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**Contact: Michael Negard**  
**Telephone: 334-255-3770**  
[michael.i.negard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:michael.i.negard.civ@mail.mil)  
<https://safety.army.mil>

## **Army to focus on motorcycle safety in May**

**Julie Shelley**  
**Directorate of Communication and Public Affairs**  
**U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center**  
**Fort Rucker, Ala.**

FORT RUCKER, Ala. (May 1, 2013) – May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and while the nationwide campaign sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration urges drivers to “share the road” with motorcyclists, Army officials are placing greater emphasis on personal responsibility while riding.

In general, motorcycle accidents within the Army do not follow national trends, according to Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Edens, director of Army Safety and commanding general, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center.

“Historically, most fatal motorcycle accidents involving Soldiers are single vehicle,” Edens said, explaining that nationally, many riders are killed when other drivers do not allow them room to maneuver in time to prevent a collision. “Even when we’ve lost Soldiers in multi-vehicle accidents, it’s often been the direct result of indiscipline on the Soldier’s part: alcohol use, excessive speed or lack of personal protective equipment.”

Army accident data show that speeding and other forms of reckless riding, neglecting to wear PPE, and failure to complete required training are among the most common indiscipline-based errors Soldier riders make. Alarming, leaders and Soldiers over the age of 25 have comprised the majority of rider fatalities during the past several fiscal years.

Although motorcycle fatalities have fallen markedly in 2013 — current statistics indicate a 59 percent decrease as compared to this time last year — officials expect numbers to rise through the end of summer.

“We’ve had a great year so far, but it’s also been a long winter in many places,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Richard D. Stidley, USACR/Safety Center. “As the weather warms and more riders hit the road, their risk is going to increase. Managing it is key to staying alive for another riding season.”

The Army-mandated Progressive Motorcycle Program, which promotes lifelong learning through staggered riding courses based on proven practices from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, is now in its second year and has received positive reviews from Soldiers. A complement to that training, the Motorcycle Mentorship Program, is already well established and boasts chapters in 48 states. The MMP pairs novice riders with experienced motorcyclists to foster an environment where enthusiasts continually learn from and keep one another safe.

“The PMP and MMP are just two of the great programs the Army has in place,” Edens said. “It’s incumbent upon leaders to ensure their riders know about them, get the proper training and ride responsibly. We now have an entire month dedicated to motorcycle safety, so there’s no excuse for not getting a head start on summer.”

Stidley said leaders should also remember their Soldiers are watching.

“Discipline and responsibility are not a function of rank,” he said. “Leaders are just as accountable to the standard as their Soldiers, and they should be setting the example.”

For more information on motorcycle safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.