SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

DEC 13 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Staying Safe this Holiday Season

The holidays are a time of year when we remember and celebrate what is most important to us: our friends, our families, and the values that we share and defend. I hope that all of you – and all members of our Department of Defense community – spend time with friends and family, reflect on the successes of the past year, and get the rest you need to prepare for the new year.

Of course, the holiday season also presents unique stresses and risks that require us to be mindful of ourselves, each other, and all our people. Whether it is family, financial, relationship, or physical stress or the risks that weather and excessive celebration can pose at this time of year, we must encourage our people to be safe and exercise good judgment.

As we work together to ensure safe, happy holidays for all, I urge you to reinforce the principles of proper planning, responsible alcohol consumption, and sound decision making, especially behind the wheel, to your team to prevent tragic mishaps this holiday season.

If you or a colleague needs assistance, particularly managing the stresses of the season, there is confidential help available through the local Civilian Employee Assistance Program or Military Crisis Line, at (800) 273-8255.

Thank you. You, and each of our people, are doing one of the noblest things a person can do, protecting our country and making a better world for our children. I am grateful to you, and I'm proud of you every day. I wish all of you the very best for the season.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season!

Ash Carter

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