Army Safety 2012 - A Year in Review and The Year Ahead

The significance of safety is one of many critical lessons our Army has learned after 11 years at war. We have learned that lesson well as demonstrated by a 9 percent annual decline in Soldier accidental fatalities. Fiscal 2012 was our third safest year on record. This is a great accomplishment for every member of our Force, and one that will sustain us as we transition to the Army of the future.

We can improve upon that performance in 2013 by treating safety as an imperative, not just a priority. As the mission changes, priorities may shift in importance. Safety, however, is non-negotiable in all that we do, both on and off duty. It must be at the center of every function throughout the chain of command for the proper care of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families.

By focusing on several key actions, leaders at all levels can contribute to the safety of our personnel. First, commanders should evaluate unit safety culture and the degree of organizational risk by scheduling their individual formations for the Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP) (more information on ARAP is available at https://safety.army.mil).

Next, commanders at all levels must continue to ensure timely completion of accident reports. Lags in reporting time and incomplete reports complicate trend analysis and delay the distribution of vital safety information to the field. Reports must contain all relevant facts and be as comprehensive as possible before they are submitted through the reviewing chain. Safety information is only as good as the data used to analyze it, and incomplete accident reports may obscure emerging trends.

Finally, leaders must know what their Soldiers are doing off duty. Mishaps involving privately owned motor vehicles – both cars and motorcycles – remain the number one cause of accidental deaths of Soldiers. We must fight off-duty risk with the same tenacity and principles that we apply to minimizing accidental fatalities on duty.

By actively engaging Soldiers, Civilians and Families, we can and must work together to ensure our continued safety success. Thank you for what you do every day for our Army and the United States of America. Together, we are The Strength of the Nation!

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