



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
330 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD
LATHAM, NY 12110-3514

MNAR-CG

08 NOV 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Holiday and Winter Safety Message 2023-2024

1. The holiday season has arrived where we begin to gather together with our family, friends, and loved ones. It is important that we remain vigilant and continue to follow all of the prevention and mitigation procedures for COVID-19. Ensure you get the COVID-19 vaccine, and the annual flu shot. Remember to wash your hands often with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, and use hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands, and practice respiratory etiquette by covering your coughs and sneezes. If you need a vaccine or booster, visit <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov>. **Finally, if you feel unwell or sick, stay home, and do not travel.**

2. Many of our team members will be traveling this holiday season. Ensure your vehicle is ready for winter, preparing and maintaining an emergency kit, and having a contingency plan can make your holiday travels less worrisome. A preparation check list was provided in the NYARNG Risk Management Monthly November 2023 newsletter and is available online at https://dmna.ny.gov/safety/message/NYNG_safety-2311.pdf. While traveling, ensure you get plenty of rest before embarking on a long trip, be prepared for adverse weather or poor traffic conditions, and take periodic breaks along the way. Drive defensively, avoid drinking and driving, always wear your seatbelt, and remind your passengers to wear them as well. Remember to use a hands-free device if you must use your cell phone while driving, and never text and drive.

3. Alcohol is often a part of many holiday celebrations. Have a plan if you anticipate consuming alcoholic beverages, and decide in advance how you want your travel plans to be addressed. Driving under the influence is not acceptable or safe, and can have serious consequences. If consuming alcoholic beverages, please designate a safe driver, or arrange an alternative safe means of transportation prior to celebrating.

4. Risk management is a continuous process, and must be implemented when both on and off duty. Poor planning will most likely result in you rushing, being negligent, and causing a mishap - that could lead to a serious injury or death of you or someone else. **Planning ahead, and being prepared Saves Lives!**

5. Unfortunately for many, the holidays can bring stress and a sense of loneliness. As we approach this holiday season, it is important to not only support and lend a hand to one another, but to know that there is assistance available to you. We have many programs and resources available to assist those in need. Please contact your chain of command, or reach out to these resources, if you, your battle buddy, or family member is struggling.

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6. The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has developed their 2023-2024 winter and Holiday Safety Campaign that will assist leaders in preparing Soldiers for hazards that are prevalent during this season. The toolkit includes checklists, articles, posters, and leadership talking points that focus on risk factors specifically for this season. To review this material, visit <https://safety.army.mil/MEDIA/Seasonal-Safety-Campaigns/Fall-Winter-Safety-2023>.

7. On behalf of Command Sergeant Major Garris, myself, and the entire New York Army National Guard command group, have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season, and please accept our best wishes for a prosperous 2024.



RAYMOND F. SHIELDS, JR.
Major General, NYARNG
Commanding General

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THANK YOU FOR BEING A
MEMBER OF OUR ORGANIZATION.
STAY SAFE AND ENJOY THE
WINTER SEASON.