



May 2008

Summertime is not the time to give safety a vacation. The time between the Memorial Day and the Labor Day weekends marks the period when our Army's troopers, their Families and our Civilian teammates are traditionally exposed to the year's greatest risk from accidental mishaps and fatalities. These 101 Critical Days of Summer are when more of us are traveling, participating in water sports and enjoying the numerous outdoor activities and thus, increasing our exposure to potential off-duty tragedies.

Our Army's strides in decreasing on-duty accidents, through proactive Leader engagement and the continual use of safety tools and awareness programs, reflect tremendous efforts. Your actions, working to protect our Soldiers while on duty, must now transfer to impact our off-duty accidents during these upcoming summer months.

We believe the Army's success in decreasing on-duty accidents is the direct result of the continuous oversight and leadership our Soldiers receive. But commander and supervisor leadership cannot physically be present 24/7. Therein lies the challenge – how do we modify the lifestyles of our Soldiers to raise awareness and adjust actions, in a positive manner, to achieve our desired results of decreased injuries and deaths? We believe there are other tools and paths you might pursue to achieve positive goals – those tools are Soldiers' peers and Families.

The Army has always recognized the influence and support Families have in the lives of Soldiers. Families serve as the key foundation of our value sets which factor greatly into our decision-making process. That said, it only makes sense to devote the appropriate amount of time and energy to educate Families in safety awareness and practices, thereby empowering them so they can then educate our Army force. Tools such as the Family Engagement Kit, located on the USACRC Web site, are developed specifically for this and can stretch to the extended Family. So enjoy your summer, but also take these best practices and recommendations to heart – you are too important not to.

- Check to see if your installation has a Motorcycle Mentorship Program. These MMPs not only provide great group ride opportunities, but also allow newer riders to hook up with more experienced riders to learn skills and techniques. Our force continues to mirror society in the continuous growth of new riders each year. We welcome our new riders, now let's mentor them.
- Remain committed to using the Travel Risk Planning System before traveling. Inspect your vehicle and plan your travel with plenty of stops to ensure you remain attentive while driving. Fatigued driving is a common contributor to vehicle accidents.
- Alcohol and water activities never mix. Alcohol affects judgment, motor skills, peripheral vision, depth perception, night vision and balance – all essential skills while enjoying water activities. Enjoy the summer months in the sun but drink responsibly.

- Never leave a fallen comrade. A comrade can fall to different types of enemies. If you see a comrade in trouble, step in and engage. Insist your buddy wears a seat belt, purchases the motorcycle that matches their riding skills and understands indiscipline is a killer. I challenge you to make the right decisions in your off-duty activities during these 101 Critical Days of Summer and never give safety a day off.

Army Safe is Army Strong!!

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Commanding