May 2009

As I travel around the Army and talk to Leaders and Soldiers, I am constantly reminded of how our environment is in a constant state of change and how critical it is that Leaders seek out ways to integrate composite risk management into all activities — on and off duty. Nowhere is this more obvious than with the recent change from winter to spring/summer-like temperatures.

Most of us recognize May as the unofficial kickoff to summer. This is the time of year for outdoor activities, vacations and road trips. But, we should not forget that the time between Memorial Day and Labor Day is also when our Soldiers and Families are at the greatest risk to off-duty summer injuries or fatalities.

Most schools are out, pools are open and Soldiers and their Families are looking for fun ways to cool down as summer temperatures heat up. As you head to the lake, beach or mountains for a weekend getaway or Family vacation, remember that safeguarding our Soldiers and their Families from needless summer off-duty tragedies is the No. 1 priority

To help you and your Family keep summer safety in mind, our Army's annual Safe Summer campaign starts this month and with it is a great opportunity for Leaders, Soldiers and Family members to create an effective summer accident prevention campaign. Running May through September, this year's campaign will be driven by the theme "No one stands alone," which highlights that every member of the Army community plays a part in protecting our band of brothers and sisters.

This year, we have implemented changes to the program to allow Leaders and safety professionals, at every level, the opportunity to tailor their summer safety campaigns to meet the needs of their specific audiences. Beginning May 4, all of the campaign's tools and resources will be available online at http://safety.army.mil. This means posters, articles and videos relating to nearly 20 summer safety topics will be ready to be released and plugged into individual safety campaigns three weeks ahead of the Memorial Day weekend.

In addition to the wealth of resources available online, we will publish periodic news releases containing information to help Soldiers use composite risk management in making sound judgments while on and off duty during the Safe Summer campaign.

While we will have an arsenal of Safe Summer tools for your use, Leaders, peers and Families are the cornerstone of protecting the force against off-duty risk and preventable accidents. Leaders must take an active interest in what their Soldiers are doing with their time off and help them identify potentially high-risk activities or behaviors that could cause serious injury or loss of life. Soldiers' taking care of Soldiers is also a key component to driving down the number of off-duty accidents. Likewise, Family members are the front line of defense when it comes to impacting a Soldier's off-duty decision-making process.

During this time of summer fun, each of us — Leaders, Soldiers and Families — must help each other manage off-duty risk. It's our duty and responsibility to ourselves and each other. As always, please look out for your Army brothers and sisters. May each of you have a safe and fun summer!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

WILLIAM T. WOLF
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding