



## Driver's Training Enables Soldiers to Make Smart Decisions

During the course of my career, driving in our Army has often been viewed as a routine task. Nothing could be further from the truth, especially today, as we fall in on and operate equipment we have never seen before.

As Brig. Gen. Forrester alluded to in his column this month, we suffered significant losses in our ranks during the month of February to on- and off-duty accidents. Some of these accidents included vehicle rollovers, vehicle ejections and head-on collisions.

As Soldiers, we have the opportunity to participate in driver's training programs that are offered at many of our military installations. While most of these programs are geared toward our Soldiers operating a military vehicle in a tactical environment, complete with full battle rattle, the emphasis of the training is teaching Soldiers to make smart decisions behind the wheel to avoid an accident.

One way to aid in the fight against these type incidents is to conduct POV check rides and continue driver's training at your installation after you return. A common trend in many communities across our Nation is the availability of defensive driving training courses. For the motorcyclist, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation® courses are provided at most installations by IMCOM. These courses, usually taught by certified contractors that use a standardized program of instruction, have one objective in mind – saving lives.

A best practice I witnessed during a recent visit to an installation was a remedial driver's training program. Those individuals who had been cited for violations in which they had lost their post driving privileges were required to attend the class prior to reinstatement. The eight-hour class is taught on a Saturday and requires participants to show up in a Class A uniform with their first-line supervisor. At the end of the class, the Soldiers have to pass a written exam. It's a simple, yet effective, use of corrective training that worked for this installation.

Tactical driving can be another story. For example, we currently have those that have never driven to those that have logged thousands of miles in combat conditions. For that reason, it is best to start driver's training early in the reset period in a controlled environment, not combat. I know of no better way to engage our young Soldiers than for noncommissioned officers to mentor them on the "do's and don'ts" of operating vehicles such as the HMMWV. The best driver's training programs incorporate on- and off-duty driving in all types of weather and visibility. They then move on to more advanced tasks such as driving with night vision devices, load planning and security of loads.

Many installations have moved toward a driving center of excellence. Fort Polk and ARCENT in Kuwait have done so in tactical driving. Fort Drum has taken it one step further with its driver's training program. Set in a real-world environment, the program combines both POV and tactical training in a one-stop building. Fort Drum also is working to partner with the state of New York to teach driver's education on post. The program will focus primarily on Soldiers, but it may also be made available to Families.

To expand the program your post offers, check into ways to work with your local and state enforcement agencies. Also check out what we have to offer here at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center by visiting our Driver's Training Toolbox. It has the resources to either get you started or enhance the program you currently have in place, at <https://crc.army.mil/drivertrainingtoolbox/>.

Keep moving left of the boom on accidents and thanks for all you do in making us Army Safe and Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tod L. Glidewell'.

**Tod L. Glidewell**  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center