



## Personnel Injury-Other Losses, Fiscal 2013

Leaders,

Since the beginning of fiscal 2013, our Army has experienced a downward trajectory in accidental deaths. On- and off-duty accidental fatalities are down 20 percent or more at the end of the third quarter. Perhaps most notably, off-duty sedan and motorcycle deaths are down for the year, with PMV-2 declining 35 percent from 2012 numbers, and Army combat vehicle deaths falling 75 percent.

The bad news, and what's caused me to send this note out, is we have seen a 24 percent increase in personnel injury-other losses as compared to last year. We have lost 22 Soldiers this fiscal year with the majority of what is historically our most dangerous quarter still to go. So far, nine Soldiers lost their lives to drowning, while six lost their lives to accidents involving privately owned weapons. These two accident types account for 68 percent of our PIO losses to date this fiscal year.

The loss of one life is devastating to our Army Family, and even more so when it's to a preventable accident.

In late June, a Soldier hiking with four other Soldiers and a civilian dove into the river from a rocky jut. When the Soldier failed to resurface, his companions searched the water without success. Authorities later recovered his body.

A few weeks ago, a Soldier who had recently purchased a handgun was showing it to three other Soldiers at an off-post residence when he shot himself in the head.

The other 19 stories differ slightly but carry with them the same endings and many of the same factors: inability or unwillingness to recognize the risk, personal indiscipline, and poor decision making. And, alcohol use is well known to increase the risk in any setting.

I would ask all leaders to take a look at your water safety program and see if there are any gaps in training. Training Circular 21-21 has the approved Army drown-proofing training, which can be conducted at your local pool. Just as we have asked you to identify your motorcycle riders, leaders should know which Soldiers are non-swimmers and take the appropriate steps to get them trained. Additional resources for swimming safety are located at <https://safety.army.mil/SafetyCity/Pages/Water/Swimmer/Swimmer.aspx>.

Privately owned weapons accidents have accounted for nearly 27 percent of our PIO losses. Safe operations of all weapons are basic Soldiers skills. The same discipline and standards used when handling military weapons on duty must be transferred to off duty. Clearing the weapon, muzzle awareness and proper identification of the intended target are three key areas that must be stressed when handling any weapon. Additional material for safe weapons handling can be found at <https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety/Home/tabid/1435/Default.aspx>.

Thank you for your continued support, vigilance and leadership as we strive to keep our accidental injuries and fatalities on a downward trajectory.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

**TIMOTHY J. EDENS**  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding