

# SAFETY ALERT

Recently, the Army experienced an accident involving the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. While the loader was preparing to load a round during tank table VIII of a gunnery operation, he slipped on the turret floor and fell forward, putting his left hand on the already retracting ammunition ready door near the top of the door to stop his fall. His glove was caught on the locking mechanism and when the door opened fully, the loader's fingers were caught in the gap between the door and the bulkhead. As a result, the loader's index and middle fingers were partially amputated and he suffered severe fractures to his ring finger.

Several days before the accident, the azimuth servo in the gunner's station had a major hydraulic leak, so maintenance personnel replaced the servo and repaired the leak. After repairs were completed, the floor of the turret was not thoroughly cleaned, leaving behind residual fluid. The paint and non-skid surface of the turret floor had long since worn away, exposing bare metal that provided the perfect environment for the residual fluid to become a slip hazard. In addition to the accident vehicle, other M1 series vehicles were found to have exposed metal and worn non-skid surfaces in the turret area, setting the stage for this accident to repeat itself.

This accident could have been avoided if the crew would have ensured that the turret floor was free of hydraulic fluid after maintenance on the azimuth servo was conducted and if the turret floor had been properly maintained. The preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) listed in Technical Manual (TM) 9-2350-264-10-1 specifies that all exposed metal surfaces or worn non-skid surfaces should be painted with the appropriate paint and non-skid compound listed as item 18 in Appendix D of TM 9-2350-264-10-2. While the accompanying non-skid diagrams in the current PMCS only depict the outside areas of the tank and the back of the loader's seat, the non-skid compound also should be used on the turret floor. A change to the TM is currently in the works to correct this oversight.

It is also important to note that when painting any vehicle, you should refer to TM 43-0139 for the appropriate paint and procedures. If you still have questions, contact your local Logistics Area Representative (LAR) for assistance.

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