

# SAFETY ALERT



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

17 MAR 03

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Serious Ground Guiding Accident – Safety Alert 03-01

1. Recently, a deployed III Corps soldier was seriously injured while serving as a ground guide. Since the accident is still under investigation, the contributing factors have not yet been identified. However, we can always learn from accidents by disseminating safety pointers.
2. The soldier was attempting to ground guide a tracked vehicle off a heavy transport vehicle trailer. The tracked vehicle operator was instructed to move the vehicle forward so that the tie down chains could be loosened and removed. The tracked vehicle lurched forward and pinned the soldier between two tracked vehicles. The soldier suffered two fractured legs. The soldier was transferred to the theater medical facility. Due to the severity of the left leg injuries, surgeons amputated the left leg below the knee.
3. This accident reminds us that our duties as soldiers inherently contain potential hazards. Situational awareness, strict attention to details, crew coordination and communications, and adherence to standards are extremely important when operating around combat systems. We have very little room for error when operating in confined spaces where the loss of life or limb can be measured in inches.
4. One of the cardinal rules of ground guiding is not to be positioned between an operational vehicle and a stationary vehicle or structure. Too many times the operational vehicle will inadvertently move forward or backward. Additionally, communication between the vehicle operator and the ground guide(s) must be maintained at all times. This communication can only be maintained if the ground guide remains in visual contact with the vehicle operator.
5. To prevent this type of accident, commanders will brief soldiers on the appropriate ground guide procedures. Ground guiding should be addressed as topic in unit driver training programs. Establishing, training, supervising and following safety procedures are our standard. Somewhere within these four actions we failed, and a soldier has been seriously injured. In the case of ground guiding, we have established the right standards. Thus, I ask that III Corps leaders re-double their efforts to train and supervise our standards that III Corps soldiers adhere to our standards.

**ENSURE WIDEST DISSEMINATION AND POST ON BULLETIN BOARDS**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas F. Metz".

THOMAS F. METZ  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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