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Army to observe National Safety Month in June

Directorate of Communication and Public Affairs
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

The Army will begin its annual observance of National Safety Month June 1, and senior leaders are encouraging Soldiers, civilian employees and their Family members to use the time to focus on mitigating summertime risks.

Off-duty Army accidents and fatalities typically rise during late spring and early summer as compared to other times of year, according to data from the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center.

“Safety is obviously a year-round imperative, but National Safety Month is a great opportunity for leaders to highlight common seasonal hazards,” said Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Edens, director of Army Safety and commanding general, USACR/Safety Center. “This is especially important as we’re beginning summer, which generally offers greater access to off-duty activities and the risks that come with them.”

While accidental fatalities remain down Army-wide thus far in fiscal 2014, both motorcycle and personnel injury-other deaths are up compared to last year’s numbers. Increases in water-related fatalities and falls are largely responsible for the PI-O trend, Edens said.

“Accidental drownings and falls while climbing or hiking are good examples of the kinds of risk we’re trying to get at with summer safety awareness,” he explained. “Those are activities unique to warmer weather. Very few Soldiers are swimming or hiking in the mountains with snow on the ground.”

The same concept applies to motorcycle safety, and with winter just ending in much of the United States, leaders are concerned this could be a difficult and deadly riding season.

“NCOs must ensure their riders are trained to standard, up to date on their training and licensing requirements, and equipped to ride as safely as possible this summer, because skills will be rusty,” said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler. “The standards don’t fall by the wayside just because a Soldier is off duty. Leaders have to take care of their Soldiers 24/7, and sometimes that means spending a little extra time and effort to make sure they’re doing things the right way.”

Chandler said leaders should also be holding one another accountable regarding standards compliance.

“We’ve got an issue when NCOs make up half or more of the Army’s motorcycle fatalities, as they have the past several years,” he said. “If leaders aren’t taking care of themselves, they probably aren’t taking care of their Soldiers. It’s time leaders start looking out for one another too.”

The USACR/Safety Center will release a multimedia campaign in support of National Safety Month June 1 at <https://safety.army.mil>.