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FROM THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Moving Left of the Boom on Motorcycle Accidents

Spring is the traditional start for motorcycle riding and, for many riders, Daytona Bike Week (Feb. 29 through March 9) marks the unofficial beginning of the season. Numbers indicate motorcycle sales have steadily increased over the years, and riding is a popular activity or mode of transportation among our ranks. As engaged Leaders, we need to ensure Soldiers are aware of the tools/resources made available to them.

The Chief of Staff, Army, now requires the Six Point Program developed by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center be used by all Army units. It is the minimum standard. This program requires command emphasis, discipline, composite risk management, standards and provides alternatives, as well as a commander's assessment. The focus of the program is engaged leadership through positive assertion of proactive measures and standards.

In fiscal 2007, there were 38 Soldiers killed in motorcycle accidents. Our data indicates that 65 percent of these motorcycle accidents involved Soldiers older than the age of 25. Of these mishaps, 60 percent involved Soldiers in the grade of E-5 or higher. What concerns me most about these numbers, aside from the horrific loss of life, is these fatalities include our senior noncommissioned officer (NCO) ranks. In some motorcycle crashes involving fatalities, the sequence of events leading up to the incident indicate these deaths were preventable. Some of these incidents indicate that fatigue, drinking and lack of engaged leadership among fellow NCOs were paramount in the Soldiers death.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoD) I 6055.4 and Army Regulation 385-10, *Army Safety Program*, Chapter 11, state that Soldiers operating a motorcycle must complete safety training. It has been my experience that Soldiers believe that these regulations only apply when they are riding on post, which is not true. The regulation states failure to wear personal protective equipment or comply with licensing or operator training requirements is against the regulation.

Coupled with the Six Point Program, please remember to be diligent and continue to move "left of the boom," not just in accident prevention measures, but in every way that involves the safety of Soldiers in our ranks. In closing, safety is inextricably tied to readiness. To move "left of the boom," we must go beyond the lectures and instruction on risk management and ensure it is being practiced within our ranks. While risk management remains the basic process by which we can reduce accidents, remember engaged Leadership is the key to risk management.

As an aid, I encourage you to work closely with your safety professionals and visit our Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>, which contains helpful tools regarding motorcycle safety. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation also has some great tips available on its Web site, which can be found at <http://msf-usa.org>.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

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