



Holiday Season Safety

The Christmas and New Year holidays provide opportunities to share joyous times with friends and families. Christmas is a time for us to give thanks for the blessings of our freedom and the bounty we share with our friends and family. On New Year's we anticipate our future prospects and resolve to better ourselves.

The keys to a safe holiday season are leader involvement, safety awareness, discipline, and teamwork. Lessons learned from previous years indicated that personnel tend to overindulge during this holiday period. Vehicle accidents normally account for most of the pain and suffering. Alcohol use will most likely be a factor in incidents that occur during the New Year celebrations. Leader involvement is vital and makes the difference in how personnel respond to the call for responsible behavior.

First-line leaders must make the difference by helping their people incorporate risk management into their holiday activity plans while leaders up the chain supervise effectively and enforce standards. Many young Soldiers will be spending their first holiday season away from family and loved ones. Some will feel a sense of loneliness and despair. Leaders must be present and watchful while ensuring their suicide prevention program is fully engaged. Encourage the use of the "buddy system," persuade Soldiers to participate in organizationally planned holiday activities, and identify "at risk" individuals and take appropriate intervention actions.

I want to express my thanks to all our Soldiers, civilian employees, and contractors for the hard work they do every day. Best wishes for a joy-filled Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year.

Pacific Victors!

RICHARD E. MERRITT
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

THOMAS S. VANDAL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding