



Best Practices Will Provide Us Consistency To Defeat Accidents

We ask our leaders to guide and mentor their Soldiers, including training them to be safe both on and off duty. Looking back on our accident statistics from fiscal 2007, we see some areas where our fatality numbers came down from the previous fiscal year. Sadly, however, the overall fatality numbers increased—that is an unsettling trend. The struggle against accidental fatalities—a threat that stalks our Soldiers whether in combat or at home station—is a never-ending battle.

So, how do we win this battle? What strategies will enable us, as leaders, to reduce these needless losses? I believe sharing of “Best Practices” is sometimes the best approach.

First, Best Practices are not new to many of our organizations. What do I mean by Best Practices? A Best Practice is a countermeasure put into place to eliminate, or used to mitigate, the risk of an accident. It can be as simple as setting out a “Wet Floor” sign; or as complex as requiring special skills or the collaboration of others. Best Practices offer the insight and suggestions of others who are dealing with similar hazards that many of us face. Unfortunately, sometimes they’re slow to be disseminated from post to post and throughout our Army. For that reason, if you have Best Practices that work for your organization, send them to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. We will post them on our site and disseminate them through safety channels. I will keep the unit confidential if you wish. However, I hope through information sharing we can save a life. Here at the Combat Readiness/Safety Center we collect, store and analyze accidental loss data on fatalities for our Army. We know our accidental losses, but what we can’t tell you is how many lives we save. I believe the Best Practices program will provide us some measurement of success in saving Soldier’s lives. We serve in one of the most noble and respected professions in our Nation. Our ranks are tired, stretched and worn thin, but we must remain committed to our force, believing that even one preventable loss is too many. Through the sharing of intel and ideas, I’m confident we can defeat the enemy that stole 247 lives from our ranks last year.

Army Safe is Army Strong.

Best Practice examples should contain the following:

Topic: Motorcycle Safety

Unit: 10th Mountain Division

Description: Individuals owning a motorcycle may ride their bikes in lieu of running in the division 4-mile run. Participants will lead the run and then, immediately following, participate in a 52-mile motorcycle ride to promote safety and esprit-de-corps. Event will be followed by a barbeque.

Result/Effectiveness: Event fostered an environment to promote motorcycle safety, education and mentorship through engaged leadership. The unit has seen a significant reduction in Class A through C accidents since the event took place.

Topic: Holiday Safety Brief

Unit: 96th Aviation Support Battalion

Description: At first formation of the day before the Christmas holiday exodus, the commander commanded “Fall In” and “Taps” played. At the completion of the music, he explained the Army typically loses several Soldiers during the holiday season. Then he explained that he did not want to return from the holidays to hear that music.

Result/Effectiveness: The unit did not suffer a single loss during the Christmas holiday period. Drawback: The technique may trigger uncomfortable memories or post-traumatic stress disorder in some Soldiers.

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

Tod L. Glidewell

Command Sergeant Major

U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center