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Bell Boeing MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft were involved in 40 mishaps between October 2001 and July 2012, according to US Marine Corps (USMC) statistics, with accident rates for less serious class B and C mishaps higher than the averages for the corps' other aviation assets.

The statistics complicate the Ospreys' controversial deployment to Okinawa Prefecture, which has been the subject of public protests in Japan as a result of fears over the aircraft's safety record. Twelve MV-22s arrived at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture on 23 July ahead of their planned deployment to MCAS Futenma in Ginowan, Okinawa, in September. The aircraft are scheduled to begin operations there in October.

On 3 August US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta defended the MV-22's record after meeting with Japanese Defense Minister Satoshi Morimoto in Washington, DC. "We have tremendous confidence in this plane," Panetta said. "We fly it in combat operations. We fly it around the world. We fly it here in this country. And we're tremendously confident that this plane can safely implement its operational mission."

The USMC data shows that MV-22 aircraft were involved in 1.93 class A mishaps per 100,000 flight hours from October 2001 to July 2012. Class A mishaps are defined as those leading to a fatality, permanent full disability or damage of USD2 million or more. The average number for the USMC aviation fleet is 2.45.

However, the MV-22's class B mishap rate was 2.85 compared to the fleet average of 2.07. A class B mishap is judged as involving permanent partial disability or damage costing USD500,000. The MV-22's class C mishap rate - involving a non-fatal injury or damage costing between USD50,000 and USD500,000 - was 10.46, more than twice the fleet average of 4.58.

According to the USMC figures, MV-22s have had four class A mishaps, nine class B mishaps and 27 class C mishaps, for a total of 40 mishaps since 2001. A USMC spokesman added that "18 of all mishaps happened while the aircraft was on the ground, [and] 30 of these mishaps took place on the ground or during landing and not while flying over populated areas or cities".

US Marine Corps
aviation fleet safety





record - Class B and
C mishaps from
2001-2012

	B AGM	B FM	B FRM	C AGM	C FM	C FRM
Bell AH-1 Super Cobra	1.16	1.16	0.0	1.86	3.26	0.47
McDonnell Douglas/BAe AV-8B Harrier II	1.68	5.87	0.0	2.8	5.59	0.0
Boeing CH-46 Sea Knight	0.42	0.62	0.0	3.12	1.04	0.21
Sikorsky CH-53 Sea Stallion	1.92	0.72	0.24	5.53	6.73	2.4
Northrop Grumman EA-6B Prowler	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.07	5.18	0.0
Boeing F/A-18 Hornet	0.25	3.52	0.25	4.02	5.66	0.88
Lockheed Martin KC-130	0.62	0.0	0.0	2.48	2.17	0.0
Bell Boeing MV-22 Osprey	3.8	2.85	0.0	11.41	10.46	1.9
Bell UH-1 Huey	0.0	1.75	0.0	1.75	5.68	0.44
Average	0.9	2.07	0.09	3.53	4.58	0.71

AGM: Aircraft
Ground Mishap

FM: Flight Mishap

FRM: Flight-Related
Mishap

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