

SAFETY ALERT



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



AFZF-GA-SAFE

10 May 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Carnage Continues – Safety Alert 02-04

1. Last Sunday morning, three III Corps soldiers were critically injured in two separate POV accidents. Both were single vehicle crashes in which recklessness and aggressive driving played major roles. Fatigue, alcohol, and not wearing seat belts were identified in one of the incidents. That driver lost control, ran off the road, struck down a light pole, which caused the car to roll - ejecting both soldiers. Ironically, this occurred almost within eyesight of the wrecked-car safety display at the main gate of the post. Speed and fatigue were involved in the other crash, where the driver lost control while negotiating a downhill curve at excessive speed. He ran off the side of the road, causing the car to roll broadside downhill, until the vehicle crashing into a tree. He had to be cut out of the car due to the impact with the tree. All three soldiers required hospitalization. The soldier who crashed into the tree suffered the most serious injuries with a skull fracture and severe brain and lung damage. He is still in critical condition and on life support. Our prayers are with the family of this soldier.

2. There is nothing new about the factors involved in these two POV crashes. One or a combination of these factors are always involved - excessive speed, fatigue, alcohol, and failing to wear seat belts. These can be categorized as reckless behavior or aggressive driving habits. According to the Director of Army Safety's discussion during our 6 May Safety Council, aggressive driving has become a national phenomenon. An aggressive driver is one who "commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons and property." Examples are speeding, unsafe lane changes, following too close, failure to yield, unsafe passing, and/or ignoring traffic signs/lights. National studies show that two-thirds of automobile fatalities/injuries are related to aggressive driving. Sadly, society views aggressive driving as acceptable under some circumstances, i.e., heavy traffic, construction sites, or in a hurry.

3. I am convinced that some of us know of, or witnessed some of our own soldiers exhibiting such aggressive driving behavior. This is why I want our leaders to get involved and make a difference, by identifying aggressive drivers. I want commanders to hold leaders accountable for their inherent duties of coaching and mentoring soldiers to stay well and alive. Don't condone less than 100% leadership involvement. It is a fact that young drivers between the ages of 18 to 25 are most likely to take greater risks on the roads. Since the majority of our soldiers fall in that age group, I want our leaders, especially our first-line leaders, to ensure that we are all fully engaged in the process of positively modifying the driving habits of soldier who they identify as aggressive drivers. This is a 24 hours a day, seven days a week job for our leaders. Relief cannot be granted for this. Research the Army Safety Center's or installation Safety Office's web sites/public folders for resources to combat aggressive driving. I want all our leaders to make every effort to go the extra distance to curb our automobile and motorcycle carnage.

ENSURE WIDEST DISSEMINATION AND POST ON BULLETIN BOARDS

B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

SAFETY ALERT

SAFETY ALERT

SAFETY ALERT