



First Quarter, Fiscal 2014

Senior Leaders,

It's always a little nerve wracking to come back to the office after Soldiers have had an extended break, especially one as long as the traditional holiday exodus. I expected to see a spike in accidental fatalities, but this year was different. Instead, deaths due to accidents actually declined from last year's exodus, falling from six to four. Please congratulate your leaders and Soldiers on this amazing accomplishment — it took everyone working together to make it happen!

The exodus marked the close of another very good quarter for our Army. Overall, accidental fatalities were down 26 percent from the first quarter of fiscal 2013, due largely to significant drops in private motor vehicle accidents. That decline tells me leader engagement and Soldier buy-in regarding off-duty safety are maturing nicely in the garrison environment, becoming more important as the force continues drawing down in Afghanistan. Please urge your leaders and Soldiers to not only continue what they're doing, but constantly look for ways to better reach one another to reduce off-duty loss.

On-duty accidental fatalities were relatively stable with last year's numbers, with the exception of HMMWV accidents. One Soldier died in a rollover in October, and two more drowned in November after their HMMWV slid into a river; both accidents occurred during home station training. These were the first Army Motor Vehicle accidents since spring of last year, a fact that proves we can never become complacent regarding safety. While AMV fatalities have fallen dramatically during the past several years, it's possible we'll see them rise with the transition back to home station. And just as with PMVs, our focus should be on speed, the environment and proper restraint system use.

All things considered, I'm pleased with the direction we're headed — with a caveat. Fatal accidents are continuing to fall, and that's a good thing, but I don't want to give the impression the hard work is over. Sustaining our success could be even more difficult than achieving it, and Soldiers at the very lowest levels will be key in maintaining the momentum. Getting through to them is critical, and the way we frame safety messages has a big impact on whether they'll really "hear" what we're saying. In my most recent column in Knowledge magazine (https://safety.army.mil/knowledge_online), I use the example of accidental deaths outpacing combat fatalities as a way to reach Soldiers on the critical nature of safety. This is a powerful message that will resonate across our force, and we should use it to our advantage. Quite simply, we all share the common enemy of unmitigated risk, and it's proven just as deadly as any fighter we'll encounter on the battlefield. We must make Soldiers realize that, and words backed by engaged actions definitely matter.

A word about safety policy: You and your safety professionals should be aware of important changes to Army Regulation 385-10, The Army Safety Program. I want to highlight that this latest revision, released in November, mandates that within 90 days of a change of command, all battalion and battalion-equivalent units be enrolled in the Army Readiness Assessment Program. ARAP has proven to be an indispensable asset in predicting and preventing accidental loss, and this change reflects senior leader commitment to the program. This is but one change, so please review the complete summary of change at the beginning of the regulation to ensure your units are in compliance. Visit http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/r385_10.pdf to download your copy and disseminate as required.

In addition to ARAP, the Travel Risk Planning System is one of the most successful programs in USACR/Safety Center history. AR 385-10 requires that Soldiers complete a TRiPS assessment when traveling outside their local area on leave, pass, during permanent change of station or on official travel. Last fiscal year, only 8 percent of active-duty PMV fatalities reported more than 150 miles from home station occurred during TRiPS-assessed travel. That's significant, considering Soldiers have completed more than 10.4 million TRiPS

assessments since its inception. The interaction this tool facilitates between supervisors and subordinates is vital in saving lives and preventing needless accidents, but it wouldn't happen without emphasis from top-level leaders. Thank you for using and supporting this worthy program!

Finally, I ask that you review the annual tri-signed safety message at <https://safety.army.mil/multimedia/MESSAGESFROMLEADERSHIP/FromArmyLeadership/tabid/2115/Default.aspx>. It's been 10 years since our Army was directed by the secretary of defense to cut preventable losses by 50 percent. Two years later, the Army chief of staff began a direct engagement strategy with senior commanders to provide guidance on developing safety culture through executable plans directed by engaged leaders, essentially beginning the cultural change we continue to see today. Fiscal 2013's landmark low in accidental fatalities is the latest manifestation of that shift, and you all worked hard to get us there. Your tireless efforts to make safety a readiness imperative — to include resourcing trained safety professionals, both military and civilian, at every echelon — have been critical in seeing this fight through. Continued investment in safety is even more important as we face difficult fiscal decisions through a demanding and complex future; we cannot lose sight of long-term goals while dealing with short-term realities.

The year is young yet, but I anticipate another great year for Soldier safety. While it's easy to stay the course, please keep your safety professionals close by and stay attuned to potential problems in your formations. As always, I welcome your feedback on how the USACR/Safety Center can better help you. I wish you and your Soldiers a blessed and safe 2014!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy J. Edens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "E".

TIMOTHY J. EDENS
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding