



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Training Year 2026 (TY26) Annual Training (AT) Safety Message

1. References:

- a. AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program, 24 July 2023
- b. AR 600-55, The Army Driver and Operator Standardization program, 25 April 2025
- c. NGR 385-63, Army National Guard Range Safety Program, Policy, and Standards, 28 February 2019
- d. NG Supplement Number 1 to AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program, 12 February 2015
- e. ATP 5-19, Risk Management, 9 November 2021
- f. FM 6-0, Commander and Staff Organization and Operations, 16 May 2022
- g. HQDA EXORD 020-19, Identification and Compliance of all battalion and battalion-equivalent organizations enrollment into the Army Readiness Assessment Program, 15 November 2018
- h. Camp Smith Training Site Range Standard Operating Procedures, 27 January 2022

1. As the TY26 AT season commences, it is my directive to all Commanders and Leaders that safety is the top priority. **No training objective, including movements, weapons qualifications, or flight operations, is worth risking life or causing serious harm to any Soldier or member of the public. Choosing to complete a training event by compromising safety is the wrong decision, as losing time is always better than losing a life. Lead intelligently, never bypass safety measures, and ensure every Soldier understands that safety is their most important duty.**

2. New York Army National Guard (NYARNG) experienced a total of **135** Army reportable mishaps in TY25. Mishaps do not always involve vehicles such as the types listed in the table below. In TY25, AT and Inactive Duty Training operations saw 33 total mishaps. The most significant injury was a fractured jaw resulting from a headfirst fall into a bunker during AT. The incident highlights a gap in hazard recognition; the service member tripped over the bunker's edge even though the unit had proactively marked the area with chem lights. There were also 23 recorded injuries linked to physical fitness events, spanning the Army Fitness Test as well as unit and individual physical training.

Mishap Category	Count of Mishap Category
Combat Skills/Military Unique	33
Industrial/Occupational	20
Motor vehicle	47
Other Ground	9
Sports Recreation and Physical Training	23
Weapons/Explosives	3

There were 53 vehicle type mishaps in TY25.

Vehicle Type	Count of Vehicle Type
AMV	13
Boat	1
Forklift	2
GSA	16
PMV-2	4
PMV-4	15
Trailer	1
Trailer/Tug	1

SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MISHAP PREVENTION.

3. **Individual Soldier Responsibilities.** Every Soldier has a personal duty to ensure safety. You are expected to know and follow all safety protocols relevant to your job, as specified in current regulations and manuals. This includes the mandatory use of all required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It is your responsibility to immediately inform your leadership of any safety violations or hazardous conditions you witness. Always maintain awareness of your environment. If a situation seems unsafe, you are empowered to question it to find the correct and safe course of action. All personnel must follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and leaders must ensure these rules are enforced.

4. **Leader Responsibilities.** Leaders are ultimately responsible for championing a culture of safety. They must lead by example, demonstrating their commitment to safety through both their actions and words. This responsibility includes providing Soldiers with all necessary safety training and procedural knowledge. Leaders must be actively present to offer guidance and supervision, proactively identifying and correcting any unsafe behavior or conditions. It is their duty to enforce all safety standards, implementing disciplinary action if required, and to foster an environment where Soldiers are encouraged to report any potential hazards.

5. **Manage Risks.** Risk Management is the Army's official framework for making well-informed decisions to reduce or eliminate risk, which in turn boosts the effectiveness of operations and increases the chances of mission success. It is a methodical process used to identify, assess, and control potential hazards. This process is integrated by all personnel, from commanders to civilians, into every stage of an operation—including planning, preparation, execution, and assessment. All identified hazards must be included in safety briefings because, most importantly, **effective Risk Management saves lives.**

6. **Rehearsals.** Rehearsals are mandatory. They are practice sessions that allow commanders, staff, and the entire unit to run through the planned actions of a mission to improve their performance when it's time to execute. By practicing the most important parts of the operational concept, rehearsals help soldiers familiarize themselves with the environment

and understand what other units will be doing. This process builds a strong mental picture of the operation of the soldiers and gives leaders a vital opportunity to assess the unit's readiness and identify any areas that might require additional supervision.

7. **Convoy operations**. Convoy operations are a frequent part of AT and demand both thorough preparation and a comprehensive understanding of the surrounding conditions. Specifically for convoy safety, I want to stress the following:

- a. Convoy commanders **MUST** conduct convoy safety briefs prior to movement.
- b. Drivers and assistant drivers **MUST** be licensed on the vehicle they are operating.
- c. Drivers and assistant drivers **MUST** have 8 hours of sleep prior to the convoy.
- d. Assistant drivers **WILL NOT** sleep during convoy operations.
- e. Drivers and assistant drivers **WILL NOT** drive for more than 10 hours (including rest and meal breaks).
- f. The maximum convoy speed on highways is **50 MPH**. **DO NOT EXCEED 50 MPH** on highways. For other roads, the speed limit is as posted (if it is not, do not exceed 50 MPH).
- g. **DO NOT** transport Soldiers in the back of trucks over highways – they can only transport Soldiers in training areas such as Fort Drum or Camp Smith.
- h. **USE** commercial or GSA vehicles to transport Soldiers over non-tactical roads.

8. **Range safety**. Before any live-fire range training event, it is mandatory for all Soldiers, regardless of their level of experience, to complete re-familiarization training and Primary Marksmanship Instruction. To prevent negligent discharges, Range Safety Officers and Leaders must be diligent in enforcing muzzle discipline and correct range clearing protocols. Leaders are also responsible for ensuring that all personnel use their PPE. This specifically means consistently wearing appropriate hearing protection and utilizing the correct type of eye protection. SOP for Camp Smith and Youngstown Ranges must be strictly followed.

9. **After Action Reviews (AAR's)**. Utilize AAR's to analyze previous training, exercises, or missions. The goal is to identify successes and areas for improvement, which will enhance readiness for future operations. Key insights and comments from these AAR's should be recorded in block 14 of risk assessments and consulted during the planning phase of upcoming missions.

10. **Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP)**. Completing the ARAP survey is a **mandatory** requirement. It is one of the most effective resources available to battalion-level commanders for preventing mishaps, as it is specifically designed to help them assess their unit's safety culture and climate. In accordance with Army Regulation 385-10 and HQDA EXORD 020-19, all Army National Guard battalion-level commanders are required to evaluate their unit's readiness using the ARAP survey within the first 120 days of assuming command. You can enroll at <https://earap.safety.army.mil/>.

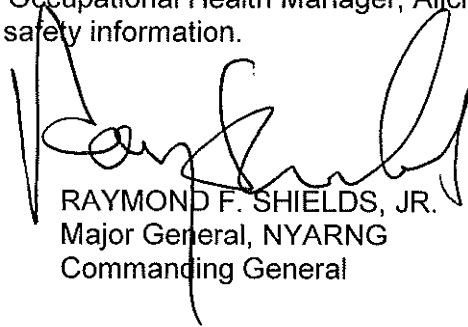
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Additionally, a shorter, follow-up assessment is required mid-tour (between 12-18 months) to allow commanders to gauge the impact of their leadership on the safety climate over time. This can be accessed at <https://irav.safety.army.mil/>.

11. Let me be clear: the safety of our Soldiers and the public is paramount. No training objective, mission, or convoy is worth the loss of life or a serious injury. I expect a deliberate and careful approach in all activities; never rush. It is always preferable for a unit to be late for training than to cut corners on safety to be on time. It is imperative that every Soldier understands that safety is our top priority and a personal responsibility for all.

12. Please contact the NYARNG Safety & Occupational Health Manager, Alicia Howard at alicia.l.howard.civ@army.mil for additional safety information.



RAYMOND F. SHIELDS, JR.
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Commanding General