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ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION

COUNTERMEASURE

VOL 21 NO 11

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NOVEMBER 2000



***Tomorrow is the
best reason for
driving safely...***

TODAY

SPECIAL POV ISSUE

ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION
COUNTERMEASURE

NOVEMBER 2000

VOLUME 21 NO 11

The Official Safety Magazine for Army Ground Risk-Management



Why Are Our Buddies Dying in POVs?

This article tells you what our buddies are doing to cause accidents. Throughout the issue, we give you personal accounts of lessons learned to show how accidents can be prevented.

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A Need for Speed

They were friends to the end. They shared a common bond—free spirits with a need for speed. While that was a romantic notion for two young, inseparable buddies, only one lived long enough to become older and wiser.

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Unlikely Encounter

As this flight school student neared post, he saw a head light in the grass 10 feet off the road. This was only the beginning of an accident that caused so much chaos; before the evening was over, five vehicles were involved.

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Death on Sunday

He had two beautiful little girls, he loved sports, and he was one of the most popular people in the squadron. But drinking and driving is a lethal combination that doesn't play favorites.

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Gene M. LaCoste
 Brigadier General, U.S. Army
 Commanding Officer

Why Are Our Buddies Dying in POVs?

Why are our buddies dying in off-duty privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents, and what can we do to change this senseless loss?

At times there are unavoidable risks, such as a person rear-ending you while you are stopped at a red traffic light, or an unexpected animal jumping into your path. However, you can mitigate the risk of those hazards by wearing a seatbelt, having small children properly strapped into their appropriate car seats, and even ensuring that you have required insurance on your vehicle just in case the other person doesn't.

Risk management isn't meant to eliminate all risk from your life, but to help you control it so you can minimize losses. There are times when you have to take risks, but you need to take those risks with this thought in mind: Are they worth it?

You might think it's too complicated to go through the 5-step risk management process before you get in your vehicle or on your motorcycle for a short ride to the store; but remember, most accidents happen within a few miles of home. You cannot always stop accidents from happening, but you can mitigate your involvement and

subsequent consequences by stopping for a moment and thinking before you act. Do you really want to ride a motorcycle without a helmet and risk cracking your skull? It doesn't sound like such a tough choice to me.

Let's take a good look at some of the POV accident causes, and then let's look at subsequent articles that show how to prevent these tragic accidents.



Accident Causes

The greatest contributing factors to POV accidents are speed, fatigue, and alcohol. Surprisingly, on some occasions, seatbelts and motorcycle helmets were not worn.

■ **Speed.** Excessive speed remains a persistent major cause of POV accidents. It may be speed in excess of the posted speed limit or it may be speed that is too fast for the weather and existing

road conditions. In either case, soldiers are often involved in accidents that stem from speeding.

Consider one soldier on leave... He was healthy, well-rested, and sober. While driving at high speeds, his car went off the right side of the pavement, hit the guardrail, and then veered left onto the shoulder. It then rolled for 300 feet, throwing the soldier out. The soldier was killed instantly. When it comes to speeding, is it worth taking

large risks for the small benefit of reaching your destination sooner?

■ **Fatigue.** Soldiers tend to go too far and wait too late to begin their return trip or they start after a long day at work. Here's an example... Two soldiers were planning a weekend trip from Dothan, Alabama, to Biloxi, Mississippi. After a long day at work on Friday, they sat up that night planning their trip. At midnight, they decided not to go to bed, but to leave right then. After being on the road

about two hours, they stopped for coffee. Less than 10 miles down the road, the driver drifted off the road onto the left shoulder. She overcorrected and swerved to the right shoulder before she gained control again. Her passenger, with a cup of hot coffee in each hand, threw coffee all over them and the car. They pulled off to the side of the road, regained their composure, and drove to the nearest motel for the rest of the night. Risk management late is better than none at all.

■ **Alcohol.** Soldiers aged 19-22 are most often involved in DUI accidents. Most of these young people are new at both driving and drinking. Put them together, that makes a deadly combination. The Army is making progress on decreasing incidents of DUI. The word is out that drinking and driving won't be tolerated. But in spite of the many effective tools available, there are still too many POV accidents where alcohol is a factor.... After a party, a soldier and four of his buddies were driving along a highway at high speeds. As they approached an intersection, the driver picked up speed to cross through before the light changed to red. He didn't make it. Instead, he hit a car making a left turn. The impact threw one soldier through the windshield. The car then rolled over him, killing him instantly. The blood alcohol content (BAC) of the driver showed him to be legally drunk. At the time of impact, the soldier's car was estimated to be traveling about 75 mph. The passenger killed was not using a seatbelt.

The Army's goal is to make risk management part of everything you do, on-duty and off. Leaders at all levels continue to put time and effort into POV accident prevention; however, even after the best efforts of the chain of command, soldiers {who should know better} still make very wrong decisions. It's up to every individual to consciously think about the risks you may be taking and their consequences, then ask yourself if it's worth the risk.

RISK MANAGEMENT POINTER

There just is no logical explanation for soldiers to not use seatbelts. But accident reports make it clear that some don't. Statistics show over and over again that seatbelts are a lifesaver—wear it, and insist that everyone else in your vehicle does the same.

Leaders Must Enforce Standards

The day was beautiful. A typical autumn afternoon—the temperature was pleasant with a gentle breeze, and the leaves were already changing colors. I was on my way home from work and noticed that the passenger in the vehicle in front of me was not wearing his seatbelt. The post, of course, requires the wearing of seatbelts, as well as the state. As I was trying to decide if I should stop them, the driver turned into a mess hall parking lot. I followed.

As I approached the vehicle, I was surprised to find that the driver was not wearing a seatbelt either! The driver was a young Sergeant, and his passenger, a Private First Class. This struck me in two important ways. First, they were in the most at-risk statistical category of soldiers most likely to be involved in a fatal POV accident (19-22 year old males, PV2 through SGT). Secondly, the NCO, as a junior leader has a responsibility to set the example

for not only his soldiers, but also the occupants of his vehicle.

In a professional manner, I “squared them away.” As leaders, and we are all leaders, we must set the example and make on-the-spot seatbelt corrections.

This must be done safely, of course. We cannot accept such excuses as “*They are not my soldiers*” or “*That’s the MP’s job.*” You are a leader...and leadership, discipline, and standards save lives.

POC: COL Michael N. Riley, USASC Director of Operations, DSN 558-2461



A Habit You Can Live With

■ The soldier was riding in the front seat of a car being driven by a friend. As they drove through an intersection, an oncoming car turned left in front of them. The cars collided head on. The soldier was killed when his head went through the windshield. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

■ The soldier was driving north on a 2-lane road. His wife was riding beside him on the front seat. As they topped a hill, a southbound car crossed the double, no-passing lines and collided

with their car. The wife was killed instantly. She was not wearing a seatbelt.

Neither of these drivers was at fault, but both were seriously injured and their front-seat passengers were killed in head-on collisions. Seatbelts could have saved their lives.

Drivers must get into the habit of wearing seatbelts EVERY time they get in a car. Make buckling up a habit—a habit you can live with.

A Need for Speed

A motorcycle accident leaves one friend mourning another's death.

When I was 19 years old, I had a need for speed and aspirations of owning a sport bike and becoming the next Scott Russell. I had just enlisted in the Air Force and found myself living in the land of the rising sun (Japan). If there was one place to fulfill the dream, it was here.

In Japan, there were so many motorcycles that I had never seen before. Racing bikes that were street legal? This can't be! I soon found myself riding a Yamaha FZR 400. It was beautiful with its pearl white and Yamaha blue paint. Now all I had to do was learn how to ride the thing. It was mandatory for every military member to attend the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Rider's Course offered on base. I signed up for the class. The day after completing the course, I was confident that I could negotiate the roads of Japan with ease.

After gaining two years of experience and owning about five different motorcycles, an instructor and good friend asked if I would like to become an instructor for the base. I was very excited and, of course, said yes to his offer.

Following my graduation from the instructors' course, we began teaching students with the help of an assistant. Our assistant was a young man by the name of Hunter. He had never owned a motorcycle and never attended the course to learn to ride. Instead he just helped pick up the cones following each exercise and assisted with the audiovisual portions. I worked beside him as an aircraft mechanic in the Air Force, and we also held off-duty jobs in the same establishment.

One day, Hunter approached me about purchasing a motorcycle and taking the course. I helped him out, and from that point on, we were inseparable. We became very close friends, and we both shared the same dream—to one day race motorcycles.

The roads through the mountains of Japan were breathtaking. Unfortunately, when we rode we weren't looking at the colorful waterfalls, which cast a beautiful rainbow over the rivers.

Instead we were there to learn how these awesome pieces of machinery would react through the tight twisty turns of pavement that those wonderful county workers had laid for us.

As the months passed, we both began to blossom into better riders. We knew the roads like the back of our hands and had begun to pick up the pace. Back then I thought it was cool to be the fastest up the mountain, as did everyone who rode with us.

One day, Hunter and I, along with one of our students, decided to go for a ride. We stopped at the base of the mountain to give the new rider a safety briefing.

"You are to ride within your limits. Be aware of the large trucks that notoriously come into your lane, and just have fun. Don't try to keep up with us because we know the roads and tend to be faster getting up the mountain."

As we carved through the mountains, I began to pull away from the other two. I looked into my mirrors and

could only see the others' headlights in the distance. I continued on until I came to a bit of construction. In Japan, when there's only one lane open because of construction, a short stoplight signals when you're cleared through. They also provide you with a timer telling you how long you have to wait. As I came to a stop, I watched the seconds click off: 56, 55, 54, all the way down to the 30s.

I looked back to see where the other two were, but they were nowhere in sight. A chill shot up my spine, because I knew what that meant... Someone was down.

I turned my bike around and headed back,

**He lay there
facedown
with blood
beginning to
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his helmet
onto the
pavement.**

thinking to myself that the new guy had laid it down around one of the corners. As I came out of a right-hander, I noticed the new rider's bike on the side of the road on its kickstand. He wasn't with it. I looked ahead at the next corner and saw the silhouette of a rider and a motorcycle lying on the road. As I arrived at the scene, I noticed it was Hunter. He had struck a car head on. I jumped from my bike, forgetting to put the kickstand down—the bike fell on my leg.

As I freed myself, I pulled my helmet from my head and approached his lifeless body. He lay there facedown with blood beginning to trickle from his helmet onto the pavement. I asked the other guy if Hunter was okay. The other rider couldn't speak. He just shook his head as tears rolled down his face.

I removed Hunter's glove and attempted to check his pulse...nothing. I asked the other two to assist me in rolling him over so we could try CPR. We did so, being very careful to keep him as straight as possible to prevent any further neck injury. I had learned not to remove a helmet from someone who has crashed for the same reason.

As we slowly rolled him over, his eyes came into view. They were no longer gleaming with life and happiness. We knew he was dead.

I began to cry and then got angry. I kicked Hunter's motorcycle, then picked it up and flipped it over. Then I began to pray.

I had to ride my motorcycle home after emergency crews took Hunter away. The padding in my helmet was saturated with my tears. My best friend was gone, and there was nothing that I could do. I wondered what happened? Was it my fault?

The police later said that Hunter had run wide in the turn and struck the car head on. He was killed instantly of a broken neck.

I still have a need for speed, but only on the racetrack. I don't want Hunter's death to be in vain. I hope this story will bring to light the dangers of riding motorcycles on the street and what one mistake at the wrong place and time can do to you.

You may be the fastest up the mountain, but are you also the most foolish? Save the really fast stuff for the track.

—Courtesy of TORCH Magazine

Imagine That

Imagine a vaccine that would prevent half of all cancer fatalities in the United States every year. Imagine that millions of Americans would refuse to take advantage of it because it would take a little bit of effort.

Imagine a national epidemic that kills 50,000 Americans and injures millions more. Imagine that a vaccine was available within arm's reach, free, and at our fingertips. Imagine further that 90 percent of Americans refused to take advantage of it.

Unlikely? Not at all. The epidemic is privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents. The vaccine that could drastically reduce their toll is the seatbelt. Why won't people use it?

Consider SGT John Fitness. He jogs every day, watches his weight, and recently quit smoking. Yet, his seatbelt is gathering dust, unused. He clearly does not perceive his POV as posing the same health threat as cigarettes, poor diet, or lack of exercise. He does not understand that the force on his body of a 10-mph collision is equivalent to a 200-pound bag of cement dropped from a 9-story window. Would he volunteer to catch that bag?

Even Americans who do recognize the value of wearing seatbelts have developed some powerful excuses for not doing so. They are the ones who permit the epidemic to continue.

Hmmmm. Imagine that.

Unlikely Encounter

In May 1980 I was approximately one month from graduating the Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Qualification Course, otherwise known as "Flight School." A few weeks prior, I purchased a car—a red 1977 Firebird. A typical hot-looking 'pilot car' not uncommon to the parking lots within the various companies at flight school.

One evening, I decided to go to a nearby town for a little fast food. After having dinner, my hot little sports car and I were on our way back to the barracks. The four-lane, undivided road was well known to all stationed at Fort Rucker.

As I neared the post in the right lane of the eastbound lanes, something caught my eye. On the left (westbound) side of the road, I spotted a single light or what appeared to be a headlight in the grass 10 feet from the pavement. As I returned my eyes to the front, less than 100 feet in front of me was a steel cable lying across all four lanes of the road! The wires were lying flat in the middle two lanes and suspended at least a foot or two above the surface of the road in the outer east and west bound lanes. Coincidentally, in the lane that I was in!

At 50 mph, I had to immediately swerve to the left lane to cross the wires where they were flat against the pavement. Fortunately, there were no cars behind me, so this maneuver didn't cause an accident.

After safely crossing the wires, I braked and moved my car a few feet onto the shoulder of the road. I shifted the car into park, applied my emergency brake, turned on the car's flasher signal, and left my headlights on.

As I got out of my car to figure out a way to warn other motorists, a young lady in a pickup truck hit the wires where they were suspended off the ground. The wires engaged her rear axle like it was the tail-hook of an

F-14 Tomcat during a carrier landing and stopped her vehicle from 50 mph within 10 feet and flipped it around 180 degrees right before my eyes! After witnessing this, I knew there was bound to be more trouble.

I rushed to her vehicle to check on her immediate condition. As I opened her door, the first thing I did was turn on her flasher signal and put the transmission in park. She was dazed and had apparently struck a portion of the steering wheel with her head and upper torso. Thank God, she was wearing her seatbelt! It probably saved her life.

Before attempting to move her, I asked how her neck and back were. Her only complaint was a bruised forehead. I told her that the safest place for her was back in the cab of her truck seatbelted.

Then, I ran to check on the headlight lying in the grass that first caught my attention. As I approached, I realized that it was a motorcycle. The driver was lying in the grass next to the bike. At first, I thought the driver had been decapitated, however his neck was so severely broken that his head was tucked almost entirely under his upper torso. Only faint breathing could be detected, so I didn't move him.

Meanwhile, a van had pulled alongside the road where we were. I quickly ran over to the driver to explain the situation and ask him to summon for help. To my good fortune, the driver of the van was an Army medic and had a CB radio inside his van. He made a quick call and notified authorities of the accident. As he examined the motorcycle driver, I went back toward the pickup truck in an effort to flag down other vehicles that would surely arrive at the scene.

As I neared the pickup truck, I noticed a small fire near an abandoned farmhouse on the north side of the

westbound lanes. Beneath a pile of bricks, that used to be a chimney on the side of the house, was a wrecked Corvette. Suddenly, I heard screeching rubber, closely followed by the sound of a collision near the area of the pickup truck. What now?

The driver of a compact car with at least four people inside became distracted by the pickup truck and didn't see the debris in the road until it was too late. He locked his brakes and stopped short of hitting parts of a telephone pole lying in the roadway. The car behind him was following too closely and plowed into his rear bumper and pushed the car onto and over one of the poles. Now there were *five* vehicles involved! Other traffic began to react in time and slow to a halt.

Soon, the welcome glow of flashing lights from emergency vehicles and police cars arrived at the scene. EMTs arrived and we assisted the victims. Fortunately, the people in the compact car were wearing seatbelts, and as a result, didn't have more serious injuries.

Meanwhile, a medevac helicopter from Fort Rucker landed in a field. As they began shutting the aircraft down, I ran over to brief the crew on the accident scene and where the victims were located. I proceeded back to the farmhouse where the car lay beneath the bricks of the collapsed chimney. Local firefighters and police officers were surveying the scene and informed me that they were looking for the driver of the 'vette. After removing some of the brick debris, they discovered no driver or passenger inside.

Flashlights searched the immediate area. A police officer finally spotted the driver. He had not been wearing a seatbelt and was thrown clear of his vehicle. He was found lifelessly

impaled on a branch approximately 10 feet up in a tree.

By that time, the motorcycle driver had been rushed from the scene by ambulance only to be pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. As I spoke with the police regarding what I had witnessed, they soon began to piece together the accident.

Putting it all together

The driver of the motorcycle was a flight school student who knew the driver of the Corvette, a young instructor pilot. They met earlier in the afternoon and decided to have an impromptu race into town.

As both vehicles exited post and approached the beginning of the

four-lane portion of the highway, they pulled alongside each other and began to accelerate at a high rate of speed. The driver of the 'vette pulled ahead of the motorcycle and continued to increase his lead at an unsafe speed, and in doing so, lost control of the car. The 'vette left the roadway and sheared right through a telephone pole

supporting some utility lines with a steel cable that crossed from a pole on one side of the road to another pole on the opposite side of the road. As the pole fell to the ground, so did the support cable.

As the motorcycle driver approached, the cable caught him across the forehead of his helmet, broke his neck, and knocked him off the bike. Both he and his bike slid several hundred feet down the road until they entered the grass and came to a stop. Part of the support cable remained entangled in the wrecked pole and prevented the entire length from lying flat on the surface in all four lanes. That's where I encountered them.

What brought this story back to my

As the motorcycle driver approached, the cable caught him across the forehead of his helmet, broke his neck, and knocked him off the bike.

mind's eye? I was watching a TV news magazine show. One of the highlighted stories was related to what to do when you encounter a multiple vehicle accident or pile-up.

Although the experience I just related was tragic, it could have been worse. The one element that prevented more serious injuries or fatalities was the use of seatbelts. The young lady in the pickup could have easily been thrown out of the vehicle with fatal consequences. The occupants of the two vehicles involved in the rear-end collision could have all been injured more seriously than they were. (The occupants in the back seat of the compact car received no injuries at all.)

Another thing to consider is safe following distances. Safe following distance would have prevented that last accident. Don't just use the rule of thumb regarding 2 seconds or 2 car lengths for every 10 mph you are traveling. Add buffer distances for visibility (i.e., night, fog, heavy rain or snow, etc.) and other circumstances.

What do you carry in your trunk for safety devices and signaling equipment?

Flares? Flashlights? A lot of people carry cellular telephones in their vehicles now instead of CB radios. Do you carry a first-aid kit and/or are you trained in basic first-aid or CPR? All of these things should be a consideration not only to help yourself or your passengers, but others who may be involved in an accident.

Looking back on it now, there were probably things I could have done differently. In fact, I probably could have avoided the wires and kept on going. That, however, wasn't an option my conscience would have accepted. Think about what you would do if you had encountered this. Just thinking about what you would do if faced with similar circumstances will make you better prepared if the situation ever arises. The greatest thing I learned from this experience is: Accidents create chaos. Chaos creates poor decision-making. Therefore, when faced with chaos, keep your wits about you!

This personal experience was sent in by CW4 (Ret) Tom Clarke, Aviation Safety Analyst, Patuxent River Naval Air Station, DSN 757-2248 (301-757-2248)

Death on Sunday

He had two beautiful little girls, he loved sports, and he was one of the most popular people in the squadron. But drinking and driving is a lethal combination that doesn't play favorites.

Nine years ago in March 1991, I was a first sergeant assigned to a medical group overseas. My family and I were cooking out and enjoying our time together.

As we sat down to eat, my beeper went off. I looked at the number and immediately recognized it as the law enforcement desk. The security policeman said, "Sergeant Wilford, we just got notified there has been a wreck off base involving one of your squadron members. The witnesses said there are injuries." I told my wife I had to go; one of my troops had been in an accident.

The location of the accident was about 20 minutes off base, so I had time to think on the way to the scene. I recall praying that my troop

wasn't hurt too badly. I knew the location of the accident that the security policeman had given was notorious for dangerous curves and steep hills. I also found myself trying to recall everything I knew about the noncommissioned officer involved in this wreck.

John was a staff sergeant, recently divorced, with two little girls. He loved sports, and we played together on our squadron softball team. In fact, every Monday he would stop by to discuss our previous week's games.

As I got close to the scene, I could see emergency lights flashing and policemen trying to keep the vehicles moving. A small crowd had gathered beside the road on a curve. I parked and ran to the crowd yelling, "Where is he?"

No one said anything; they just pointed down the hill.

As I turned to head down the incline, I recognized two of our airmen from the medical group standing by one of our ambulances at the scene. One of them said, "It's John, and it's bad!" Those words echoed in my mind as I went down the hill.

About 200 feet down, I found John's car wedged up against a tree. I looked inside. John wasn't there. He had been thrown from the vehicle. I looked further down the hill, and I could see flashlights and hear voices. "God, let one of those voices be John's," I whispered.

I stumbled on down to where the flashlights were, and I could see two figures against the rocks. I could make out one person kneeling beside someone lying in a fetal position on the rocks. I recognized the voice.

"Doc, is that you?" I asked. He responded, "First Sergeant, John's dead." I don't know why, but I leaned over John and started yelling at him, "John why did you do this?" Then I sat on a rock beside John and cried as I waited on our medics to get the equipment into the ravine to get his body out.

It took us a couple of hours to get John out of that ravine. We had to carefully guide the emergency basket as it went up the hill to keep it straight. Around that basket that night were the section commander, the doctor, two medics, an OSI agent from the base and me. All of us knew John, and it would take a long time to come to grips with that night.

Later, as I pulled back into my driveway, I

tried to collect myself before I walked into the house. I opened the door, and my wife ran to me with a shocked look on her face. I didn't realize my shirt was covered in John's blood from getting him out of the ravine. An investigation revealed that John had been at a beach party all afternoon drinking and then decided to drive. Some friends offered him a ride, but he assured them he was fine. The autopsy revealed that John's blood alcohol was .21, over twice the legal limit.

That night and the weeks that followed were some of the saddest times of my military career. Our squadron was torn apart because everyone loved John. I found myself trying to be strong for the squadron, while hurting so badly inside. Without a doubt, the hardest thing I have ever had to do was write the condolence letters to his little girls telling them about their father.

Everyone attended his memorial service on our base, and the healing process began slowly. It's taken me a long time to put this tragedy on paper, but I know Staff Sgt. John Keller would want me to.

Our message needs to be loud and clear: Don't drink and drive! Call Airmen Against Drunk Driving, call a friend, call a supervisor, or call a taxi. Life is too precious, and it's not just you that gets hurt, it's also your family and friends who care about you.

Finally, if you see people drinking and they insist they can still drive, don't listen to them. Take care of your teammates by taking their keys — you may be saving their lives.

Courtesy of **TORCH Magazine**

Safer Travel

During a recent Centralized Accident Investigation of a Class A Army Motor Vehicle accident, the accident investigation board discovered that the road on which the accident occurred was well known by the state highway patrol to be dangerous. As a result, state highway patrol officials published a flyer describing the road hazards and outlining countermeasures that the state had taken to improve the road, and actions that motorists should take to avoid an accident.

In fact, concerned citizens established a political action committee to lobby their legislatures for more safety improvements. Check with your local law enforcement, Department of Motor Vehicles, and state highway department to determine which roads in your area have been identified as dangerous and what actions these agencies recommend to mitigate the risk. Then tell your soldiers.

POC: LTC Fred Reynolds, Chief, Ground Systems and Accident Investigation Division, DSN 558-3562

Is Your Unit Safe?

Assessing the level of safety readiness of a unit without being a member of that unit is surely a difficult task. But, negating personal biases that soldiers may have and getting a fresh look at your safety climate, from an outsider's perspective, can be invaluable to a unit. In order to aid the conduct of external or internal safety assessments, the Army Safety Center has developed a relatively easy survey (on pages 13 and 14) that can quickly highlight some areas of concern within a unit.

Beginning with the Army Command Climate Survey, MAJ Brian Sperling and MAJ Robert Wildzunas tailored this to focus specifically on safety-related topics.

This survey is designed to be given to separate groups of people and the results compared between groups. For instance, the unit may decide to survey the junior officers in one group and NCOs in another. The results will not only point out problems and successes in both areas, it will also identify the level of communication between the groups. Both groups may have a significantly different perception of the safety climate within the unit.

This survey has been validated by a number of units, results have been discussed with individual chains of command, and policy changes have been made based on the results. Below is an example of how one unit was able to modify the survey to meet its specific needs.

Beginning with the Army Safety Center's Safety Climate Survey, Deb Heise of the Fort McCoy Safety Office retooled the questionnaire, tailoring it to ground units. The finished survey was administered to the soldiers and leaders of two Illinois Army National Guard companies being deployed to guard PATRIOT missile sites in the Middle East. The tabulated survey results were provided to the unit commanders at Fort McCoy's Unit Readiness Center during mobilization processing. Unit commanders were briefed on unit strengths and key hazards

that needed command attention.

The survey indicated that safety leadership was strong in both units. Unit soldiers felt they could approach their commander and NCO leadership about safety problems and expect to be heard. Adherence to operational standards was high in both units. However, the survey indicated that unit soldiers needed additional risk management training.

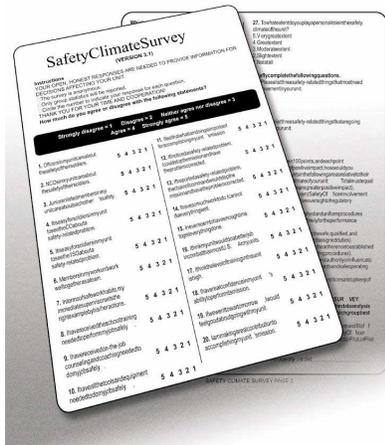
Since vehicle accidents are a significant hazard in the Middle East, a section of the survey was crafted to focus on driver training and safety of vehicle operations. Even though AR 385-55 requires soldiers pass a written test, a road test, and complete accident avoidance training, an average of 30 percent had not completed accident avoidance training. More than 40 percent of the soldiers in each unit indicated they usually, but not always, wear seatbelts when operating Army vehicles.

Many had not operated unit vehicles in more than a year—a significant proficiency and training issue.

Fort McCoy used the survey results to plan for the safety training needed to ensure unit safety readiness. Based on the results, Fort McCoy's Safety Office was able to provide instruction in the application and use of Army Risk Management, and provide two hours of accident avoidance training to all the soldiers in both units. The survey was only one part of Fort McCoy's assessment strategy for mobilized units, but it was a tool that helped them identify areas of strength and weakness in order to focus their efforts.

This survey is just another method available to prioritize a unit's training. When incorporated in the overall safety strategy of a unit, this can be a very powerful tool in developing an effective program.

POCs: MAJ Brian Sperling, Chief, ORSA Division, DSN 558-1496 (334-255-1496), sperlinb@safetycenter.army.mil or Mr. Douglas Blair, Safety Director, Fort McCoy, DSN 280-3403 (608-388-3403), douglas.blair@emh2.mccoy.army.mil



Safety Climate Survey

(VERSION 3.1)

Instructions

YOUR OPEN, HONEST RESPONSES ARE NEEDED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR DECISIONS AFFECTING YOUR UNIT.

- The survey is anonymous.
- Only group statistics will be reported.
- Circle the number to indicate your response for each question.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Strongly disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neither agree nor disagree = 3
Agree = 4 Strongly agree = 5**

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| 1. Officers in my unit care about the safety of their soldiers. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 11. I feel that what I am doing is important for accomplishing my unit's mission. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 2. NCOs in my unit care about the safety of their soldiers. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 12. If I noticed a safety-related problem, I could stop the mission and have the problem corrected. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 3. Junior enlisted members in my unit care about each other's safety. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 13. If I reported a safety-related problem, the chain of command would stop the mission and have the problem corrected. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 4. It is easy for soldiers in my unit to see the CO about a safety-related problem. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 14. I have so much work to do, I cannot do everything well. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 5. It is easy for soldiers in my unit to see the 1SG about a safety-related problem. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 15. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 6. Members in my work unit work well together as a team. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 16. I think my unit would do a better job in combat than most U.S. Army units. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 7. In terms of safe work habits, my immediate supervisor sets the right example by his/her actions. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 17. I think the level of training in this unit is high. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 8. I have received the school training needed to perform my job safely. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 18. I have real confidence in my unit's ability to perform its mission. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 9. I have received on-the-job counseling and coaching needed to do my job safely. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 19. If we went to war tomorrow, I would feel good about going with my unit. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 10. I have all the tools and equipment needed to do my job safely. | 5 4 3 2 1 | 20. I am making a real contribution to accomplishing my unit's mission. | 5 4 3 2 1 |

Which of the choices following each statement below best describes your experiences in this unit?

21. What level of conflict are you experiencing in your unit?

6. None
5. Slight
4. Moderate
3. High
2. Very high
1. Extremely High

22. Usually, how far in advance do you know your unit's training schedule; that is, where you will be and what you will be doing?

5. 14 or more days
4. 11-13 days
3. 8-10 days
2. 4-7 days
1. 1-3 days

23. To what extent do the personnel in your chain of command treat you with respect?

5. Very great extent
4. Great extent
3. Moderate extent
2. Slight extent
1. Not at all

24. Describe how well prepared your unit is to perform its wartime duties/mission?

5. Very well prepared
4. Well prepared
3. Moderately prepared
2. Not well prepared
1. Not at all prepared

25. How would you rate your current level of safety readiness?

5. Very high
4. High
3. Moderate
2. Low
1. Very low

26. How would you rate the unit's current level of safety readiness?

5. Very high
4. High
3. Moderate
2. Low
1. Very low

27. To what extent do you play a personal role in the safety climate of the unit?

5. Very great extent
4. Great extent
3. Moderate extent
2. Slight extent
1. Not at all

Briefly complete the following questions.

28. Please list three safety-related things that most need improvement in your unit.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

29. Please list three safety-related things that are going very well in your unit.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

30. If you were given 100 points, and each point represented 1 unit of positive impact, how would you distribute the 100 points in the following areas relative to their impact on the safety climate of your unit: Total must equal 100 (higher number means greater positive impact).

1. ____ The Safety Program (Safety Officer involvement in the administrative oversight of regulatory safety guidance).
2. ____ Standards (established and uniform procedures that are followed routinely for the performance of safe operations).
3. ____ Training (instruction on the safe, qualified, and proficient performance of assigned duties).
4. ____ Discipline (self-control in the adherence to established standards and safe operating procedures).
5. ____ Leadership (active command authority or influence to adhere to established standards and safe operating procedures).
6. ____ Maintenance (safe working conditions and upkeep of property and equipment).

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

The following demographic is required for data analysis purposes only. Please indicate below which group best describes your current duty position.

- ____ Sergeant Major, Commander, or Command Staff
____ 1st Sergeant, Platoon Leader, or Safety Officer
____ Standardization Instructor Pilot, Instructor Pilot, or Pilot
____ NCO
____ Enlisted Soldier
____ Other (specify, i.e. civ) _____

Safety and Occupational Health Course Schedule

These are the courses that the CP-12 Safety & Occupational Health (SOH) interns must attend in the 2-3 year intern training program. These courses are also open to other safety professionals or military members who may need the training. To enroll, send a DD1556 to Dr. Brenda Miller, CP-12 Manager, U.S. Army Safety Center, Bldg 4905, 5th Ave, Fort Rucker, AL 36362 or fax the form to DSN 558-9527 or CML 334-255-9527. The course schedule will also be posted to our web page: <http://safety.army.mil>. The CP-12 Professional Development Training Schedule will be posted at a later date.

COURSES	DATES
Orientation* (Interns Only)	Jan 2-3
How the Army Runs	Jan 4-5
Theory & Application of Accident Prevention	Jan 8-9
Risk Management	Jan 10-12
Industrial Application of Regulatory Initiatives	Jan 15-18
Research Methods	Jan 19
Problem Solving	Jan 26
Electrical Hazard Control	Jan 29-31
CAPSTONE I - Field Trip*	Feb 1-2
Hazard Recognition in Built Environments	Feb 5-9
Accident Investigation and Analysis Techniques	Feb 12-16
Training Techniques	Feb 19-20
Fire Safety in Building Design	Feb 21-23
Environmental Law	Feb 27-28
Safety Program Leadership & Management	Mar 1-2
Quantitative Methods in Safety Management	Mar 5-7
Human Factors	Mar 8
MACOM Briefings* (Interns Only)	Mar 9
Legal Aspects of Safety	Mar 12-15
Writing Techniques	Mar 16
Hazardous Material Control & Response Methods	Mar 19-23
Recognition, Evaluation, & Control of the Occ. Enviro. (IH)	Mar 26-30
Motor Vehicle and Transportation Safety	Apr 2-5
Briefing Techniques	Apr 6
Contemporary & Army Ergonomics	Apr 9-13
System Safety	Apr 16-17
Health Physics & Radiological Health	Apr 18-19
Research Project* (Interns Only)	Apr 20
CAPSTONE II - Field Trip*	Apr 23-25
Operational Safety	Apr 26-27
Range Safety	Apr 30-May 2
Career Development	May 3
INTERN PHASE I GRADUATION	May 4
Tactical Safety	May 14-25
Explosives Safety Management	May 29-June 1
Army Safety Program Management	Jun 4-5
Resource Management	Jun 6-8
Range Safety	Jun 11-15
Aviation Safety	Jun 18-22
* CP12 interns only	

Fatigue Is Deadly Behind The Wheel

A large number of privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents happen at night and fatigue is often a factor. Soldiers might not understand how easily sleep creeps up on them while driving. Even a momentary lapse is a deadly warning that must be heeded. Soldiers should take the following commonsense precautions while traveling:

- Start out fresh.
- Avoid alcohol—it worsens fatigue.
- Avoid over-the-counter or prescription drugs that may cause drowsiness or impair or slow physical reactions.
- Take a rest break every 2 hours, and don't drive past normal bedtime.
- On long trips, take someone to help with the driving.
- When fatigue sets in, STOP. No amount of caffeine, fresh air, or loud noise will take the place of rest.

Home for Thanksgiving

The day before...

David D., a junior officer, was on his way home for Thanksgiving. It had been months since he'd seen his mom and dad. He'd never seen his 8-week-old niece. An ice storm was threatening to close the roads before he got home, so he was in a hurry. David was driving too fast on the slick highway when he lost control of his car. It slid sideways across the median and into oncoming traffic, where it was hit by a van. David died before reaching the hospital. He had not worn his seatbelt.

Thanksgiving Day...

Eric L., an NCO had the holiday blues. He was having marriage problems, and he faced a lonely 200-mile drive to his folks' house for Thanksgiving dinner. He hadn't been sleeping well and was tired when he got behind the wheel of his car before dawn. Halfway home, he dozed off. His car crossed into oncoming traffic and hit an approaching car

head-on. The other driver was killed and his passenger was seriously injured. Eric suffered head injuries and a broken leg. He spent Thanksgiving Day (and several more) in the hospital.

The day after...

Tom S., fresh out of basic training, celebrated at a party with friends, then started home—300 miles away—to spend the weekend after Thanksgiving with his family. He was speeding when he rear-ended another car with such force that its driver was killed. Tom had a BAC of .17 percent. He was charged with involuntary manslaughter.

Thanksgiving should be a time of family fun and celebration, but it turned into a time of mourning for these soldiers, their victims, and their families and friends.

Editor's note: David, Eric, and Tom were real soldiers, who were involved in real accidents. We have changed their names and certain details concerning the accidents.



From all of us here at the U.S. Army Safety Center, we wish you a truly happy and safe Thanksgiving.