



### Holiday Season Safety Message

Happy Holidays to all of our Soldiers, Civilians, Family, and Friends! This is the time of year for us to give thanks for the blessings of our freedom and the bounty we share with friends and family.

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

First-line supervisors and leaders must make the difference by helping their subordinates incorporate risk management into their holiday activity plans. 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 in order to 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  
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