

on the edge... own the edge

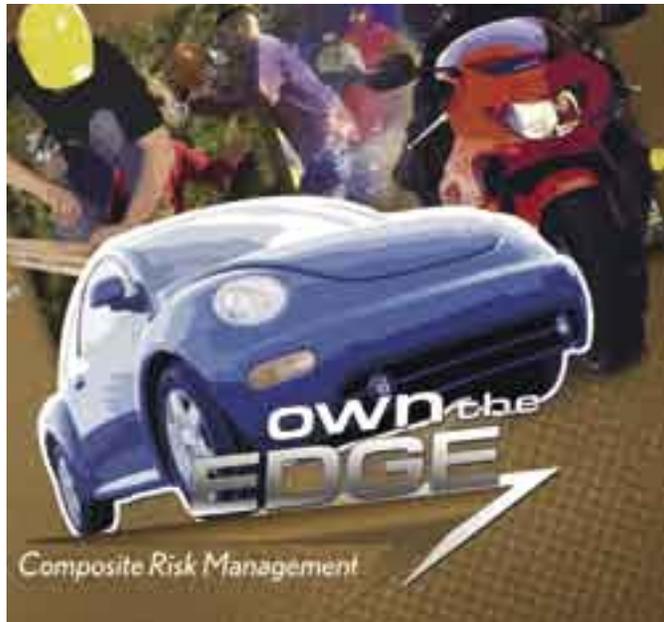


Our Army continues to fight the Global War on Terrorism, with our Soldiers fighting two active campaigns against a determined enemy. More and more of our active and reserve component forces are returning home as combat-hardened veterans. They've been "on the edge" in Iraq and Afghanistan and see themselves as combatants in every aspect of their lives.

This mindset has become clear to me as I've traveled and talked to Soldiers, NCOs and officers. They don't want to be viewed as the "geeky guy on a moped who is decked out in safety gear." They are warriors. This mindset presents a unique challenge to leaders who are trying to manage risk. As leaders, we want to capture the energy and intensity that comes with being on the edge and channel it in a more constructive way. This enables warfighters to manage risk and operate in a deliberate manner so they "own the edge."

The Combat Readiness Center (CRC) continues to serve as the knowledge center for all losses, helping commanders

connect the dots on loss prevention and providing leaders with tools to manage risk. We know Soldiers are on the edge, but we want them to own the edge through Composite Risk Management (CRM).



As we start a new year, our Army is launching a new campaign to get the CRM message down to first-line supervisors and individual Soldiers. Composite Risk Management enables Soldiers to own the edge, no matter where they are in the fight, by teaching them how to think—not what to think, and challenging them to be smart about managing risk. Thus, CRM puts individual Soldiers and leaders in control of how far on the edge they can operate.

When a Soldier wakes up each day—whether in combat, training or off-duty—we want him to ask himself one simple question: "What could take me out of the fight today?" If you are fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan, it could be the enemy. However, if you are driving home on a four-day weekend, it could be fatigue, speed, or alcohol. Even in combat, the most likely thing to take you out of the fight is an accidental hazard instead of the enemy. No matter the threat, the most effective way to counter a hazard is CRM.

Once Soldiers internalize CRM, they begin making smart risk decisions wherever they are—be it in theater, in garrison, at home or on the road. Safety transcends being just a separate paragraph in an operations order or an afterthought during mission planning to something instinctive and intuitive. With CRM, Soldiers become more lethal and ready so they're not just on the edge, they OWN THE EDGE! ⚡

Joe Smith
BG Joe Smith



beyond the edge

ANONYMOUS

It was the week following the Christmas “exodus” and I had to head back to my unit. As usual, I was running a bit behind. I had intended on leaving Thursday evening, but Thursday came and went, as did Friday. I finally left Saturday evening for a trip that would take me from Jamestown, N.Y., to Fort Campbell, Ky., then to Fort Bragg, N.C., then to Atlanta, Ga., and then back to Fort Campbell. I had to hit Fort Campbell first to drop off my oldest son so he could go to work Sunday afternoon.

With my leave coming to a close, I was already tired before we left on the first leg of our trip. We drove all night, or shall I say “I” drove all night, as the rest of the crew slept. I was tired when we arrived at our home at Fort Campbell, but thought I would be able to complete the journey. We ate a quick breakfast and splashed some cold water on our faces, then left for Fort Bragg to drop off another kid who’d spent the holidays with us. I’d never driven this route before, but I looked at the map and figured it would take about eight hours. That turned out to be a costly mistake because the road wound through the mountains and took an additional four to five hours.

As we drove through the mountains that night the alternator started to go out and the headlights began to dim. About an hour before sunrise I had to choose between having headlights or an engine, so we pulled

but I’d completed the first two legs of the journey and was feeling pretty good. The next two legs would be shorter, but I’d be driving mostly at night.

When we left Fort Bragg I still had about 12 hours of driving ahead of me. My



According to the National Sleep Foundation, a person who has gone 18 hours or longer without sleep is as impaired as a driver with a blood alcohol content of .08 percent—the national standard for being legally drunk.

over and took a 45-minute nap. We limped into Fort Bragg and dropped off my son’s friend. We found an auto parts store, bought a replacement alternator and installed it in the parking lot during a rain storm. That delayed us a bit,

youngest son and I discussed some family issues that needed attention, which made the drive to Atlanta fairly enjoyable. By the time we arrived in Atlanta, I’d been awake some 40 hours and had

driven more than 27 hours interrupted only by some brief stops. At that point, I should've been smart enough to call my commander and ask for extra time to get home safely. However, I felt pressured to make it to morning formation so, with a foggy mind, I trudged on. Fortunately, I made it home safely—even though I can't remember a single minute of the last leg of my trip. I was just able to catch a quick shower and head to the morning formation.

Looking back on this experience, I thank the Lord I'm still here to write about it. I made so many bad decisions which were easy to diagnose after the fact. My original plan would've allowed me enough time to get some rest during the trip. However, instead of following my plan, I cut my time in half. That decision ensured I'd have to drive straight through to get back to Fort Campbell in time. Like so many Soldiers I'd done the first three steps of composite risk management by identifying the hazards, assessing them, and developing controls (a plan)—only to skip the fourth step, implementing the plan. Plans, like road maps,

don't do you much good if you don't follow them.

Also, I know my experience is not unique. Many Soldiers on leave wait until the last minute to head back and try to squeeze too many miles into too few hours. Leaders need to talk to their Soldiers about their travel plans and help them avoid this kind of mistake. Leaders also need to be flexible, understanding Soldiers sometimes need a contingency plan—such as the option to return late—for times when plans do change.

I'm fortunate that I didn't kill or injure myself, my passengers, or some other innocent motorist on the highway. Creating a situation where I had to drive exhausted didn't prove I was "tough," instead it proved I was irresponsible. Although I knew better, I foolishly took myself beyond the edge.✘

USAREUR BEGINS WINTER SAFETY CAMPAIGN

The U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR) winter safety program will run from Oct. 1, 2005, through April 30, 2006. European winters present a wide range of hazards, including carbon monoxide poisoning, driving on black ice, cold-weather health hazards, and treacherous winter driving and flying conditions.

The campaign's purpose is to reduce accidental injuries and deaths to Army members, civilians and local national employees and to also protect Army assets.

For more information, visit the USAREUR Safety Web site at http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/services/safetydivision/usareur_winter_safety_campaign.htm.

think you'll always be lucky?



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driving. After witnessing the impact of these two events, I knew that I would never get behind the wheel after I'd had even one drink.

The first instance happened when I was leaving post about 7:30 or 8 p.m. on a weeknight after attending a wives' group meeting. The roads were almost empty. I noticed the pickup truck in front of me going very slow and crossing the center line. The driver stopped the truck at the next stop light, but he was in the oncoming lane. I realized that he was confused, but I was not convinced that he was drunk until I saw him turn on his windshield wipers—despite the lack of rain or even humidity in the air. I knew then that his vision was blurry and he thought a wet windshield was the cause.

The light turned green and the driver proceeded through the intersection and re-entered the proper lane after about a half mile. He was headed off post, where he'd encounter traffic that would be traveling at much higher speeds. I knew I had to stop him before he hurt himself or someone else. I maneuvered my car in front of his and slowed to a stop, put my car in park and got out to go talk to him.

Since this happened in the dark ages (before cell phones), I flagged down the next car to drive by, which happened to be a friend coming from the same meeting I had attended. I explained the situation and she went to alert the MPs. I detained the driver of the truck for about

as a career officer, I often spoke with my colleagues about the good old days and how the Army had changed from the “work hard, play hard” days of our youth to just “work hard.” The Officers and NCO clubs used to be the busiest bars in town. On Friday nights, they were standing room only. “Right Arm” and “Bring Your Boss” nights lasted until 11 p.m. or midnight. When the club

system put in coin-operated machines for patrons to check the alcohol level in their breath, we'd have contests to see who got the highest score.

The Army's and the nation's attitude about drunkenness, and especially drunk driving, has changed significantly since then. My attitude, however, changed long before the culture shift in the Army occurred. As a young lieutenant stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., two things happened that forged my anti-tolerance attitude about drunk

five minutes, pretending to be lost and needing directions. The MPs came, administered a field sobriety test, which he failed, and took him into custody. A few months later, I testified at his hearing in magistrate's court and he was convicted of drunk driving. I don't remember the details of his sentence, but he was a repeat offender so his punishment was stiff.

The second incident that molded my attitude about drunk driving was more severe because no one intervened to stop the person from driving. It happened to a Soldier in my aviation maintenance platoon. She was young, had been drinking and had a heated argument with her boyfriend. She then sped away from the home where the disagreement had occurred, lost control in a turn and slammed her small car into the trunk of a very large tree. She was knocked unconscious and was incinerated when the car caught fire. The photos of the car with a chunk of charred, mangled flesh in the driver's seat were horrific and have stayed vivid in my memory for more than 20 years.

Alcohol, in moderation, can give you a carefree, fun-loving attitude and feeling for a short while. However, nothing will kill your "buzz" or you as quickly as an accident. If you're dumb enough to drive after "just one beer" or because you tell yourself you can drive just fine with a little buzz, you're betting your money and maybe your life on luck. If you're lucky, you'll get away with it. If you're not so lucky, you'll get ticketed and pay a heavy fine. If you're really unlucky, your temporary residence will be the jail or the morgue. And even when you're lucky, you're only postponing the inevitable. The more often you get away with driving drunk, the more often you'll try it. Sooner or later the odds will catch up to you. They always do. ✕

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tales FROM the docket

Think you can drink and drive and nobody else gets affected? Think you were born "lucky" because you've never had an accident or gotten a ticket? Think your luck will always hold out? Is "live fast, die young, leave a good-looking corpse" your motto? If any of these are you, then it's time to get a clue. The guys below, unfortunately, didn't.

A major driving his Jeep Cherokee near Fort Benning, Ga., ran a stop sign and hit a female motorcyclist, causing her riding partner (another Army officer) to crash into the side of the Jeep. The major then hit the gas pedal, spinning his wheels in an attempt to flee the scene, but wound up crashing into a brick wall. About an hour after the accident, his blood alcohol content (BAC) level was .18 (.18 grams of ethanol per 100 milliliters of blood). The major admitted drinking four beers during a four-hour period before the accident but denied being impaired. He was convicted at a general court-martial of drunk driving, reckless driving,

involuntary manslaughter and conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman. He was sentenced to dismissal and confinement for three months.

After an evening of drinking, a specialist attempted to drive to work at Fort Bragg, N.C., and hit a Soldier participating in a pre-dawn group road march. The specialist had not allowed himself enough time to sober up after drinking and his BAC was .16. He was convicted at a general court-martial of drunken and reckless operation of a vehicle and negligent homicide. He was originally sentenced to a dishonorable discharge, confinement for three years and total forfeiture of all pay and allowances; however, his case is under appeal. Before this tragic event, the specialist had a prior conviction in civilian court for driving while impaired. He chose not to learn from his previous experience and killed another Soldier.

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CRM Take it Home!

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I use much of my Army training in my off-duty time; perhaps the most important being Composite Risk Management (CRM). About 10 years ago, my National Guard unit's safety officer gave a briefing on the risk management process. While he was finishing, he handed out some cards showing the risk management process and challenged us all to "take it home and use it in our personal lives."

On my drive home that evening, I decided my daily commute to work would be a prime candidate for risk management. The process was easy, and I'd done most of in my head before I got home. Here's how I lowered a "High" risk to a "Moderate"—and often "Low"—risk.

STEP 1: identify the hazards

This was pretty simple. My commute was 28 miles each way on two-lane winding roads. When I threw in some rain, snow and ice, working the midnight shift and driving home sleepy, I knew I had a recipe for disaster.

STEP 2: assess hazards

That wasn't too difficult—I just marked everything "High." I couldn't just tell my boss the drive was too risky and I wasn't willing to move any closer, so just send my check to the house. The fact is I'd have to live with the drive.

STEP 3: develop controls and make decisions

I needed some control measures I could apply to each of these hazards to make the

drive safer. The secret to this step was coming up with ideas I would actually make a part of my daily routine. I couldn't shorten the drive, but I decided that finding a car pool buddy would be a good idea—one that would also save me money. We would ride together when we could. I would stay on top of my vehicle's maintenance—including making sure I had good tires—to avoid a maintenance-related breakdown or accident. When the weather was bad, I would leave 15 minutes early



so I wouldn't be rushed—30 minutes if the weather was really foul. For the morning drive home, I'd drive as safely as possible and make sure I got the best sleep I could during the day. That meant turning off the phone ringer, darkening the room and running a fan to help cover any other noise. As a last resort, if I was just too tired to drive home I would get a motel room. I felt following these rules would lower my risk from "High" to "Moderate" on bad-weather days and days when I worked double shifts and provide me a "Low" risk on a typical day.

STEP 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS

For the implementation phase, I would make sure I followed my control measures and evaluated them. However, the process didn't stop there. As I implemented my controls, I would look for ways to modify and improve them.

For example, I got home one morning and couldn't remember the last section of road I had just driven or whether I had stopped and looked before going through the intersection. I quickly identified this as an "Extremely High Risk" and decided I had to do something about it. I added some alertness checkpoints, using all of the intersections, a school and other locations along my route

of travel. I also decided to take several different routes to and from work to break up the monotony of always driving the same road. Over time I assessed that my controls had reduced the risk to a "Low" because I could remember passing my checkpoints and stopping and looking at each intersection. Eventually, this became a habit for me.

STEP 5: SUPERVISE and evaluate

I drove this commute accident free for more than 12 years and believe much of that is due to using CRM. As time passed, practicing CRM during my daily commute became a natural part of my thinking. However, it didn't get that way automatically; I had start by taking the time and effort to use CRM. What I got in return, however, was a game plan I could follow for my daily commute—one that also gave me options when things weren't going so well. Now I didn't have to rely on luck to get me home safely.

it doesn't have to be hard

The principles I learned so many years ago have grown to become today's CRM. The one thing I've learned over the years is that you don't have to make safety complicated for it to work. I like keeping CRM short and simple so I can

use it quickly and apply it in many situations. To do that I mentally identify and assess the hazards, ask myself how I can lower the risk and then follow through with my decision.

I would like to challenge you the way my safety officer challenged me—take CRM home and use it in your personal life. You'll find out it works! 🙌

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announcing asmis-2

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aSMIS-1 is a Web-based, automated risk management tool that uses known accident hazard information and available technology to provide practical experience to young leaders. The ASMIS-1 system consists of Privately Owned Vehicle (POV), Ground, and Aviation modules available on the Combat Readiness Center's Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>. The current POV module, deployed on Dec. 10, 2003, is the oldest of the three and is being revised and will be released as ASMIS-2 in early December.

The intent of the ASMIS-2 POV module is to change the user's behavior. The module educates users by presenting them with advertising banners that combine eye-catching graphics with short, powerful messages. The banners will initially be focused on the current major causes of fatal accidents. As users progress through the module, banners will evolve based upon the user's responses to questions. Leader and subordinate interaction is encouraged through a supervisor's module that includes management and counseling tools.

After completing the initial trip assessment, the user is

presented with actual accident cases relevant to their planned trip. Those cases show users that accidents are not simply something that happens to somebody else; Soldiers just like them have had fatal accidents under similar circumstances.

Finally, they are offered controls to reduce the level of risk for the trip they have planned. Upon completion, the assessment is automatically sent via e-mail to the Soldier's designated supervisor.

The ASMIS-2 POV module has been designed to improve the accuracy of the risk calculation model, provide users with additional products and improve supervisors' participation. The risk calculation model has been significantly modified and is based upon National Transportation Safety Board and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety research data. The integration of Defense Table of Official Distances mapping software will provide the user with a trip map and time and distance traveled information for risk calculations. Since many of the assessments are completed

before leave or pass, the user is provided with a partially completed DA Form 31 they can finish and print from the module. Modifications to the supervisor's module will provide counseling and reporting tools designed to



encourage their participation by making it easier.

During FY05, the ASMIS-1 valid user fatality rate was 5 ½ times lower than the Army POV fatality rate. ASMIS-1 has more than 200,000 registered users from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force. Those users have completed more than 576,000 assessments. The number of users is growing at a rate of 300 to 500 every day. As of Oct. 1, 2005, five registered users have been involved in fatal accidents, none of which occurred on trips assessed with ASMIS-1. 🗣️

For more information on ASMIS-2, contact Mr. Larry Kulsrud at (334) 255-3641, DSN 558-3641, or by e-mail at larry.kulsrud@crc.army.mil.

getting squirrelly with a gun

CW3 GREGORY S. WOOTEN

This year, just like every year before, someone will go into the woods for what will be their last hunt. When I was growing up, my father took the time to teach me gun safety and proper techniques for hunting. So of course I followed those instructions, right? Not quite.

I remember one morning when I was about 12 years old and living in Arkansas, I got up early and went squirrel hunting by myself. I walked into the woods that surrounded our home and sat down on a rock. It wasn't long before the squirrels were jumping about in the trees. I remember running through the woods with my loaded shotgun so I could get

that perfect shot. I fired and missed, and the squirrel fell to the ground and went into a small hole on the side of a tree. I wanted to scare the squirrel out of the hole, so I started hitting the tree with the stock of my weapon. As I hit the tree the second time, my gun went off just inches from my face. It was only then that I realized how stupid I'd been.

Most, if not all, states require hunters to take a safety course before they're issued a hunting license. Those courses teach the basics of safe gun handling, so ignorance is not an excuse. The problem is that some hunter's chose to ignore what they've been taught or, in the excitement of the hunt, forget to make safe gun handling a

priority. The following are some valuable safety tips hunters should always keep in mind:

- Always be aware of where the muzzle of your weapon is pointed and never allow it to point toward yourself or others.
- Keep the safety on and your finger outside the trigger guard until you're ready to shoot.
- Clearly identify your target before you shoot. Never shoot at a sound or a patch of color.
- Know what's beyond your target and avoid shooting if a missed shot could threaten others. For squirrel hunters who use handguns or rifles in .22 Long Rifle, remember the



bullet can carry for a mile or more if fired at a high angle.

- If you have a misfire, keep the weapon pointed in a safe direction for at least 45 seconds and then remove the cartridge.
- Do not climb fences or trees, cross slippery areas or jump ditches or creeks while carrying a loaded firearm. It only takes a few seconds to unload the firearm then reload after you've crossed the obstacle. If you're hunting with a partner, hand him your UNLOADED gun before crossing the obstacle.
- Never pull a firearm toward you by the muzzle.
- Handguns should be carried in a holster.
- Do not shoot at flat, hard surfaces or at water. Bullets will ricochet off these surfaces and you'll have no control of where they'll go. Remember, a bullet or shot from a shotgun shell is your responsibility from the instant it leaves your weapon. (Editor's Note: While hunting ducks at a Fort Bliss, Texas, training area, I was on the opposite side of a pond when a shooter opened up on the birds with his .30-30 rifle. The rounds

missed the ducks but hit the water and ricocheted in my direction. I left the pond, got to the nearest phone and called the military police. I checked with them later and was satisfied to hear the individual had been arrested and his rifle confiscated).

- Alert other hunters in your area to your presence and note where they are so that you don't accidentally fire in their direction. If you're hunting in a group and spook game, don't become so fixated on aiming at the animal that you accidentally point your weapon at another hunter.
- Be especially careful at the end of the day when you're tired and your firearm begins feeling heavier. Fatigue can make you careless, which can lead to a tragic accident. If you feel tired, stop and unload your weapon and rest.
- Do not use alcohol, medication or drugs that could impair your judgment and dull your senses. 🦋



Since 2000, the Army has reported two Soldiers being killed and four others injured as a result of hunting accidents. Significantly, neither fatality was firearms-related but, rather, involved Soldiers who drowned while duck hunting from boats. Two injuries occurred when Soldiers fell. One Soldier fell from a hunting stand, and the other while climbing a steep hillside. One of the firearms-related injuries happened when a Soldier stepped into a hole and accidentally shot his brother, who was also a Soldier, in the right leg. The other injury occurred when a Soldier was shot in the buttocks with a .22-caliber weapon. The incident was treated as a crime, but the shooter was never captured.

CONNECTIONS

For additional information on firearms safety, visit the National Rifle Association's Education and Training Programs Web site at <http://www.nrahq.org/education/guide.asp>.

every breath you take

The alarm on our carbon monoxide (CO) detector sounded, giving my wife and me a scare and sending our cats high-tailing into the bedroom. We looked at each other, surprised at what was happening. As far as we knew, nothing was wrong. We didn't see any smoke or smell anything. I opened the kitchen and dining room windows and ran the heat pump to clear the air. The alarm finally went off and the cats came out from beneath the bed. The loud beeping had startled us, but it was better than the alternative—suffering carbon monoxide poisoning.

That happened in our first house, which was built in Georgia in 1992. The same thing happened when we moved to New Mexico and built our second home. On some fall nights, before I switched on the furnace, my wife and I would sleep in the front room, enjoying the warmth of the gas fireplace. When I bought the house, the seller drilled into me the importance of keeping the fireplace's outside vent clear. The importance of that was reinforced one night when the CO detectors sounded and almost ran us out of the house. Grabbing a flashlight, I ran outside and looked into the vent only to discover it had been "inhabited" during the

summer. Annoying as the CO alarm was, it sure beat going to sleep warm and waking up dead the next morning! (I hope you were paying close enough attention to catch the irony in that sentence.)

And it wasn't just the gas fireplace I needed to be concerned about. My gas-operated stove, furnace and water heater were all potential sources for CO poisoning, as was our attached



two-car garage. No matter how cold it was outside, I always opened the garage door before starting the engine and backed the car onto the driveway to warm up.

What are the signs of trouble?

Every year, more than 200 Americans die of CO poisoning, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The symptoms of CO poisoning often mimic the flu with headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, and shortness of breath. These symptoms are caused when

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CO interferes with the blood distributing oxygen to the rest of the body. If the exposure is prolonged or at high-enough levels, the results can be fatal. People who have had coronary or respiratory problems are especially at risk. If you suffer any of the symptoms of CO poisoning,

you should immediately do the following:

- Get fresh air immediately. Open doors and windows, turn off combustion appliances and leave the house.
- Go to an emergency room. Be sure to tell the physician that you suspect CO poisoning.

be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Is anyone else in your household complaining of similar symptoms?
- Did their symptoms appear about the same time as yours?
- Are you using any fuel-burning appliances in your home?
- Has anyone inspected your appliances lately? Are you certain they are working properly?

an ounce of prevention

The best way to avoid CO poisoning is to not expose yourself to it in the first place. Following the common sense

For more information on protecting yourself and your family from carbon monoxide poisoning visit the Carbon Monoxide Kills Campaign Web site at <http://www.carbonmonoxidekills.com/>.

guidance below can prevent this wintertime tragedy:

- Have your furnace and fireplace checked yearly by a licensed heating professional to ensure they're working properly.
- Never leave your automobile running in the garage.
- Never operate a gas or charcoal grill in an enclosed area such as a closed garage, cabin or camper.
- If operating a kerosene space heater inside a house, ensure you have adequate fresh air ventilation.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home to alert you to dangerous levels of CO and give you time to get out.

about those detectors

Let's say you walk into a room and see a disc-shaped detector on the wall near the ceiling. You're in good shape, right? Not

necessarily! Chances are, you're looking at a smoke detector. A smoke detector will warn you if there is a fire, but it won't warn you about dangerous levels of CO, which is both colorless and odorless. The problem is many smoke detectors and CO detectors look alike, so telling them apart can be a challenge.

How can you tell the difference? Modern-made detectors are clearly marked on the front, so there is no mistaking them. However, as I discovered in my current home, some older detectors aren't marked. So I can assume two things—the fact they're not marked means they're old enough they should be replaced. Also, their location high on the wall suggests they're smoke detectors because smoke, which is warm, rises. By contrast, CO distributes evenly in a room, so the detectors can be mounted at any height.

Of course, you could get

the best of both worlds and buy a combined smoke and CO detector. The good news is combined models are no more expensive than buying separate smoke and CO detectors, and they're no larger in size. Since you need protection against both threats, why not get the combined model? It sure beats going to sleep warm and waking up dead! 

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it's FOR YOU...

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Everyone who owns a cell phone is probably guilty of having a phone conversation while driving. There may be many drivers on the roads right now with a cell phone in one hand and a cigarette in the other. The point of this story is not to accuse all who use cell phones while driving of being bad drivers. The point is to illustrate that although talking on the phone while driving is

inherently dangerous, there are things you can do to lessen your risks.

One dreary, wintry day I was traveling westbound on a two-lane highway in Kentucky, headed home from a long day of college classes. Pleased with my newest toy—my very first cell phone—I called everyone I knew. While talking to a good friend, I hit a bump and dropped the phone. Instead of leaving it on the floorboard where it landed, I

decided that I would retrieve it while driving 60 mph. I looked down to see where the phone was and reached for it on the floorboard. When I looked up, I saw a washing machine in the middle of the road. You would think that a washing machine in the middle of a highway would be visible from a long way off. However, because I was preoccupied with retrieving my cell phone, I didn't see it until it was almost too late.



I swerved violently onto the right-hand shoulder and nearly hit a mailbox. I overcorrected and came back across the highway, narrowly missing a vehicle in the oncoming lanes. As I spun out and went off the eastbound side of the highway, I ended up on top of a “No Littering” sign. The whole ordeal took only a few seconds, but it felt like an eternity, as everything seemed to happen in slow motion. Although this might be an unusual example, I’m sure many of you have heard tales of cell phone-distracted drivers doing dangerous things on the highway.

If you decide to talk on the phone in your vehicle, there are several things you can do to reduce your risks. First and foremost, get to know the features of your cell phone. Use features such as speed dial and memorize the keypad so you can keep your

eyes on the road. Always use hands-free devices or speaker phone settings. This will allow you to keep both hands on the wheel at all times. Always tell the person you are speaking with that you are driving and your primary focus is on the road. And be smart about when you use the phone. In heavy traffic, bad weather and other stressful situations, either pull over to a safe area or wait until you have reached your destination. Also, it is not a good idea to have heated debates or emotionally charged conversations while driving. Before putting the vehicle in motion, set up your hands-free device to make it easier to operate in the event you get an unexpected call. 📞



Recent studies suggest the biggest problem is not holding the phone but being distracted by the conversation. Also, some cities and Army installations restrict or prohibit the use of cell phones. Be sure you know the rules for the area where you drive.)

The recommendations in this story are just a few ideas to improve the safety of your driving experience. Remember, the safest way to get from point A to point B is to concentrate on the task at hand. Drive safely and buckle up. To learn more about the effects of cell phone use on driving safety, visit the following Web sites: <http://www.nsc.org/nsm/distracted.htm>, and <http://www.reedberry.com/cellphone.html>.



The Insurance Information Institute’s Web page at <http://www.iii.org/media/hottopics/insurance/cellphones/> provides information from multiple studies on the impact of cell phone use on safe driving.

don't look the other way

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POV Accident Investigator
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

In today's fast-paced world, we have come to accept a lifestyle of "getting there fast." But at what cost? In the name of speed, whether it's behind the wheel or getting a job done, we sacrifice safety. You can measure the price of that sacrifice in Soldiers permanently removed from our ranks.

The statistics are not just numbers, they're Soldier's lives. Many of our young Soldiers are dying in automobile and motorcycle accidents because they lack good judgment, speed and drive or ride under the influence of alcohol or while fatigued. Sadly, they die before surviving enough close calls to learn from them. In all too many cases, they believed they could drink and drive without any consequences.

Before coming to the Combat Readiness Center to work as an accident investigator, I worked as a state trooper. I had performed hundreds of motor vehicle accident investigations on people who caused accidents or were victims of someone else's carelessness. Some of the worst experiences in my career were the many times I had to inform a family of the death of a loved one. Their responses included guilt, anger, denial and feeling responsible for the incident. The response

I didn't expect was, "We were wondering when this would happen." Yet that's what I heard from some people. They knew the victim well enough to know something terrible might happen but never did anything about it. They just looked the other way.



That's something to think about. How many times do we see someone acting in a careless or reckless manner and say nothing? It is our responsibility as friends, Soldiers, and leaders to point out and correct these errors. As leaders, we must discipline wrong behavior and hold individuals accountable for their actions. However, we also have a duty to use our past experiences to help guide and train our Soldiers so we don't lose them prematurely.

When we do nothing, when we look the other way and then make excuses when a Soldier is hurt, seriously injured or killed, we are **WRONG!**

When we were younger Soldiers, we learned we were not always the best judge of our abilities. We also learned that Murphy's Law—what can go wrong will—still applied. Today's young Soldiers are no different than we were. They also often overestimate their abilities and turn a blind eye toward danger.

As leaders, we have lived and learned. Now it's our turn to teach our Soldiers to learn and live. They're watching us because we set their goals and our expectations of them. When it comes to safety, if we don't care enough to correct them when they're wrong, they'll think it doesn't matter—that we've chosen to look the other way. But if the phone rings in the middle of the night and the unsafe Soldier we ignored is now in the morgue, we will personally know the cost of a safety statistic. We won't be able to look the other way then.

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BRIEFS

The following reports reflect accidents that have happened to Soldiers in their privately owned vehicles, during recreational activities, and in other non-tactical environments.



POV

Class A

- A Soldier was operating his POV on a single-lane highway when he collided with an oncoming truck. The driver, a Soldier, suffered fatal injuries and the passenger, also a Soldier, had to have an arm amputated.

- A Soldier was driving her POV when she collided

with an oncoming taxi. Medical aid was summoned and the Soldier was pronounced dead at the scene.

- A Soldier was operating his POV when a tractor-trailer collided with a truck. Both vehicles crossed the median, forcing the Soldier's POV off the road, where it burst into flames. The Soldier died at the scene.

- A Soldier driving his POV to his duty station was involved in a fatal accident. His POV reportedly ran off the road and across the median and into the path of a tractor-trailer.

- A Soldier was operating his POV on Interstate 70 when he reportedly fell asleep, ran off the road, crossed a creek and struck a barrier.

The Soldier suffered multiple injuries and died at the scene.

- A Soldier was reportedly involved in a drag race down a residential street when he had an accident and died.

- A National Guardsman was driving his POV to his unit to report for duty in support of OIF when he was involved in a fatal accident. He

was evacuated to a hospital, where he died from his injuries.

- An Army reservist was driving his POV south on Interstate 15 en route to his annual training. Reportedly, a witness saw his vehicle drifting left and right before it went off the road and rolled over into a ditch. The reservist was fatally injured.

- A Soldier was driving his POV when he lost control on loose gravel after leaving the roadway. The Soldier suffered fatal injuries.

Class B

- A Soldier was traveling on the autobahn when a metal pipe became airborne from the vehicle in front of

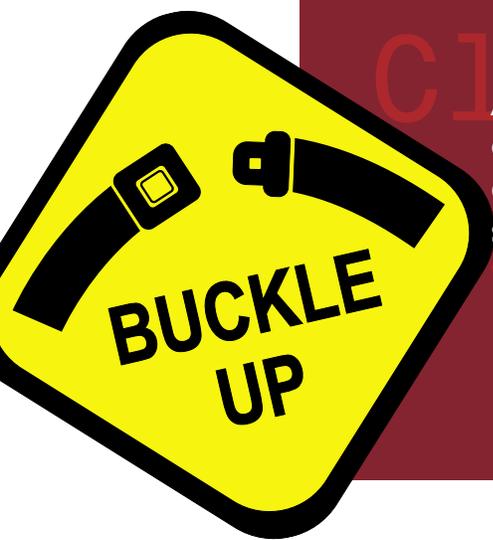
POM

Class A

- A Soldier was riding an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) in a pasture on private property when he apparently lost control and had an accident. The Soldier, who was not wearing a helmet, was thrown from the ATV and suffered fatal injuries.

an off-ramp when his motorcycle became airborne and landed in a ditch on the right side of the on-ramp. The Soldier's estimated speed was 100 mph. The Soldier died of his injuries.

- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle around a curve when he apparently lost control, ran off the



Class A

A Soldier was fatally injured when his pickup ran off the road, struck a guardrail and rolled down an embankment. The Soldier, who was not wearing his seatbelt, was pronounced dead by the county coroner.

WEAR YOUR SEATBELT!

- A National Guardsman was killed when a vehicle that reportedly crossed the center line into his lane struck his vehicle head-on. The guardsman was in inactive duty training status and was driving to his weekend training.

him and struck him in the eye, resulting in a permanent-partial disability.

Class C

- The Soldier was stopped and waiting for traffic to resume moving when she felt her car being hit. She was driving to work.

- A Soldier was fatally injured when he lost control of his motorcycle, ran off the road and hit a tree. The Soldier suffered a broken neck and was pronounced dead at the scene.

- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle and attempting to exit

road and struck a telephone pole. The Soldier suffered fatal injuries.

- A Soldier was operating his motorcycle when a pickup failed to yield right-of-way and pulled out in front of him. The Soldier reportedly took evasive action, laying

the motorcycle on its side. The motorcycle slid into the pickup, causing the Soldier fatal injuries.

The weather at the time of the accident included fog, condensation and frost.

- A Soldier suffered fatal injuries when he lost control of his motorcycle, ran off a road and struck a tree. The Soldier was taken to a hospital, where he died from massive head injuries.

- A Soldier on a motorcycle was attempting to pass a vehicle when he reportedly lost control, slid into oncoming traffic and was struck by a car. The Soldier, who was not wearing his helmet, was fatally injured.

Class C

- While operating his motorcycle, a National Guardsman attempted to pass a POV on the left when it turned left in front of him. The guardsman struck the

UNNATURAL selections

An NCO took his motorcycle and cruised to a local park, ignoring the loose gravel and dirt at the parking lot entrance. When he later decided to leave, he rode to the entrance, looked left and right, and then screwed on full throttle while turning to the right.

But drat, there was that loose dirt and gravel. Too much power and too little traction and the Honda swapped ends faster than a rodeo pony, throwing the rider to the ground. In the process, he stuck out his hand to break his fall and, instead, broke his wrist.

car and sustained a broken jaw and rib.

Personnel Injury Class A

- Soldier was fishing on a riverbank when he fell into the river and drowned.

- Two Soldiers were hiking above the lower Columbine Trails when one of the Soldiers apparently slipped and fell 400 feet to his death.

- A Soldier was seen struggling in the pool by witnesses but was non-responsive when he was reached. The Soldier is presumed to have been swimming and drowned.

- An Army National Guardsman placed his shotgun in the back of his POV (muzzle pointed toward the rear hatch area) while his spouse sat in the front seat. When she turned to retrieve an item from the back of the vehicle, the shotgun fired and struck her husband in the neck, fatally injuring him.

- A Soldier died of various injury complications after he was retrieved unresponsive from an apartment complex-affiliated pool.

- A Soldier was swimming laps in a swimming pool when a minor that was

being tossed into the water by a parent reportedly struck him. The Soldier died as a result.

Class C

- A Soldier had just made a jump shot during a basketball game on the driveway of his post quarters. As he landed, his left foot rolled on the edge of the driveway, causing an extensive stress fracture of the left foot.

SNUFFY hits the Road!

It was winter and when PVI Joe Snuffy went out to start his car and drive to the post he had the following conversation with himself.

“Wow! It snowed last night. I hope the car starts. Should have replaced that battery last month; I knew then it wasn’t real good. Couldn’t afford it, though, and I still can’t. Oh, well. Let’s give it a try. Come on, baby, start. Yeah! Now let’s get some heat in here. Where’s that ice scraper? Man, it’s cold. This ice is thick. Shoot! The scraper broke! What now? Time to pull out the old ID card and scrape some more. It’s getting late. The staff sergeant will have my butt if I’m late again. Come on, defroster, get going! I guess I can see

things nearly all of us have done at one time or another. Let’s take a minute and think about a couple of the rules for driving in adverse weather conditions that Snuffy chose to ignore.

First and foremost, Snuffy did not clean ALL of his vehicle’s windows of snow, ice and frost before attempting to drive. You cannot drive safely if you cannot see. The front, side and rear windows must all be cleared of obstructions. Scraping away just enough ice from the windshield to make a small hole to see through until the defroster finishes its job is unacceptable.

Another mistake Snuffy made was not allowing enough time to properly prepare his vehicle for driving in the hazardous winter conditions. His fear of getting in trouble with the staff

sergeant outweighed taking the extra time to prepare correctly. Better to arrive late than never.

a few thoughts FOR Leaders

How many of you as leaders have been too quick to overlook reasons for something happening? We have become ingrained with the idea that “This is when it is scheduled and this is when it will happen.” We fail to do a

Composite Risk Management assessment for everything we do. Ask yourself this question: Would it have been better to tolerate Snuffy being late and receiving a short counseling along the lines of “think ahead



and plan better,” or not to have him show up at all because he was killed in an accident?”

And there’s more. Have you taken the time to teach your other troops how to prepare their vehicles for winter and drive safely on wintry roads? Do you know how to do these things yourself? If you don’t, it’s time to learn so you can teach and lead your Soldiers. Remember, many Soldiers come from the Deep South where they have rarely, if ever, seen snow or had to drive in it. Helping these Soldiers avoid become winter driving statistics shows you care, and that’s a good thing in any leader. 

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CONNECTIONS

For some useful tips on winter driving safety, visit the “Car Talk” Website at <http://www.cartalk.com/content/features/winterdriving/>.

well enough; besides, the car will warm up faster if I’m driving, right? Here we go. At least the road isn’t too bad. Whoa! That curve was slick! There must be ice out there. Oh, no. I think I see some headlights coming from over there. They’re coming pretty fast! Slow down, slow down, SLOW DOWN!”

These were the last thoughts Snuffy had that morning before awakening in the hospital several hours later. He did the same