What’s Killing Us?

In the first half of FY20, the Army lost 33 Soldiers to off-duty mishaps: 28 PMV (14 automobiles, 9 motorcycles and 1 pedestrian), 3 weapons related and 2 diving mishaps 1 scuba diving and 1 after a hard landing while sky diving.

1. Occur most frequently between midnight and 6 a.m., or in the late afternoon. At both times of the day, people experience dips in their circadian rhythm—the human body’s internal clock that regulates sleep;
2. Often involve only a single driver (and no passengers) running off the road at a high rate of speed with no evidence of braking; and
3. Frequently occur on rural roads and highways.

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83% of vehicle occupants totally ejected from vehicles were killed (NHTSA).

NHTSA estimates that in 2017, 91,000 police-reported crashes involved drowsy drivers. These crashes led to an estimated 50,000 people injured and nearly 800 deaths.

Drowsy-driving crashes:
1. Experience dips in their circadian rhythm—the human body’s internal clock that regulates sleep;
2. Often involve only a single driver (and no passengers) running off the road at a high rate of speed with no evidence of braking; and
3. Frequently occur on rural roads and highways.
As travel restrictions are lifted and the country begins to return to normal operations after the COVID-19 pandemic, our Soldiers are going to want to take leaves or passes to visit family and friends, make up for missed family vacations, hit the theme parks or the beach or just get out for the weekend. So what are we going to be asking them?

What are your weekend plans and who have you talked to about them?
If you’re taking leave or pass what’s your rest plan before you head out? Do you need to take an extra day?
- Getting adequate sleep on a daily basis is the only true way to protect yourself against the risks of driving when you’re drowsy. Experts urge you to make it a priority to get seven to eight hours of sleep per night.
- Before the start of a long family car trip, get a good night’s sleep, or you could put your entire family and others at risk.
- Always check your prescription and over-the-counter medication labels to see if drowsiness could result from their use.
- If you drive, avoid driving during the peak sleepiness periods (midnight – 6 a.m. and late afternoon).

What do you think the impact to the unit, your friends and family would be if we lost you?
Slow down - a 50-mile drive at 65 mph vs. 75 mph saves just 6 minutes and 9 seconds. Is that worth getting a ticket, or worse, losing your life?
Seat belts/restraints reduce the risk of fatal injuries by 45%. If you ride a motorcycle, wear proper PPE. Helmets reduce the risk of death by 37%.
- Even a small amount of alcohol can affect driving ability.
- In 2018, there were 1,878 people killed in alcohol-related crashes where drivers had lower alcohol levels (BACs of .01 to .07 g/dL).
A first-time alcohol related offense can cost a driver upwards of $10,000 in fines and legal fees.

If You Need Help Call Me:

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