



4905 5th Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363
Comm. (334) 255-3770 Fax (334) 255-2266
<https://safety.army.mil>

Pride of Ownership in Personal Safety

Lori Yerdon
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

As the spring and summer seasons approach, the likelihood a Soldier will become an accident statistic increases. To counter that trend, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center is asking service members to take pride of ownership in their personal safety.

Everyone is susceptible to accidents, but tragedy is not inevitable. Soldiers can protect themselves and their loved ones through individual risk mitigation.

“The challenge we have during the spring and summer is as the weather warms up, everybody gets outside,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley, USACR/Safety Center. “Whether it’s riding a motorcycle, getting out on the water or any outdoor activity, our number of fatalities usually goes up.”

Seventy-eight Soldiers died in off-duty accidents during the spring and summer months last year, and officials hope to reduce that number this year.

“Army statistics show a significant number of accidents are a result of human error,” Stidley said. “Whether an accident is due to indiscipline, complacency or overconfidence, the fact remains senseless loss or injury can and should be prevented.”

The USACR/Safety Center recently updated the Individual Risk Assessment tool in an effort to better educate Soldiers on the benefits of individual risk mitigation. This pocket-sized, tri-fold card is designed to heighten awareness and help Soldiers at all levels identify risk factors that could lead to an accident. It also offers plans of action to mitigate identified risks.

“I believe young Soldiers today want to be treated like adults in all aspects of their careers, but they have to act like adults both on and off duty,” Stidley said. “That mindset starts with making good decisions.

“Soldiers should be their own best risk managers, and it all starts with education. The USACR/Safety Center has an arsenal of tools to help Soldiers make smart choices.”

Stidley said accidents occur because someone made a poor decision such as driving too fast, drinking and boating, or not wearing a seat belt.

“We can’t expect Leaders to watch their Soldiers 24 hours a day,” he said. “Sooner or later the emphasis has to be placed on the individual to make a decision and not rely on leadership to make it for them. They have to take responsibility for their actions, and they have to start making better decisions.”

Poor decision-making is not unique to a particular Army demographic, according to Stidley.

“Leaders are making poor decisions too. We’re seeing senior noncommissioned officers, officers and warrant officers involved in motorcycle accidents,” he said. “It’s important that everyone in the Army understand no one outranks safety.”

“You’re a Soldier all the time, and you’ve got to do what’s right all the time. Whether at work or at home, at the end of a duty day or at 2 a.m. after a night of drinking, doing the right thing is an individual responsibility.”

The USACR/Safety Center stands ready to assist Soldiers and Leaders by providing tools that address the risks and hazards surrounding both on- and off-duty activities.

For additional information on the Individual Risk Assessment and other tools, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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