



U.S. ARMY
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U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

FROM THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



From the CSM

It's hard to believe we're already more than halfway through this fiscal year. Our Army is as busy as ever, and our Soldiers are doing great work in places both near and far. During my travels over the past few months, it's been my pleasure to see our Soldiers in action.

This hard work shows in our accident statistics. To date in fiscal 2010, overall accidental fatalities are comparable with last year's historic numbers. We've done especially well regarding motorcycle fatalities, which remain slightly below the numbers logged for the same time frame in fiscal 2009.

As we move full swing into this summer's riding season, let's keep this trend going by encouraging Soldier responsibility and participation in the motorcycle training programs offered at installations across our Army. The Motorcycle Mentorship Program is one of the most successful of these initiatives, and it's a great way for commanders to promote safety awareness among motorcycle riders within their formations. For beginners and experienced riders alike, the MMP offers an opportunity for fun and camaraderie as participants build confidence and hone their riding skills.

One area that continues to be of concern is privately owned vehicle accidents involving sedans. While fatal POV accidents as a whole are down about 16 percent from fiscal 2009, we're seeing a slight trend in fatalities among unbuckled backseat passengers in sedans specifically. This finding proves that we, as first-line Leaders, must continue to reinforce the importance of seat belt use within our force, especially with younger drivers and their passengers.

The Army has tools in place to help both individual Soldiers and Leaders recognize potential driving hazards. I recently started a discussion on BCKS Safety Net regarding the TRiPS program, asking whether the process had become a paper drill or if it was still useful for Leaders to identify high-risk Soldiers. The overwhelming majority of responses emphasized the value of TRiPS, especially when first-line Leaders embrace the tool and actively use it to engage with Soldiers about their off-duty activities.

Without supervisor and Soldier buy-in, TRiPS is just a tool — but it becomes a game changer when it encourages dialogue between Soldiers and their supervisors. These conversations must include a discussion of all the hazards Soldiers and their passengers might face on the road and the importance of seat belts in saving lives. You don't have to wait until your Soldiers complete a TRiPS report before talking to them about safe driving practices, however. In fact, most of our POV fatalities are happening near home stations, so the need for timely guidance is ever present. Listen to what your Soldiers are saying, and always be on the lookout for those who might need additional experience or direction to become a safe and responsible driver.

This same emphasis on driving safety must translate to on-duty operations. Just recently, we lost three Soldiers within one week to separate MRAP rollover accidents. While investigations are ongoing, at least one of the fatalities — a vehicle commander — is reported to have not been using his restraint system.

Around the same time, another vehicle crew experienced a potentially devastating rollover into a canal, but everyone survived thanks to restraint use and quick execution of the trained rollover drill. This accident proves the importance of thorough precombat checks and inspections and the power of engaged leadership, even within the crew itself. The bottom line is it's just as easy for vehicle crews to follow the standard as disregard it, but the difference between the two is measured in lives saved.

Please let me know what you're seeing out there and how our USACR/Safety Center team can help. Take advantage of the readymade Safe Summer Campaign available on our website (<https://safety.army.mil/>) and also check out our tactical tools, including the new MRAP Safety Awareness video. These are great plug-and-play applications that will not only make your job a little easier, but also educate your Soldiers on the fundamentals of safety. And please join the conversation on our BCKS Safety Net and NCO Net, where you can find information on other great programs working within our Army today.

Have a great summer, and remember to always play it safe for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Eyer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Eyer
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center