



STATE SAFETY OFFICE
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SAFETY MESSAGE 22-06

June is Military Driving Safety Awareness

Tactical motor vehicle mishaps are the #1 on-duty killer of the Army's ground-based Soldiers. The USACRC recently conducted a study of tactical vehicle mishaps during the past five fiscal years, which revealed a spike in incidents during the third quarter. The Army lost 55 Soldiers to on-duty tactical motor vehicle mishaps from FY16-FY20, with 35 percent occurring during the third quarter. While a significant increase in tactical vehicle mishaps was evident in the third quarters throughout the study period, the months of May and June were particularly risky. Nearly a third — 28 percent — of the Army's tactical vehicle mishaps are occurring during these two months, which account for only 16 percent of the fiscal calendar. Driving is the deadliest hazard most Soldiers will face daily, not high-risk operations like live-fire ranges.

The Causal Factors:

- Increased OPTEMPO during the third quarter — when many National Guard and Reserve units execute annual training — is **NOT** the primary cause of the third quarter spike. The Army actually drives more miles during the fourth quarter, but with about 30 percent fewer mishaps.
- The spike is likely due to a mix of factors: Shortcomings in driver training, Soldier fatigue and environmental conditions, all in addition to the increased mileage and greater exposure that begins during the third quarter.
- More than 70 percent of catastrophic vehicle mishaps are attributed to leaders failing to enforce standards, conduct rehearsals/convoy briefings, or follow troop leading procedures.
- Adverse environmental conditions were cited in over half of all tactical vehicle mishaps during the study period's third quarters. Darkness, dust, and other obscurants can greatly increase risk for even a simple convoy movement. Environmental factors are most commonly cited in collisions among multi-vehicle convoys.
- Inadequate driver training programs are cited in more than 80 percent of tactical vehicle mishaps investigated by the USACRC. The September 2019 update to AR 600-55, The Army Driver and Operator Standardization Program, sets clear standards for effective driver training programs and mandates a progressive training and licensing model executed by senior unit leaders.
- At least 30 percent of Soldiers directly involved in third-quarter tactical vehicle mishaps during the study period were on duty more than 12 hours. Training could be pushed later on the clock during longer days, adding more strain to already fatigued Soldiers.

- Fatigued driving is impaired driving. Fatigue slows hazard awareness, reaction time and attention span. Driving after 20 hours without sleep is equal to driving legally drunk, and fatigued drivers are three times more likely to experience a vehicle mishap.
- Most tactical vehicle mishaps occur during routine movements. Resulting inattention and complacency, combined with fatigue, are a recipe for tragedy.
- Specific causal factors include:
 - 83% involved a lack of proper leader engagement
 - 47% were due to an inexperienced driver
 - 43% involved inadequate driver training
 - 20% failed to follow proper PMCS procedures, i.e., before, during and after maintenance checks and inspections
 - 17% were due to poorly planned convoy operations
 - 13% failed to accomplish adequate pre-combat checks (PCC) and pre-combat inspections (PCI)
 - Lack of experienced leaders was also a factor

Required Attention & Assistance:

- Leaders at every level must have the authority to correct unsafe behaviors and be knowledgeable in the practice of dynamic risk management, which is simply reassessing and mitigating risk as conditions change in the mission profile. Leaders must make risk management part of every real-time decision.
- The Joint Risk Assessment Tool, Driver's Training Toolbox, Army Readiness Assessment Program, and Small Unit Leader Cards can help leaders. All are available at <https://safety.army.mil>.
- To reduce the potential for traffic accidents caused by operator fatigue, commanders will establish and enforce specific rest and duty hours for Army Motor Vehicle (AMV) operations. This should include but are not limited to:
 - Operators will be provided at least 8 consecutive hours of rest during any 24-hour period.
 - An operator will not drive more than 10 hours in a duty day (including rest and meal breaks).
 - If more than 10 hours are needed to complete operations, commanders will assign to each vehicle and assistant driver to operate the vehicle.

Ground Guiding:

Using dismounted ground guides in congested or confined areas is critical to the safety of personnel, and to promote safe vehicle operations. These congested and confined areas are defined as motor pools, construction access sites, assembly areas, bivouac sites, parking areas, hazardous terrain, or any other situation where visibility is restricted. Before moving vehicles in these areas, the operator and the ground guide should have the same clear understanding of what the hand and arm signals mean. These are standardized in TC 3-21.60, downloadable in [army pubs](#). The same applies for use of filtered flashlights or chem-lights in limited visibility. Operators and crews should receive instruction on ground guiding during training events such as driver's training and should receive periodic refresher training to ensure proficiency is maintained.

To find previously published Safety Messages go to our NYARNG Safety Website:
<http://dmna.ny.gov/safety/>

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