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Over the recent Independence Day holiday period, the active Army experienced zero recordable fatalities resulting from off-duty accidents. To put this into perspective, this is the first recorded fatality-free Fourth of July holiday period the Army has experienced since the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center began keeping records in 1974. Unfortunately, there were three reserve component, not in-duty status Soldiers, who lost their lives in motorcycle accidents.



Although the loss of a single Soldier is too much, our Leaders continue to demonstrate that Engaged Leadership does immediately save lives. This reversal of a 34-year trend is a direct result of Engaged Leadership at every echelon.

Every Leader, Soldier, Family member, Civilian and Battle Buddy who used composite risk management and made good decisions to avoid or prevent off-duty accidents, on what is historically one of the most hazardous holidays of the year, contributed to this “safety success”.

Engaged Leaders communicate effectively with their subordinates to gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of their behaviors. Soldiers and Soldiers’ expectations are defined by influences of their past. To change or adjust Soldiers’ lifestyles, all the while, capitalizing on what they bring to the fight, without degrading inherent capabilities of independent thought is tough work. Successful Leadership requires Engaged Leaders to take actions to influence attitudes, to clarify standards and ingrain habits of adherence to those standards and instill Soldiers with the confidence in their Leaders’ abilities to enhance and ensure mission success.

Engaged Leadership lays the foundation for a cultural shift and that, in conjunction with Soldiers taking personal responsibility for their own safety, will further drive down accidental losses.

It is important for all of us in our Army to take a moment and acknowledge such a momentous milestone. However, we can not afford to rest on the laurels of our success and give accidents a chance to strike when our guard is down. We must always remain vigilant to preserve our Nation’s combat power, both on and off duty, if we want to continue to enjoy our success.

**Army Safe is Army Strong!**

WILLIAM H. FORRESTER  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Commanding

