

SAFE SUMMER



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Taking it to the extreme

Extreme sports require extreme caution

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Sports are a very popular part of today's society. Whether people engage in sports for exercise or fun or by cheering on their favorite team, they are an important part of everyday life in America.

Since the early 1990s, extreme and adventure sports have been weaving their way into the traditional definition of "sports." Sports such as sky diving, snowboarding, skiing, mountain biking and B.A.S.E. (Building, Antennae, Span and Earth) jumping have grown in popularity as more and more people have sought the "extreme" adrenaline rush. Although sports, including extreme sports, can be very good for the mind and body, they can also be harmful.

Over the 2009 summer months, three Soldiers were killed during extreme sporting activities – one while B.A.S.E. jumping, one was skydiving and one river rafting. Four Soldiers were treated for serious injuries from mountain biking, skydiving and wakeboarding.

Extreme sports, by definition, generally translate into extreme risk as participants are pushed to the very edge of the safety zone. Whether challenging the limits of speed or gravity, extreme sports enthusiasts need to be ready to do what is needed to ensure extreme risk does not become extreme harm.

Before you hit the trails, the skies, the water or the skateboard ramp this summer, remember that a good education, quality equipment and a smart partner can lessen the risk of even the most extreme sports.

Talk to the experts

No matter what the extreme sport, there are always people who have been doing it longer than you. Find an expert in whatever interests you, check out books about the topic or take a lesson or two to better understand what you might be getting yourself into.

Gear up

Quality safety gear is not something you want to try to save money on when planning to participate in an extreme sport. Wear a helmet, appropriate protective padding including knees pads, elbow pads and wrist pads and proper clothing.

Get a partner

Activities are always more fun when you have someone to share them with and this certainly holds true for extreme sports. In addition to making the experience more fun, a partner also provides something of a safety net that ensures someone one will be to get help should something go wrong with a particular activity. For more information about summer safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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