



## Learning lessons, staying safe

Our Army is beginning the summer on a high note of success: As of May 9, overall accidental fatalities were down 19 percent from 2010, and our Soldiers, Family members and Civilians are more dedicated than ever to the fight against preventable deaths and injuries. Every life saved is proof of your hard work and commitment to safety. Thank you all for what you do every day!

When things are going well, however, there's always a risk of complacency setting in. Accidents typically peak during the spring and summer months, and it's especially critical we maintain our vigilance and look out for one another during the weeks ahead. Since past problems tend to repeat themselves, I'd like to take a quick look at the lessons learned from summer 2010.

**Motorcycles.** For the period April 1 to Sept. 30, 2010, more Soldiers died on motorcycles than all other privately owned vehicles combined (31 versus 27, respectively). The numbers have been particularly worrisome in 2011, with motorcycle fatalities more than 60 percent above last year's numbers midway through the third quarter. Indiscipline — speeding, alcohol use, failure to wear personal protective equipment and/or a lack of proper licensing and training — was identified as a primary contributing factor in a majority of these accidents.

**POVs (sedans, vans, trucks and SUVs).** Accidents involving POVs comprised the next largest share of accidental fatalities during spring and summer 2010 and, like motorcycles, indiscipline was cited in the bulk of these cases. Although fatal POV accidents as a whole have been on a downward trend the past several years, they remain the No. 1 accidental killer of Soldiers, regardless of season. Nonuse of seat belts continues to be a leading factor and is a key area Leaders should address with their Soldiers.

**Pedestrian.** We lost seven Soldiers in pedestrian accidents last spring and summer, a marked increase from previous years. Numbers are down significantly this fiscal year, but as the days get longer and the weather nicer, more Soldiers might choose to walk home if they've had too much to drink. While this might seem a good alternative to driving after drinking, walking while intoxicated is just as risky.

**Drowning.** Four Soldiers drowned in off-duty accidents during the last half of fiscal 2010, a 100-percent increase from the same timeframe a year before. We've already lost two Soldiers in drowning accidents this fiscal year, and that number could increase as more Soldiers and Family members vacation at beaches and lakes in the coming months.

**Other.** From April to September 2010, one Soldier died in an ATV accident; one in a negligent discharge incident; one in a boat collision; and one from carbon monoxide poisoning at home. Accidents like these are uncommon, but negligent discharges in particular are on the rise this fiscal year. In fact, we've lost four Soldiers thus far to accidental discharges involving privately owned weapons. As your Soldiers take advantage of their down time this summer, it's especially important to engage with them and their Family members on everything that can take them out of the fight. Trust built through engagement — by Leaders, peers and Family members — is absolutely necessary to ensure our Soldiers stay safe on the road and in all their off-duty activities.

Fostering a command climate where Soldiers feel comfortable talking to their Leaders and each other about potential problems, without fear of retribution, will not only build this trust, but also allow Soldiers to take personal responsibility for their safety and develop greater self-discipline.

The USACR/Safety Center is working every day to make engaging with your Soldiers easier. Our annual Safe Summer campaign is currently underway, and a toolkit featuring posters, videos, informative articles and a presentation template is available through the "Campaign Corner" on our Website, <https://safety.army.mil>.

This is also the last month for submissions to our annual Peer to Peer video competition, so encourage your Soldiers to help get the safety message out while winning some cash for their local Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers programs. Finally, be sure to direct your Soldiers to the Training and Doctrine Command's "Off Duty, On Guard" interactive experience, also available on our website.

This tool allows users to see the consequences of their decisions by assuming a virtual player's identity in a variety of off-duty situations. Many of the scenarios involve warm-weather activities like boating and are especially relevant this time of year.

We're on the right track to another remarkable year for safety, and I'm confident our successes will continue through the weeks ahead with the commitment of all our Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Civilians.

Thank you again for what you do every day, and remember to play it safe this summer!

**Army Safe is Army Strong!**

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

WILLIAM T. WOLF  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding