

Do any of these bother you?

People or objects on or near the road
Other vehicles getting "too close"
Big rigs and tanker trucks
Vehicles backfiring
Overpasses and bridges
Flashing traffic lights

Reducing the Threat

- ★ Focus on the differences between combat and home.
- ★ Ask yourself, am I reacting to this person as if he was an insurgent trying to kill my buddies?
- ★ When feeling provoked or on guard, count to 10 before you speak or act.
- ★ Walk away from situations if you feel yourself losing control.
- ★ Talk to someone you trust.
- ★ Do something that you enjoy or that relaxes you (make a list of these activities).

★ ★ ★
— VETERANS' —
SAFE DRIVING
— INITIATIVE —
www.safedriving.va.gov

Images from iStockPhoto, VA resources and the Department of Defense

Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration (13)
Washington, DC
www.va.gov

Department of Transportation (DOT)
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Washington, DC
www.dot.gov

revision date 081511

Are you taking unnecessary risks?

Since returning home, have you been...

- ... involved in any traffic accidents?
- ... having close calls while driving?
- ... pulled over for any moving violations?
- ... driving faster than surrounding traffic?
- ... not wearing your seat belt or your helmet?
- ... feeling distracted or on edge while driving?
- ... drinking or using recreational drugs more than before?
- ... having trouble sleeping or having nightmares?
- ... more easily irritated than before?
- ... yelling, throwing things or threatening people?
- ... uneasy or nervous because you were unarmed?
- ... carrying a loaded weapon?

Aggression

In combat - Split second decisions in highly ambiguous environments are necessary for survival. Anger keeps you awake, alert, pumped up, ready to respond.

At home - You may be hostile, over react to minor insults, snap at your buddies, co-workers or family.



Post Deployment Mental Health

Quick Guide - Patient/Family Readjustment

Military personnel are deeply affected by their war experiences. Adjustment difficulties are common. These are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. This series of brochures deal with issues that are common following deployment. Remember - identifying your problem areas and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It means you are actively coping with your challenges.

H O M E S A F E

DRIVE SAFE

S T A Y S A F E

Transitioning

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in Veterans in the early years after returning from deployment.



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Driving Safely

Combat driving is aggressive

To avoid hazards you ...

- ... drive unpredictably
- ... drive faster than traffic
- ... hold the middle of road
- ... make rapid lane changes
- ... keep away from other vehicles



Civilian driving is defensive

To avoid accidents you ...

- ... drive predictably
- ... go with the flow of traffic
- ... keep to your lane
- ... signal all lane changes
- ... maintain a safe distance

Become a safe driver again by ...



... reminding yourself that you are driving in the US and not in a combat zone

... noticing the differences between the area you are driving in and the combat zone (green plains vs desert or flat terrain vs hills)

... using grounding exercises to remind you that you are safe (play the ABC game, say out loud what you see around you)



... checking your speed regularly

... avoiding distractions (no cell phone use, no loud music)

... reminding yourself of driving laws in your state (notice and obey the speed limit, don't drink and drive)



... emphasizing defensive driving

- wear your seat belt or helmet
- use your turn signals
- slow down
- allow others to merge or pass
- keep a safe distance (3 second rule)
- keep your attention on the road
- slow down in rain or snow
- control your anger

