

FATALITY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
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AFZF-GA-SAFE

04 DEC 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Holiday Weekend Motorcycle Fatality -- Fatality Memo 03-04

1. The emphasis commanders and leaders placed on privately owned vehicle (POV) accident prevention prior to the long weekend has paid off for most soldiers. However, two of our comrades did not get the word on the use of motorcycle helmets. One III Corps soldier was fatally injured and another seriously injured in separate accidents during the holiday period. Neither was wearing the required safety equipment, mainly a helmet, which is in direct violation of Army and post regulations. One soldier (SPC) had left a party about 0200 hours to give a friend a ride on his motorcycle. He only had one helmet and allowed his passenger to use it. When traveling on a city street, the motorcycle left the roadway and crashed into a fence/tree line. The soldier spent several days in the hospital on life-support before dying and the passenger was treated for non-life threatening injuries. The second soldier (SGT) sustained numerous broken bones and head injuries when the motorcycle he was operating struck an automobile at approximately 1900 hours. He is undergoing surgery due to his injuries. He also was not wearing a helmet. There are indications that alcohol was a factor in at least one of these accidents. Both accidents are under investigation by local law enforcement authorities.

2. AR 385-55 directs that "Soldiers will wear a properly fastened, approved helmet whenever and wherever (on or off post) they operate or ride a motorcycle or moped." Additionally, motorcycle operators must complete an approved motorcycle safety course prior to operating a motorcycle. Temporary registrations are made available in order for motorcyclists to schedule and attend such a course. Commanders and leaders must become familiar with all the safety requirements in AR 385-55 and strictly enforce them.

3. The two accidents mentioned above remind us that our POV accident prevention efforts must be continuous and leaders must remain engaged. It is clear that the seriousness of these tragedies could have been avoided if the individuals had taken responsibility for their actions. Leaders must take no shortcuts to ensure motorcycle operators understand the benefits of wearing required safety gear (helmet, clothes, reflective vest, gloves, etc.) and also ensuring that motorcyclists attend Army-mandatory motorcycle safety training. Committed/involved leaders can make a difference. I need your vigilance on this to keep our soldiers alive and well.

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ROBERT WILSON
Major General, USA
Acting Commander

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