



Army Safe for the New Year

The start of a new year is always exciting. The months ahead are a blank slate for new beginnings and resolutions to do better in the things most important to daily life. But before we go “out with the old,” it’s important to reflect on where we’ve been — and for our Army, 2010 was a year to remember. The closure of combat operations in Iraq was a remarkable milestone for our force and a highly visible indication of the abiding hard work and dedication of our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. So too was the near-record safety performance we sustained throughout the fiscal year, culminating in an historic five-year reduction in on-duty fatalities.

The lead article in this month’s Knowledge focuses exclusively on the specifics of our fiscal 2010 safety performance, but the big picture looks like this: Overall, fatalities were up slightly from fiscal 2009; however, our fatality rate per thousand Soldiers remained on par with the historic low achieved during the previous year. This accomplishment was due in large part to a 65 percent reduction in Army motor vehicle fatalities and a drop in deaths attributed to sedans and other privately owned vehicles, including SUVs and trucks. Sharp rises in off-duty motorcycle and pedestrian deaths, however, in addition to a spike in Army combat vehicle and aviation fatalities, resulted in seven additional Soldiers lost during 2010 than in 2009.

Our challenge for 2011 is applying the same principles that have worked both on and off duty, such as an emphasis on restraint system and seat belt use in AMVs and POVs, to our existing problem areas. Pre-combat checks and inspections are a great way for Leaders to engage with their Soldiers on the importance of restraint systems, safe driving habits and proper training both inside and outside the wire. Off duty, Leader, Soldier and Family engagement is crucial to countering the recurring problem of indiscipline, especially with regard to sedan, motorcycle and pedestrian fatalities. Active participation by all three groups is required for maximum effect, and that means Leaders must take the initiative by involving all their Soldiers and Family members in the unit’s safety programs.

While Leader engagement has become a hot topic in Soldier safety during the past couple of years, we can’t forget about the foundation of every successful safety program: composite risk management. A vital part of engagement is ensuring all Soldiers, regardless of rank or position, are equipped with the tools and knowledge to keep them safe. The best start any Leader can give their Soldiers is an in-depth education in CRM because, once learned, it’s much more than a process — rather, it’s a mindset and lifestyle that becomes second nature in all activities. As we embark on the new year, take a hard look at your unit to see if your Soldiers really understand the CRM process and conduct refresher training when necessary. The time and effort spent will reap exponential rewards for Soldier well-being and mission readiness.

Although 2011 has officially just begun, we got a great start to the new fiscal year with below-average fatalities throughout much of the first quarter. Ultimately, however, we must remember that every number in our fatality count represents another Soldier tragically lost to his or her unit, Family and our Army. By working together, I am confident we can maintain the positive momentum of the past few years and achieve another record year for Soldier safety. Our Band

of Brothers and Sisters have demonstrated time and again their courage and sacrifice, and they deserve no less than our full focus, attention and concern, both on and off duty.

The USACR/Safety Center stands ready to help as you renew your commitment to safety during the new year. We have several initiatives planned for 2011, and you can find all our products and tools online at <https://safety.army.mil>. Please let us know what you think and how we can better meet your needs in the months ahead.

Thank you for what you do every day for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Make safety a priority on your resolutions list, and always remember the precious lives of those counting on you. On behalf of the USACR/Safety Center team, I wish each of you and your Families a happy, healthy and safe 2011!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William T. Wolf
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding