



Holiday Season 2020

After a trying and truly unique year, the holidays are finally upon us. The upcoming block leave period will be the first opportunity for many of you to travel amidst pandemic-related restrictions, and we know you're eager to see family and friends. We thank you for the sacrifices you've made, not only in the Army's fight against COVID-19, but every day on behalf of our Nation.

Dynamic risk management is the Army standard for on-duty missions, meaning that even with a completed deliberate risk assessment worksheet, we continuously reassess the hazards and adjust mitigation strategies as conditions change. With long-distance trips and extended time away from home installations in the near future for many, dynamic risk management off duty will be more important than ever.

The weeks between now and just after New Year's Day are the second-deadliest time of year for Soldiers off duty, trailing only the summer months. If historical patterns hold true, we can expect to lose 11 Soldiers in off-duty mishaps this holiday season. Nine to 10 of those will die in private motor vehicles, and at least a quarter of them will have been drinking. Dynamic risk management is essential when conditions in your original plan change, such as experiencing inclement weather or fatigue while driving, or drinking beyond your limits. Pulling over for the night to rest or wait out poor driving conditions and securing a sober ride are textbook examples of dynamic risk management at work.

First-line supervisors have the greatest impact in helping Soldiers determine when enough is enough. Counseling prior to leave or pass is a proven mitigator of risk, and the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has developed a communications campaign that targets the Army's most prevalent off-duty holiday hazards. This toolkit includes a counseling checklist and features articles, posters, public service announcements and talking points perfect for engaging Soldiers on personal risk factors. Also available are the Travel Risk Planning System and Off Duty Safety Awareness Presentation, both tried-and-true tools for counseling and safety briefs. All are online at <https://safety.army.mil/>. Use these tools! They are designed to not only save you time but, more importantly, equip you with timely and relevant information to manage this period of elevated risk!

You have earned this time off. We want you to make great memories this holiday season, but remember that for your families, friends and battle buddies, your continued presence in their lives is the most precious gift you can give. Thank you again for being part of this great Army, and we look forward to seeing you back in 2021. Happy and safe holidays to you and yours.

People First — Winning Matters — Readiness Through Safety!

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