



## August 2011

If scorching temperatures and crowded highways are any indication, the dog days of summer are here. Last-minute vacations, back-to-school shopping and counting the days until the first game of football season are hallmarks of this time of year, and many of our Soldiers and Family members are busy preparing for the hectic and fun weeks ahead. There is one additional indicator of late summer, however, of which we should all be aware: a largely predictable increase in fatal off-duty accidents.

Historically, August and September are especially brutal in terms of privately owned vehicle accidents. Using fiscal 2010 as an example, motorcycle fatalities nearly doubled during these months versus June and July. Deaths in sedans and other POVs also rose between August and September from numbers recorded earlier in the summer, although the increase was not as significant as that for motorcycles. And while POV fatalities as a whole are down in fiscal 2011, fatal motorcycle accidents were up 37 percent at the end of the third quarter — with what are traditionally our worst days still ahead.

Curbing indiscipline has been a primary focus for Leaders for many years now, yet the majority of our off-duty accidental fatalities continue to be attributed to some form of reckless behavior. Going back to fiscal 2010, indiscipline was a primary contributing factor in 32 of the 40 fatal motorcycle accidents recorded during the year. Investigations into many of fiscal 2011's accidents are still ongoing, but indiscipline is obvious in preliminary reports: One Soldier died after he lost control of a borrowed motorcycle at 90 mph, while another was killed instantly after slamming into a car at more than 100 mph on his motorcycle. We know motorcycle and other off-duty accidents typically peak during the summer, but we cannot afford to sit back and hope things get better when the weather cools off. The time to act is now, and the best action Leaders can take is to continue engaging with their Soldiers on the hazards of indiscipline.


There is no doubt our Leaders are doing a great job every day in executing their missions and ensuring the well-being of their Soldiers on and off duty. Some Soldiers may require more engagement than others, however, and Leaders should not be afraid to call them out on acts of indiscipline. Our most successful Leaders maintain an open and close relationship with their Soldiers but also know when to take corrective action. Your Soldiers may be tired of hearing you talk about indiscipline, but that should never stop you from engaging with them anyway. What you do and say makes a difference.

At the USACR/Safety Center, one of our central priorities is to give you the safety tools you need as a Leader in today's Army. Soldiers are more dynamic and connected than ever before, and we are working every day to make engaging with them easier and more effective. We just launched the fourth and final installment of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Safety Factor kit, which includes several interactive and hilarious presentations ready for you to brief before long holidays or during safety stand downs. We also have several initiatives set for release at the beginning of fiscal 2012, including our

annual Safe Fall/Winter campaign and a seat belt campaign kit designed to reach younger Soldiers. In addition, we are continually looking for suggestions to improve the Army's Motorcycle Mentorship Program, which remains the single-greatest way for Leaders to engage with their Soldier riders on motorcycle safety. Outside the duty day, there is no better opportunity for our Leaders to truly lead by example than the MMP. Information on these and all our other tools and programs is available on our website, <https://safety.army.mil>.

Each of you is doing a great job every day for our Soldiers, Family members and Civilians, and I thank you all for your hard work. Remember to be extra vigilant as we say goodbye to summer and prepare for the fall and a new fiscal year, and please let us know how we can help you and your Soldiers. Keep making a difference, and play it safe in all you do!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William T. Wolf', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**William T. Wolf**  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding