



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

4905 5th Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363
Comm. (334) 255-3770 Fax (334) 255-2266
<https://safety.army.mil>

Resource Document Driving Safety *Indisciplined POV Driving*

Bob Van Elsberg
robert.l.vanelsberg.civ@mail.mil
334-255-3641
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
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Narrative:

No other preventable tragedy takes the lives of more Soldiers each year than vehicle accidents. However, many of these injuries and fatalities are “self-inflicted” when Soldiers knowingly choose to drive in an indisciplined manner. Speeding, driving under the influence and not wearing seat belts is commonly seen themes in these accidents.

How big a factor are these issues? Between Oct. 1, 2011 and July 10, 2011, nearly half of all Soldiers who died on the road were speeding when they crashed. Not only does speeding increase a Soldier's chances of losing control and crashing, it also makes those impacts much more severe. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, every 10 mph above 50 mph doubles a person's chances of dying.

Nearly one-in-three Soldiers who died could have survived had they only worn their seat belts. Not only is wearing seat belts required by the Army, it is also the law in all but a few states. Unbelted drivers and occupants continue to move forward during a collision, striking interior parts of the vehicle such as the steering wheel, dash and windshield. Unrestrained occupants are far more likely to be ejected through the windshield, sunroof or other vehicle windows. When that happens, the victim is 25 times more likely to die, according to NHTSA.

Alcohol impairs a driver's judgment, leading to poor decisions and impaired skills. One fact discovered by NHTSA was drunk drivers are twice as likely not to buckle up as sober drivers. Drivers, who, in a sober state would wear their seat belt, may overlook doing so when they are intoxicated behind the wheel.

Key Messages:

- Soldiers killed in indiscipline driving accidents are a loss to the Army and reduce their unit's ability to perform its mission. In addition, such losses also deeply affect family members, friends and battle buddies in their units.
- Encourage Soldiers to drive safely and to take an active role in protecting battle buddies who may be at risk.

Talking points:

- Indiscipline is a major contributing factor to privately owned vehicle crashes — the biggest cause of accidental death to Soldiers.
- The three most significant acts of indiscipline are speeding, not wearing seat belts and driving under the influence. Because of the way alcohol affects a driver's judgment, it often contributes to other forms of indiscipline.

Tips:

Indiscipline driving can lead to consequences drivers never anticipated. To avoid an unhappy, surprise "ending" on the road. Soldiers should follow these tips:

- If you will be drinking, plan so that you do not get on the road impaired. Plan to stay with friends, use a designated driver or use a taxi to get you home safely.
- Don't bust the speed limit unless you want to be "busted" by a cop or wind up busted and broken in the hospital. If you want the thrill of high-speed driving, consider joining the Sports Car Club of America and racing on a track.
- Buckle up before you head out. Remember, it is better to be properly restrained in your vehicle than properly restrained in a stretcher.
- Understand speed limits are designed not only to protect you, but to also protect other motorists along with pedestrians and residents who also may share the road with you.
- Because alcohol first affects your judgment, never assume you are safe driving skills have not also been impaired.
- Always wear your seat belt. Even if your car has air bags and other safety features, only your seat belt can keep you in position during a crash. Because modern vehicles are designed to protect those who remain inside the occupant compartment, being thrown from the vehicle is one of the worst things that can happen to you.

Historical Reference:

<https://safety.army.mil/>

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

<https://rmis.safety.army.mil/Pages/Home.aspx>

<http://www.scca.com/>

<http://www.nsc.org/>

Statistics:

- Statistics from the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's Risk Management Information System show that speeding is a factor in nearly half of all fatal accidents involving Soldiers.
- Nearly one-in-three Soldiers killed in vehicle accidents were not properly restrained by seat belts.