



## The Fight Against Indiscipline

This month, Americans will celebrate 234 years of our nation's independence and honor the courage of brave men and women who have kept our nation free.

Today, the entire Army team plays an important role in keeping our country free and sustaining the principles that make the United States a truly great nation. We could not succeed in this vital mission without the support of every Leader, Soldier, Family member and Civilian, and this is why we need our entire team to stay safe in everything you do. Whether working patrols in Afghanistan, enjoying some down time at home, running an electrical line at your local installation or enjoying time on the lake, your constant dedication to risk management honors those who have come before you and makes a difference in the success of all our efforts around the globe.

The Army team's strong commitment to safety has ushered us into a summer where we are seeing slightly fewer accidental deaths among our ranks, despite a startling increase in fatal privately owned vehicle and motorcycle accidents in May. While I am proud our Army has made gains on last year's historic reduction in fatal accidents, we cannot be content with only minor progress in our fight to save lives.

Although there are exceptions, the vast majority of our fatal POV and motorcycle accidents involve indiscipline, ranging from speeding, neglecting to wear seat belts and personal protective equipment or failing to get required motorcycle training. We've even had some accidents where all three of these factors were involved.

Sadly, indiscipline in the form of speed was involved in two of our most recent POV fatalities. One Soldier was a passenger in a sports sedan driven by another Soldier when the vehicle spun out of control on loose gravel and rolled over into an embankment. In the second accident, a Soldier lost control of the sports sedan he was driving and crashed into a stand of small trees. Both Soldiers were scheduled to deploy overseas within just a few days of their deaths.

In the past, we've put a lot of emphasis on Leader engagement in enforcing standards, and every reduction in fatal accidents is proof engaged leadership works. Since our Soldiers may be on duty for only a few hours a day, the role of our entire team becomes that much more important. Getting the message across that indiscipline in any form is unacceptable isn't just a Leader thing; it's also an issue for our fellow Soldiers, Families and Civilians.

Peers, whether inside the Soldier's unit or outside, have tremendous influence on their friend's actions. Reaching all of our Soldiers and making them a part of the solution is extremely important in building an Army culture where safety is a way of life, not an on-the-job regulatory requirement. It's important to remember that peer pressure can be a positive thing, and that's the kind of environment we need to keep fatal accidents from happening.

Families are perhaps the most important stakeholders in Soldier safety. In recent years, our Army has done a great job in engaging spouses and their Families through Family Readiness Groups and Family Readiness Support Assistants with safety tools such as the Family Engagement Kit. But we cannot forget that young, single Soldiers comprise a large portion of our force, and their Families — parents, siblings and other close relatives — play just as important a role in risk management as military spouses. We must also tap this valuable resource if we want to keep all our Soldiers safe and in the fight.

Finally, we can never underestimate the power of our Civilian workforce. In an Army where change is certain, Civilians provide vital continuity for Leaders and Soldiers alike. They have a primary role to play in looking out for the entire team, including our Soldiers. One vital part of the Civilian workforce is our Civilian safety professionals at the installation and operational levels. They possess unparalleled knowledge and firsthand experience of the risks their Soldiers may encounter. Please take advantage of the continuity and experience of all our Civilians, but, most importantly, these safety professionals. Harness their expertise and let them help you in your fight against preventable accidents.

Every Soldier deserves a chance to serve their country honorably and safely. Whether you're a Leader, a Soldier, a Family member or a Department of the Army Civilian, please do your part to keep the Soldiers in your life safe. The USACR/Safety Center has some great tools to get you started, so check out our website (<https://safety.army.mil/>) and let us know how we can better serve you.

Thank you for what you do every day for our Band of Brothers and Sisters. Enjoy this summer while it lasts. Play hard, but always play it safe.

**Army Safe is Army Strong!**

**William T. Wolf**

Brigadier General, USA

Commanding