



## Go for the Green

For many years, the green-amber-red model has been a staple of military planning. It's the way we express readiness – both visually and verbally – for everything from budgets to training to real-time operations. And, in describing our status on risk management and safety, it's also very useful.

As of late January, the Army was green regarding overall fatalities. Accidental deaths were 10 percent below last year's figures, setting the stage for a hopeful second quarter. Ironically, our "greenest" area currently is private motor vehicle losses: Sedan and motorcycle deaths are down nearly 50 percent and 13 percent, respectively, and PMV-other fatalities, which were on the rise last year, have fallen nearly 70 percent thus far in fiscal 2014. That doesn't mean the fight is over, but it does indicate we're making progress in off-duty safety. Leaders and Soldiers at all levels are doing a tremendous job and deserve credit for these successes.

The picture is different on duty, where we're red in most categories. We've seen notable upticks in Army motor vehicle and personnel injury-other fatalities since October. While it's too early to call anything a trend, these two areas warrant increased attention immediately. Every Soldier who's died in an on-duty accident so far this fiscal year was at home station. Is our training up to snuff? Have we assumed away risk/hazards based on our combat experience? We need to ensure our Soldiers aren't letting down their guard simply because they're no longer engaged in combat. The "I'm finally home, so I don't need to be as cautious" mentality is a deadly fallacy, and we must emphasize that in all we do. Whether Soldiers are outside the wire, in garrison or out on the town, you never leave a fallen comrade — the principle isn't exclusive to war.

Applying this model across your formations, some Soldiers will be green, some amber and some red. Some are obviously at risk, while others play by the rules on duty and lead a completely different life off post. Whatever the case, you and your first-line leaders must assess every Soldier's status. This applies to leaders as well; with five of our seven motorcycle losses this year being NCOs, we must be actively involved in their development, emphasizing safety and mentoring programs.

I plan to talk in my next column about messaging. What we say and how it resonates with Soldiers is critical in reaching them about personal risk, and I welcome your feedback for ways the USACR/Safety Center can better communicate the "safety is a readiness imperative" message. We don't have a monopoly on ideas, and outside perspective is always a good thing. Please let me know how we're doing and what we can do better.

Finally, although we're still deep in winter, remember that spring is just around the corner. After months of abysmally low temperatures and record snowfalls, Soldiers will be anxious for some sun and fun. We'll kick off the Army Safe Spring Campaign March 1, so use those tools to augment your existing programs.

Green, amber or red, we're all in the fight together. Make honest assessments, set green as the goal, and don't stop even after we're there. Thank you for working toward it every day.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

TIMOTHY J. EDENS  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding