

SAFETY ALERT



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



AFZF-GL-M

5 September 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Safe Operating Speeds for the M939 Family of Vehicles -- Safety Alert 02-10

1. Driving accidents continue to occur while operating the M939 series 5-ton trucks, including a recent accident, which resulted in three fatalities and two soldiers injured. Almost all of these accidents are the result of vehicle operators driving too fast for the road conditions and/or locking the wheels when attempting to stop the vehicle. The air brakes of the M939 series trucks are very sensitive, so the operator must gradually apply the brakes or "pump" the brakes when stopping the vehicle—especially when the trucks are lightly loaded or empty. Pumping the brakes is also important when the vehicles are driven on wet or slippery pavement. Overbraking could cause the wheels to lock up, which may lead to loss of vehicle control—often resulting in collisions, jackknifing and/or rollovers.
2. Change 1, dated 22 February 1999, to TM 9-2320-272-10, dated 15 August 1996, revised the maximum safe operating speeds for the M939 series trucks as follows:
 - a. Highway and secondary roads—40 miles per hour
 - b. Cross country roads—35 miles per hour
 - c. Sand and snow—25 miles per hour
 - d. Icy conditions—12 miles per hour
3. TACOM has developed an Anti-Lock Braking (ABS) retrofit Modification Work Order (MWO) to alleviate wheel lock up during emergency braking. This MWO will improve the overall braking system by reducing premature brake lock-up. Extensive testing of Anti-Lock Brake Systems has shown that the ABS will eliminate 100% of the wheel lock-ups. This MWO is currently available at all III Corps installations. The FORSCOM Contract Maintenance Facility is the proponent agency for the application at Forts Carson, Riley and Hood, and Premier is the proponent agency at Forts Bliss and Sill.
4. I expect leaders at all levels to ensure their soldiers understand and comply with the maximum safe operating speeds cited above while conducting vehicle movements in the M939 series trucks. I also expect leaders to ensure soldiers know all associated hazards while operating the M939 series trucks. This is command business, and I need all leaders to review all of the URGENT and LIMITED URGENT MWOs required for your equipment and ensure you have completed or have a plan to complete them. We cannot afford to have one of our great soldiers injured during a vehicle movement, whether tactical or non-tactical, because we failed to enforce standards or failed to apply MWOs. Engage your leaders to enforce compliance.

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B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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