



# From The SMA: More and More Vehicle Fatalities Involve NCOs

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**T**eam,  
It's summer and historically that means the number of vehicle fatalities, especially those occurring off duty, statistically will increase. Although the total numbers are down this year, the Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center is reporting disturbing trends. My concerns are that 45% of the Army's fatal motorcycle accidents are indiscipline-based, that NCOs comprise a majority of those fatalities, and that ATV fatalities are rising. These are all NCO leader issues.

As of 7 July 2013, the Army has had 22 motorcycle Soldier fatalities this fiscal year. As previously noted, nearly half of those accidents were indiscipline-based and, of these, 68% occurred between Friday and Sunday.

Most troubling to me, however, is the fact that 14 of the 22 motorcycle fatalities involved Soldiers in the ranks of E5 to E7.

As Senior NCOs, we are the standard-bearers in our units. We look out for our Soldiers and their Families. We enforce regulations to ensure success and safety. But, we also ensure every NCO has someone to check his or her compliance with these responsibilities.

Statistics that show over 60% of motorcycle fatalities

are NCOs mean the messages we deliver are not effectively reaching those NCOs who directly influence junior enlisted Soldiers. This is a poor example for them to follow.

To date this fiscal year, we also have experienced five ATV fatalities, compared to none in FY12 and FY11. Two of these were on-duty accidents. One incident was a rollover during a training exercise, but the second was a staff sergeant not wearing an appropriate safety helmet – another example of indiscipline.

The NCO Creed states, “My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind — accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers.” We must teach our Soldiers, no matter what their rank, to do the right thing and to appropriately consider comprehensive risk management practices. By doing this, we mitigate safety concerns with activities both on and off duty. As an NCO and leader, I expect you to set, enforce, and abide by these standards. I also expect that you will ask a commander, battle buddy or peer to keep you honest in all these efforts.

Remember, NCOs are the Backbone of the Army.  
— SMA



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