individuals I consider friends and watching them get injured is difficult especially when those injuries can be minimized or prevented.

On last note on safety and that is fire suppression systems. Does your car have one in addition to a hand held fire extinguisher. If it does not highly recommend installation of a system. When installing do not have it spray on you as that is very distracting during a stressful situation, do not have it spray into the drivers foot well as the liquid is a modified soap and is slippery which means difficulty in getting out of the car. If you have a system check it every year at a minimum.

I will close with this sobering thought. Those 11 who died, they will not be brought back to loved ones. Instead they will be pushed off the trail and lay there frozen for eternity. That fate in some cases was the result of poor preparation and inadequate equipment both of which could have been prevented.

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