



Independence Day 2010

This Independence Day, our great Army Family and our nation will celebrate 234 years of America's freedom. In the tradition of the brave men and women who have come before you, your service ensures our liberty is perpetually sustained. Thank you for what you do every day for our country.

Many of you will take advantage of this extended holiday weekend to vacation with Family, visit friends or participate in festivities close to home. This time will offer abundant opportunities for fun and excitement, but not without an increased risk of accidents. Long road trips, fireworks, summertime heat and the complacency that comes with the familiarity of home all present unique hazards for Soldiers and their Family members. As you take part in all July Fourth has to offer, I encourage you to keep composite risk management in mind and remember that safety is everyone's responsibility.

This responsibility includes looking out for not only yourself, but also your buddies. Set the standard by wearing your seat belt, following posted speed limits and using required personal protective equipment on motorcycles. Designate a driver or call a cab when your plans involve alcohol, and take the keys when your friends need an intervention. And don't forget that outdoor activities like swimming, hiking and celebrating with fireworks require a thoughtful, yet simple, risk management plan.

Sadly, our Army lost six Soldiers to off-duty accidents during the 2010 Memorial Day weekend, our worst holiday weekend statistics in more than five years. Nearly all these accidents involved a vehicle or motorcycle, the failure to wear seat belts or PPE and traveling at excessive speeds. This July Fourth weekend, we must remain vigilant to prevent tragedies like these from happening again. Remain engaged with your fellow Soldiers, take an active role in helping them make safe decisions and never hesitate to ask for help when you have a concern about your or a buddy's plans. Above all, safety is an individual responsibility, but one that is made easier by working together and looking out for one another.

Your service and your safety are vital to ensuring our nation's freedom endures for generations to come. Enjoy this weekend, but always remember to play it safe!

William T. Wolf
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Commanding

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