



Leader involvement in motorcycle accidents

Leaders,

Little more than halfway through fiscal 2014, fatal motorcycle accidents are already 33 percent above last year's numbers. This is worrying, especially given lingering cold weather in much of the United States, where riding season has been delayed for many Soldiers. A deeper look, however, reveals an even more disturbing statistic: as of 21 April, 10 of the 12 motorcycle losses reported this year have involved enlisted leaders at the rank of sergeant and above.

This trend is unacceptable. During the past several years, our Army has lost a staggering number of NCOs in preventable motorcycle mishaps, often due to indiscipline and negligence on the part of the rider. What kind of message is this sending to the young Soldiers in our formations? It is time for us — command sergeants major and sergeants major across the Army — to start engaging with our subordinate leaders on safety, holding them to the same standards expected of their Soldiers.

Motorcycle riders inherently face more hazards than conventional vehicle drivers and passengers. But, that does not mean riders have no control over their personal safety. It is up to us, as senior leaders, to ensure our Soldier riders have the best opportunity to “train out” the risks of motorcycling. Are your motorcycle mentorship programs alive and well? Are the right people leading them? Are your riders trained to anticipate all the hazards of the road, even those they cannot control like wildlife and distracted drivers? Are all your riders even trained to standard? Those are tough questions without easy answers, but we owe it to every one of our Soldiers, regardless of rank, to answer them and quickly remedy any shortcomings discovered during the process.

Soldiers must have confidence in their leaders, and in turn, those leaders must build their Soldiers' confidence in safety. Leader indiscipline is reflected in the ranks, but the reverse is also true: Disciplined leaders produce disciplined Soldiers. Please take a hard look at your formations and discuss this issue with your leaders down the NCO support channel. Our enlisted leaders are truly the backbone of our Army, and we need them all to keep our force ready for tomorrow's challenges.

May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and I encourage you to use the tools available at <https://safety.army.mil> to refocus your safety programs on this important topic. The next few months will be critical, and we have no time to waste. Thank you for your efforts, and please let me know how I can help keep your Soldiers safe in all they do.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leeford C. Cain'.

Leeford C. Cain
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center