



Safety Sends--Off-Duty Losses

Under your great leadership, our young Leaders and Soldiers are doing superb work executing the missions both at home and in theaters overseas. Double-digit reductions in all on-duty accident categories show safety has become a top priority on the job, and we are poised to set another record low in on-duty fatalities at year's end. On-duty, our Leaders are engaged while our Soldiers continue to look out for each other on every mission, at home station and in the AOR. Through March of this year we were also seeing decreases in almost all off duty fatality categories as well. However, since the end of April, approximately four Soldiers have died every week during their off-duty time, primarily in privately owned vehicles (POV) and privately owned motorcycles (POM) crashes.

For the fourth consecutive year, Soldier deaths in sedans, trucks, SUVs, and vans, as well as on motorcycles have accounted for nearly two thirds of all accidental fatalities. Fatal POM accidents are currently 50 percent above year-to-date totals for both 2009 and 2010 and are approaching the record high set in fiscal 2008. Additionally, off duty fatal personal injuries like drowning, falls from buildings, and even private airplane accidents are also on the rise and already exceed numbers recorded during the previous two fiscal years. If this trend continues through the end of September, we could close the year with over 190 Soldiers lost to accidents during fiscal 2011.

Indiscipline is the root cause of the vast majority of these fatalities. Simply put, Soldiers are killing themselves by driving too fast and/or under the influence of alcohol, neglecting to wear seat belts or personal protective equipment, mishandling firearms, failing to use basic safety equipment, and swimming/boating after drinking or in dangerous areas. I think you are all familiar with the many tools we have available on our website, <https://safety.army.mil>. The POV/POM Toolbox and "Off Duty, On Guard" interactive challenge as well as the Soldier Safety Kit presentation will prove especially useful for your Leaders in fighting risky behavior. I encourage you to explore our site and share this knowledge with Leaders down your chain of command.

The tools are only as powerful as the people who use them. Our junior Leaders know who is at risk in their unit; they need to engage their Soldiers with the same dedication they have exhibited on-duty. These Leaders may need your help with establishing a garrison style of engagement with their Soldiers, so I would ask for you and your Senior Leaders to step in as necessary. Someone always knows when a Soldier is taking unnecessary risks and like we have seen in theater and at home station during training, our Soldiers look out for each other and take care of one another well when they are on-duty. I need your help to ensure our Soldiers know to step in and make a difference with their battle buddy off-duty as well.

Thank you all for what you do every day for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Working together, we will turn the arrow down on these tragic accidents. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and always play it safe!

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William T. Wolf
Brig. Gen., USA
DASAF and Commander,
Combat Readiness/Safety Center