



GROUND SAFETY SPECIAL EDITION 2010

Volume 3, Number 2

WINGMAN

Airmen Taking Care Of Airmen

The United States Air Force Journal of Aviation, Ground, Space and Weapons Safety



KNOW YOUR RISKS



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Ground Safety Special Edition 2010

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Airmen Taking Care Of Airmen

The United States Air Force Journal of Aviation, Ground, Space and Weapons Safety

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Year of the Air Force Family



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Air Force Chief of Safety Interview



In September 2009, Maj. Gen. Fred Roggero, Air Force chief of safety, and the chiefs of safety from the other military services visited the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety Vehicle Research Center, the agency that rates the safety of vehicles, as a part of the Joint Service Safety Chiefs biannual meeting. The following contains the results of General Roggero's impromptu interview with Dan Steber, Naval Safety Center audio/video producer.

NSC: How critical is traffic safety to your service?

General Roggero: Traffic safety is extremely critical. It's an issue that we have to deal with every day. If you look at just the numbers since 9/11, the Air Force has lost about 570 Airmen in off-duty ground mishaps alone compared to about 55 Airmen in combat ... 570 compared to about 55 in combat. Of those 570, approximately 80 percent are due to traffic fatalities, both personal motor vehicles (four-wheel vehicles) and motorcycles (two-wheel). This is something we have to attack and fix for our people and our families.

NSC: What did you hope to gain today through this visit to the IIHS?

General Roggero: Making connections with not just our sister services to find out exactly what things they're working, but a nature of the issue amongst the general population to see how we in the military fit into that picture. Are we worse or better than our civilian counterparts out there? That's what I was looking for, as well as to build partnerships with our civilian institutes that can get us information and that we can share information with so that we can tackle this problem together.

NSC: Why is it important for the JSSC safety chiefs to work with civilian partners like the IIHS?

General Roggero: We look inside ourselves a lot as a service to try to figure out what is the cause of the problem. Is it reckless behavior, is it preventable mishaps, is it training and education or is it technology? By going out to others, and especially the civilian institutions like the IIHS, we can better grasp if we're looking at everything that we need to look at in order to solve this issue.

NSC: What surprising or new information did you learn because of your visit to IIHS?

General Roggero: Looking at the stats nationally on motorcycle fatalities and insurance claims. It was astounding to see the rate of increase over the last 11 years. And a lot of that, according to the institute's data, is because of the technology and development, and the cost factor, which has been going down to purchase sport bikes and supersport bikes, and their availability to anybody on the market. But what we haven't done is invest that same amount of engineering and training into our folks so that they have the skill to use that equipment.

NSC: Do you have any last thoughts on traffic safety for the military members watching this spot?

General Roggero: I think that what the service chiefs would say to all our Airmen, Sailors, Soldiers, Marines and Coast Guardsmen is that it's OK to do something that has risk in it. But what we're asking you to do is to mitigate that risk. To take a look at it very carefully and see what you can change in order to make whatever activity that you're going to do a little bit less risky. And don't ever forget that, although you're assuming the risk, you have a team, a squadron, you have a family that are assuming that same risk with you, and you have to take them into account when you make the decision to try whatever it is that you're going to do. ★★



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



OCT 8 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL AIR FORCE PERSONNEL


SUBJECT: Private Motor Vehicle Safety


We are losing far too many Airmen to Private Motor Vehicle (PMV) mishaps. Last fiscal year, 47 Airmen were killed in motor vehicles, with 20 of those fatalities occurring on motorcycles. This is nearly eight times the total number of Airmen killed in aviation mishaps, including combat operations, during the same time period. Our goal from this year forward is ZERO Airmen lost in preventable PMV mishaps.

All Air Force Airmen should operate motor vehicles in a responsible manner. This includes the wearing of seatbelts, obeying posted speed limits, and avoiding distractions while driving. AFI 91-207, *The Air Force Traffic Safety Program*, clearly outlines safety requirements for operators and passengers of PMVs. Every Airman must understand the AFI requirements apply both on- and off-duty.

In addition to following the rules of the road, all Airmen must also understand that failure to take personal responsibility will result in their being held accountable for their actions. Commanders will ensure personnel are aware of AFI requirements and enforce compliance. Violations by military personnel are punishable under the UCMJ and may also be considered misconduct during line of duty determinations.

We cannot tolerate reckless operation of motor vehicles by Air Force personnel. Reckless operation may jeopardize the benefits members/beneficiaries receive following a mishap. Supervisors will ensure military and civilian personnel understand the implications of poor decisions and the importance of compliance. Your full participation and support is imperative as we move forward to reduce injuries, save lives, and preserve our most important asset—our Airmen.


Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force


Norton A. Schwartz
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Accountability 2010



What YOU need to know!



Private Motor Vehicle Focus

You must understand the AFI requirements for on and off-duty.

Violations are **punishable under the UCMJ.**

Reckless operation of a vehicle may jeopardize benefits for members/families following a mishap.

SO: wear seatbelts, obey speed limits, eliminate distractions.

It's up to YOU.

Fatigue and its Effects

ELIAS CANTU

Ground Safety Division
Air Force Safety Center
Kirtland AFB, N.M.

Most of us have become fatigued due to long hours, changing schedules, high ops tempo and outside-of-work activities at some time in our lives. Fatigue impairs alertness, motivation and performance. When fatigued, judgment and decision making become faulty, and fatigue affects performance behind the wheel much like alcohol. It's not surprising, then, that we're now coming to recognize drowsy driving as a significant cause of road catastrophes.

Historically, humans have lived by day and slept by night. It's commonly accepted that people need between six and eight hours of continuous sleep daily. While there are individual variations, less than five hours of sleep in a 24-hour period is known to cause forgetfulness. When a person doesn't get enough rest and appropriate sleep, not only can fatigue set in, but the cumulative effect can result in serious sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation can cause the body to call upon its energy reserves and lead to a "sleep debt."

The consistent conclusion of studies has been that fatigue results in:

- Loss of concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Inattentiveness
- Reduced cognitive ability
- Increased reaction time
- Diminished alertness

It's important to understand that sleep needs vary, and individuals cannot accurately assess how tired they are or if they're about to fall asleep. The only cure for fatigue is SLEEP! There is no substitute for a good night's rest. You must plan and manage sleep periods to maximize sleep quantity and quality. 🛏️

Here are some signs that should tell a driver to stop and rest:

- ♣️ Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking or heavy eyelids
- ♣️ Daydreaming, wandering/disconnected thoughts
- ♣️ Trouble remembering the last few miles driven, missing exits or traffic signs
- ♣️ Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes
- ♣️ Trouble keeping your head up
- ♣️ Drifting from your lane, tailgating or hitting a shoulder rumble strip
- ♣️ Feeling restless and irritable

Motorcycle

ED ADAMS

Director of Safety
The Air Force District of Washington
Andrews AFB, Md.

One might argue that motorcycles are safer to operate on the roadway than a four-wheeled vehicle. This may be true ... until an accident occurs.

Motorcycle operators may have a greater advantage of avoiding an accident because they can execute an evasive maneuver with their smaller vehicle and

avoid an accident altogether. Except for a very few skilled motorcycle riders, that's not always the case. Even the best riders can't escape a mishap most of the time. If an evasive maneuver is not enough to get the motorcycle operator out of harm's way and an accident does occur, the operator doesn't have the added protection of being buckled (seat belt) into the surrounding structure of a four-wheeled vehicle. Consequently, the resulting injuries are often worse, including a higher probability of death.

Besides being a cautious and defensive rider, how can a motorcycle rider best increase the chances of avoiding serious or even fatal injuries? The answer is by wearing *full gear* rather than *fool's gear*. Full gear is the required protective equipment/clothing for both driver and passenger. From head to toe, protective gear can save a life or limb. Without the right equipment, a minor motorcycle accident could still result in a fatality. With the correct gear on, it may result in just a minor mishap or may prevent a major mishap resulting in severe injury or death.

Helmets

- ✓ Helmets must be worn by all who operate or ride as a passenger on a motorcycle on a military installation and by military members whether on or off installation.
- ✓ As a minimum, helmets shall be certified to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Standard 22-05, British Standard 6658, or Snell Standard M2005.
- ✓ Helmets must be properly worn and fastened under the chin.
- ✓ Novelty helmets are for those who don't value their lives. Novelty helmets don't meet the proper standards of protection, nor do they become legal by simply affixing a DOT decal on them.
- ✓ Operators and passengers are encouraged to affix reflective material to their helmets to increase their visibility at night and during inclement weather.



Safety — It's On You!

Eye Protection

- ✓ Operators and passengers must wear eye protection designed to meet or exceed American National Standards Institute, Standard Z87.1-2003, for impact- and shatter-resistant goggles, wraparound glasses, or a full-face shield attached to their helmet. A windshield or fairing does not constitute eye protection.

Outer Garments

- ✓ Full gear includes a long-sleeved shirt and/or jacket.
- ✓ Motorcycle jackets and pants constructed of abrasion-resistant materials, such as Kevlar® or Cordura®, and containing impact-absorbing padding are strongly encouraged.
- ✓ Long trousers must be worn to protect the legs from burns and possible road rash.
- ✓ Riders are encouraged to select PPE that incorporates fluorescent colors and retro-reflective material. Bright and reflective garments significantly increase operators' and passengers' chances of being seen by other drivers who aren't looking for motorcycles approaching them.

Gloves

- ✓ Full-fingered motorcycle gloves or mittens made from leather or other abrasion-resistant material offer protection and can increase operators' comfort.
- ✓ Gloves or mittens should be carefully selected to ensure they offer proper grip characteristics rather than the risk of slippage.

Footwear

- ✓ Wearing leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes can properly protect the feet.

Recommended Don'ts

- ✗ Don't wear shorts!
- ✗ Don't wear sandals or flip flops. Both can interfere with the proper operation of motorcycles and could result in mishaps and unnecessary injuries.
- ✗ Don't have more passengers than the motorcycle is designed for. Motorcycles are designed for two riders (operator and passenger).

Must Possess

In addition to wearing the full gear, all Air Force motorcycle operators must possess:

- ✎ A proper motorcycle license.
- ✎ Proof of insurance.
- ✎ Proof of completion of an approved motorcycle safety training course.

Like four-wheeled vehicles, motorcycles are not dangerous — people are! Whether used for leisure or business, daily or occasionally, ride smartly, ride safely, remain vigilant of others and arrive alive. Showboating, reckless riding, and drinking and riding on a motorcycle usually end with negative results.

Additionally, all military members are required to be thoroughly familiar with AFI 91-207, *U.S. Air Force Traffic Safety Program*, and AFI 31-204, *Air Force Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision*.

It's your responsibility to adhere to the proper procedures and protocols when operating a motorcycle. Motorcycle safety — it's on you! ✎

Track Days are for You

Speed, Power, Safety and Your Sport Bike

SHARON ROGERS

Ground Safety Division Contractor
Air Force Safety Center
Kirtland AFB, N.M.

Zooming along, heart beating fast, leaning into the curve and feeling the power of your sport bike. There's no feeling like it. Loss of control, tires sliding out from under you, a jarring impact. Waking up (if you're lucky) with pain, not knowing where you are. There's no feeling like that, either.

If you choose to ride a sport bike, there are some facts you need to know.


According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the federal government states that per mile traveled in 2006, the number of deaths on motorcycles was about 35 times the number in cars. Some motorcycles (like your supersport) have high-performance capabilities that can encourage riders to speed, accelerate quickly or engage in other risky driving maneuvers (National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration, 2008. Traffic safety facts, 2007: motorcycles. Report No. Department of Transportation HS-810-990. Washington: U.S. DOT).

Fatalities among motorcycle drivers and their passengers in 2007 more than doubled since 1997. They reached 5,037 in 2007, accounting for 12 percent of total highway crash deaths. This is the highest number of motorcyclists killed in one year since NHTSA began collecting fatal motor vehicle crash data in 1975. In contrast, passenger vehicle occupant deaths reached a record low in 2007.

According to data from the Highway Loss Data Institute, an affiliate of IIHS, supersport motorcycles had the highest overall collision coverage losses among 2003-2007 model bikes, almost 3.5 times higher than losses for touring motorcycles and more than 5.5 times higher than cruisers. Nine of the 10 motorcycles with the highest losses were supersports. Supersport motorcycles also are the most frequently stolen.

In the event of a mishap, there are also physical and emotional costs to you, your friends and your family.



Own a sport bike or supersport bike? You may pay for it in more ways than one. Driver death rates are nearly four times higher than rates for all other motorcycles.

With proper education and experience, you can usually avoid an accident and still enjoy the ride. Those interested in honing their skills may be interested in attending “track days” to learn how to be safe on their bike.

Recently, Dan Orchowski of the Air Force Safety Center conducted a Joint Motorcycle Rider focus group. He found, to no one’s surprise, that sport bike riders bought their bikes because they intended to ride fast. Riding without proper technique can have fatal consequences, and the Air Force has experienced a rise in the rate of fatalities for sport bike owners. Track days provide an excellent means to help mitigate risks by offering riders the chance to learn proper technique for riding safely at higher speeds. Check with the officials in your city to find out if track days are offered and participate if you can.

Typically, riders first attend a meeting to learn about the rules of engagement for the track. Classroom instruction and supervised riding on the track with an instructor are features to enhance safety. Before actually riding, the participant must submit their bike and personal protective equipment to track officials for a technical inspection.

The bike and gear must pass that inspection before being allowed on the track. Instructors then teach riders how to enter and leave the track and lane position. Particular attention is given to cornering, where most mishaps occur.

Airmen who have attended and provided feedback feel much more confident after participating in a track day. They learn skills, such as positioning, passing, braking, throttle control, how to shift correctly, how to corner safely and, most importantly, how to determine appropriate speeds. One participant stated, “I can’t think of a better setting to learn.” After attending the training another participant stated, “I’m less inclined to go do something stupid on the street.”

If you’re determined to own a sport bike, are accountable for the risks and costs and are willing to attain the education and experience necessary to become a better rider, then track days are just one of the many tools available to better prepare yourself for a safer, more enjoyable riding experience. 🏍️

**And while you’re alive, you may pay nearly
four times more in insurance premiums.**



Steer Clear While Driving!

VINCENT DOTSON

Ground Safety Division
Air Force Safety Center
Kirtland AFB, N.M.

Imagine this scenario: It's Friday afternoon, you just got off work and are headed home. You're thinking about what you want to do for fun over the weekend. Suddenly, a car in the oncoming lane veers across the centerline; it's pulling around another vehicle parked in the road — right into your path. Are you prepared?

Similar situations have occurred numerous times to personnel stationed at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. Almost all car accidents, including head-on collisions, can be prevented if you stay alert, think ahead and practice safe driving habits. Call it defensive driving.

Defensive driving prevents accidents despite the unsafe actions of other drivers. Certain techniques enhance your ability to predict the outcome of traffic situations earlier and can turn an accident into a near miss. Defensive driving means being constantly alert, aware of other drivers and road conditions and reacting to lessen the severity of unavoidable accidents.

Almost all accidents result from driver error. Be alert for behavior, such as excessive speed, weaving, tailgating or inattention. Anticipate what the other driver might do, then adjust your speed, increase your distance between the vehicles and maintain an escape path in case something unexpected happens.

Driving on wet roads, in fog or in congested traffic affects your ability to steer, stop and maneuver. Each of these road conditions demands your best defensive-driving skills. In addition to making it more difficult to safely operate your own vehicle, these road conditions also increase the risk of another driver hitting you. Remain alert, reduce speed and increase following distance.

According to the National Safety Council, even if a collision is unavoidable, you can lessen the severity of injuries. Try to hit something

soft, like bushes or small shrubs, rather than something hard. Hit at an angle rather than head-on; there'll be less of an impact, and you'll do less harm than colliding with a tree, telephone pole or oncoming vehicle.

Remember there are two collisions in any crash: the first is between the vehicle and another object; the second is between the occupants and some part of the vehicle. The use of a seat belt and an airbag will help keep you safely secured.

Consider the following defensive-driving tactics:

- Stay alert for vehicles moving into your lane. Be wary of weaving vehicles, headlights that suddenly change in intensity and oncoming vehicles approaching a curve too quickly. Use your horn or lights to warn other drivers so they can take corrective action.
- Don't slam on your brakes; this can lock your wheels and cause a skid (not applicable for anti-lock brakes).
- Always veer right if a vehicle is coming at you. If you drive to the left and the oncoming driver recovers at the last minute, you'll be in his or her lane and the head-on crash will still occur.
- Scan the side of the road for a possible escape path. If you must drive off the road, try to use the shoulder as your escape lane (unless you'd face a greater danger by doing so).
- Only drive into a ditch as a last resort to avoid a collision. Driving into a ditch may cause you to roll.

Constantly using defensive-driving skills will enable you to steer clear the next time that other driver becomes "unpredictable." 🦋



Alcohol and Accidents: Elimination is as Easy as 1, 2, 3

SHARON ROGERS

Ground Safety Division Contractor
Air Force Safety Center
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We've all heard the statistics; we know the drill. Yet, far too many people die and are injured in alcohol-related accidents every year. One can only wonder why. There are plenty of programs that offer free rides home if you have too much to drink. The idea of having a designated driver isn't new. What it boils down to is that people do dumb things.

If you think it makes you cool to have a few too many and get behind the wheel, think again. The facts are plain — you're endangering yourself, innocent bystanders and people you love. The solution is as simple as one, two, three!

① Don't drive drunk

To date, almost 30 percent of all Air Force PMV-4 fatalities and 16 percent of all AF PMV-2 fatalities involved alcohol usage.

Five beers into the evening is NOT the time to decide if you should drive or get a ride. Alcohol affects your decision-making ability, and the probability for making a poor choice will only increase with each alcoholic beverage you consume. A much better idea is to have a plan and follow through. Before going out with a group of friends, assign a designated driver

before the drinking gets out of control. If you have to ask yourself, "Am I OK to drive?," chances are you probably aren't. It's OK to call a friend for a ride. You know what's cool? You coming home at the end of the evening. Hospital waiting rooms and rehab clinics are not romantic.



② Don't let friends drive drunk — be a Wingman


About three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

What kind of friend watches someone drive unsteadily down the street, knowing too much alcohol has been consumed? What kind of a person gets into that car? You have a responsibility to yourself, your friends and unsuspecting potential victims. It takes courage to speak up when the situation is not safe.

③ Drive defensively

On average, a first-time drunk driving offender has driven drunk 87 times before being arrested.

It's not enough to monitor your own drinking; you must also be on the lookout for others who are driving while intoxicated. We hear time and again of accidents where Airmen have been rear-ended by drunk drivers, motorcycles are forced off the road with dire consequences or a car veers across the median and collides head-on with an unsuspecting victim. Don't let it be you. Pay attention to your driving and always, always assume that the other driver won't do what's expected; practice situational awareness.

We haven't told you anything you haven't heard before. But this time we want you to DO IT — 1, 2, 3 will keep you and others safe. 

(Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)



SORRY, YOU AREN'T SUPERMAN ... BUT YOU COULD BE

SHARON ROGERS

Ground Safety Division Contractor
Air Force Safety Center
Kirtland AFB, N.M.

Have you noticed that the biggest blockbusters today are superhero movies? It sometimes seems that many of the younger generation think they were born with an “S” on their chests and an indestructible body.

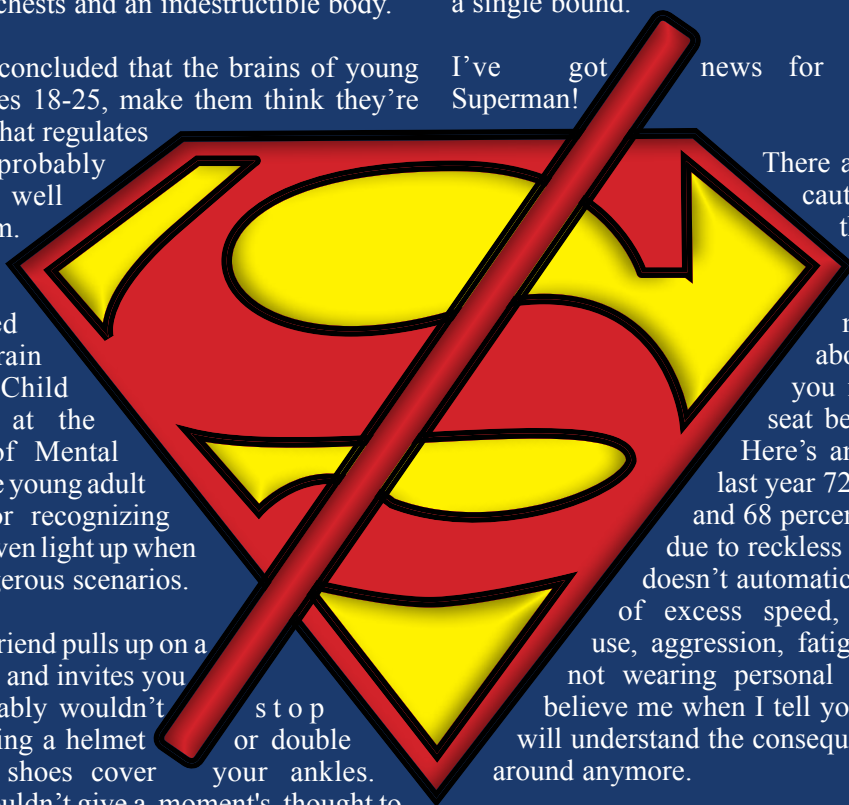
Recent studies have concluded that the brains of young men and women, ages 18-25, make them think they’re invincible. The area that regulates impulse control probably doesn’t work very well for most of them. According to MRI studies by Dr. Jay Giedd (pronounced Geed), chief of brain imaging in the Child Psychiatry Branch at the National Institute of Mental Health, portions of the young adult brain responsible for recognizing consequences don’t even light up when confronted with dangerous scenarios.

For instance, if your friend pulls up on a really hot motorcycle and invites you to hop on, you probably wouldn’t stop to think about donning a helmet or double checking that your shoes cover your ankles. And you probably wouldn’t give a moment’s thought to your family, friends or girl/boyfriend. Not you, the one with the “S” burning proudly on your chest ... you’d just jump on the bike, not giving a thought to consequences.

Science says that the brain of an 18- to 25-year old doesn’t even register consequences for this rash action. Their heads are able to make short connections, such as, “This will be fun!” However, they may not be able to make a long connection, such as, “What if we crash and

I’m not wearing a helmet? My head will be crushed like a melon.” Instead, the Superman promo kicks in: “More powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.”

I’ve got news for you — you aren’t Superman!



There are reasons to be more cautious. Did you know that since 9/11 the Air Force has endured 53 combat deaths vs. 572 mishap deaths? Think about that the next time you neglect to fasten your seat belt or put on a helmet. Here’s another not-so-fun fact: last year 72 percent of motorcycle and 68 percent of car fatalities were due to reckless behavior. If your brain doesn’t automatically calculate the risks of excess speed, distractions, alcohol use, aggression, fatigue, lack of skills and not wearing personal protective equipment, believe me when I tell you that your loved ones will understand the consequences when you’re not around anymore.

Those in the 18- to 25-year age range have the highest risk of being killed off-duty. If you’re a co-worker, friend or relative of someone in this age group, it’s up to you to be the voice of reason. Perhaps, even to the point of nagging if it means a life will be saved.

What can you do if your own mind doesn’t automatically kick in with caution for what might happen?

While we may not be able to fly like Superman, the closest we can come is piloting a plane. Col. Mark Mouw, former 12th Air Force chief of safety at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., offers information that pilots use and recommends implementing this information if you're operating a motorcycle or car.

- ✓ Do I have the skills to operate this machine? Adequate training must be refreshed regularly to build habit patterns that can kick in during critical moments.
- ✓ Do I have a plan? Consider route, weather and traffic.
- ✓ Am I wearing a seat belt or personal protective gear? Seat belts, helmets, leathers, boots and gloves for driver and passenger.
- ✓ Have I done a walkaround? Tires, fluids, brakes, lights, etc. Check PPE as well.
- ✓ Am I focused and practicing situational awareness? Anticipate the unanticipated and expect the unexpected!
- ✓ Am I practicing visual lookout tactics, scanning ahead for problems?
- ✓ Is my cell phone put away? Texting and driving can be more dangerous than drunken driving.
- ✓ Will I commit to following speed limits and traffic rules?
- ✓ Will I be careful, refrain from aggressive driving and think of my friends and family?
- ✓ Will my mom, best buddy, significant other or children be happy about my actions today?

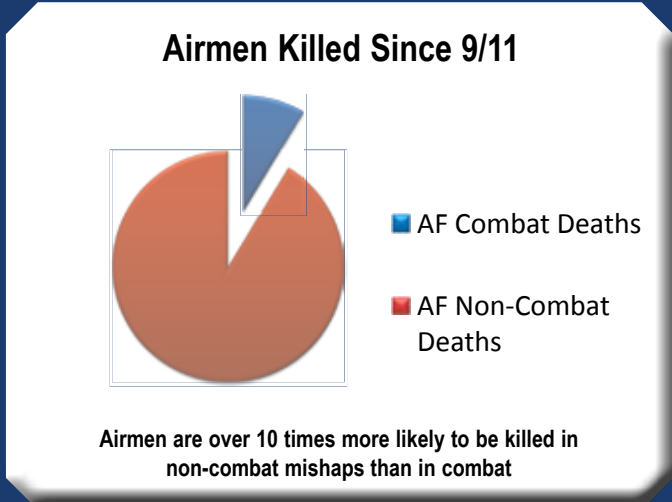
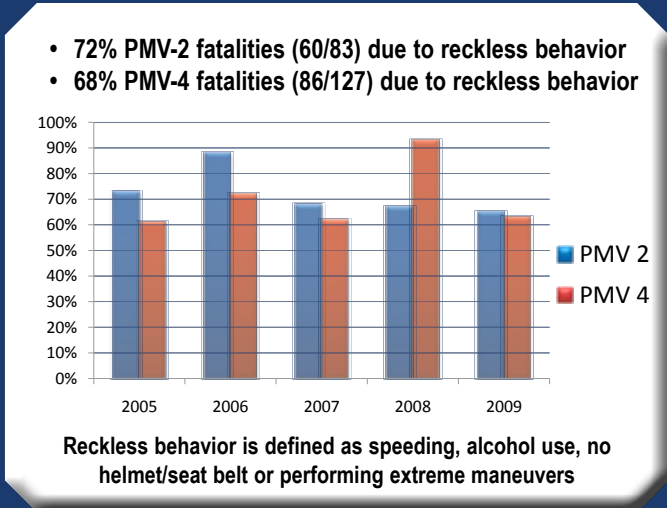
The answer to all of the questions must be YES! Remember, you are a flesh-and-blood mortal with no superpowers whatsoever.

There are excellent programs available to ensure your safety. The Air Force offers PMV-2 safety classes that are free of charge and don't cost leave time. Three levels are available: Basic, Experienced and Sport Bike training. To sign up, contact your base ground safety office.

It doesn't make sense to say, "It won't happen to me." That is your nonfunctioning brain talking! PMV-2 and

PMV-4 fatalities account for too many deaths — simply unacceptable. If you consciously make these important changes in your driving habits and remember who you're living for, your loved ones will view you as a true superhero. 🦸‍♂️

In the last five years, 70 percent of Air Force fatal PMV mishaps (149 out of 213) were due to some form of reckless behavior — speeding, alcohol, not wearing seat belts or motorcycle helmets, etc. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)



Wind and an Icy Road

CAPT. JOSHUA SMITH
436th Airlift Wing
Dover AFB, Del.

Never take planning for granted. Several years ago as I planned my family's move from Colorado to Oklahoma, I diligently tried to decide the best route to take. Did I want to head south and encounter the sometimes treacherous Raton Pass, along the Colorado-New Mexico border, and then head due east? I could also take my chances going north and catch Interstate 70 east to Wichita, Kan., then head south.

I checked out everything: weather, terrain, estimated driving times, etc. All things considered, the routes were equal with one exception: I would be driving my truck pulling a trailer filled with household goods. The combined weight of the truck and trailer was more than 9,000 pounds. I decided I didn't want to chance traveling through the mountainous and unpredictable Raton Pass. I chose to go north.

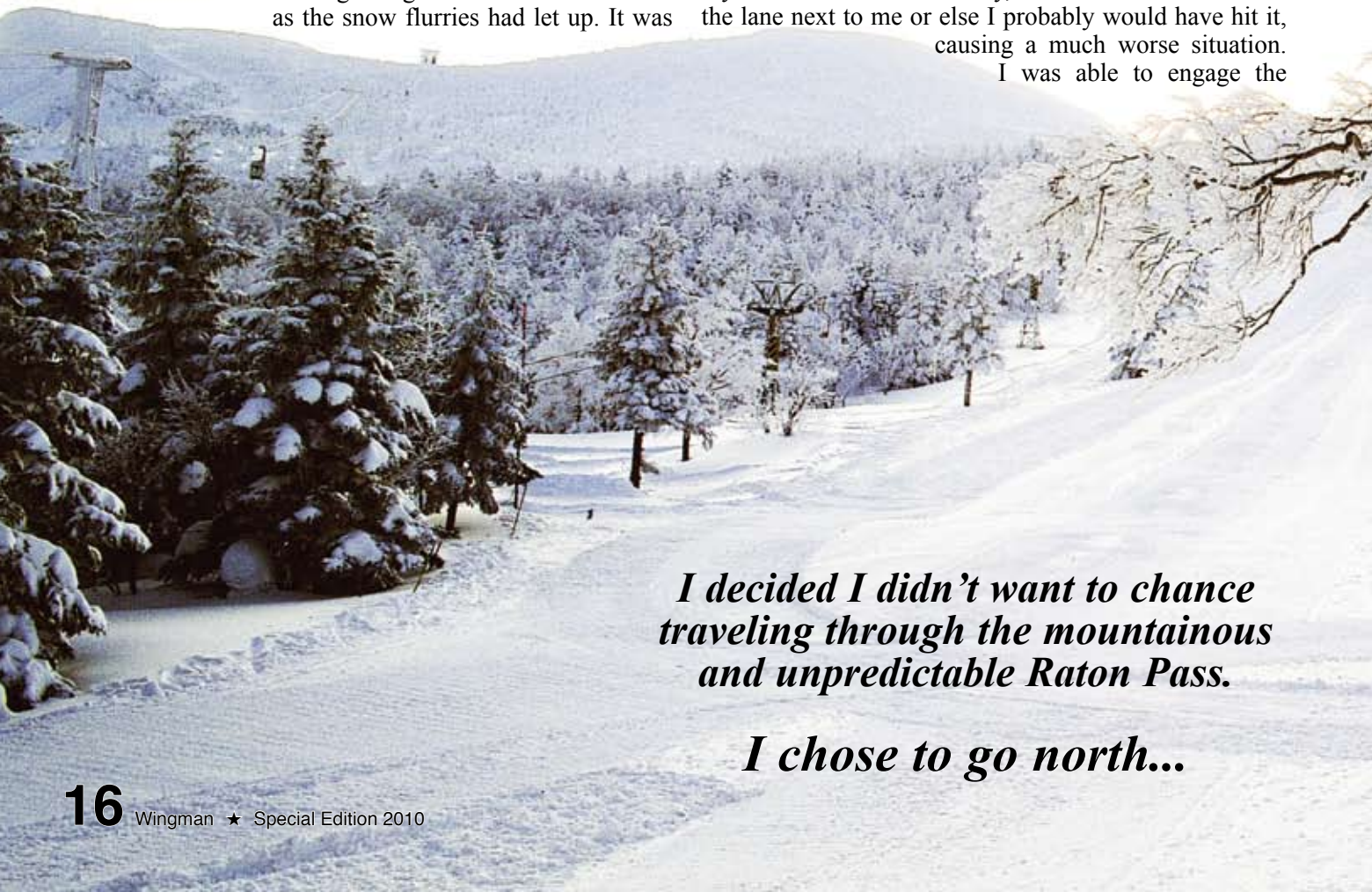
There were a few snow flurries in Colorado Springs the day we left; nothing unusual for January. The flurries were light, so I didn't think too much about it. I was driving my truck with trailer in tow, and my wife was following in our other car. The beginning of the drive wasn't bad as the snow flurries had let up. It was

cloudy, cold and a little windy. The weather was still fairly good as we drove north and began traveling east on I-70. We were driving the speed limit and using our cruise control to get better gas mileage.

As we continued our trek east, we eventually crossed into Kansas where the snow started to fall more. This was where the fun began. Although the roads didn't appear to be too bad, we slowed our speed down below the speed limit. About 100 miles into Kansas, the snow was starting to stick to the road. There were no snowplows out yet laying down sand and salt. We slowed down even more, to roughly 45 mph.

I had noticed a couple of vehicles in the median. One was a Jeep lying on its roof that had apparently slid off the slippery road and flipped over. About a mile down the road, I saw a Suburban that had slid into the median, sitting upright with its trailer still attached and laying on its side. It was shortly after passing that Suburban that a gust of wind caught my trailer causing it to slide sideways on the icy road. I remember looking out the back window and seeing the side of the trailer. The trailer became loose and its brakes engaged due to pressures on the tongue. This caused my truck to start fishtailing. I thought that I was going to end up in the median on my side as well. Fortunately, there wasn't a vehicle in the lane next to me or else I probably would have hit it, causing a much worse situation.

I was able to engage the



I decided I didn't want to chance traveling through the mountainous and unpredictable Raton Pass.

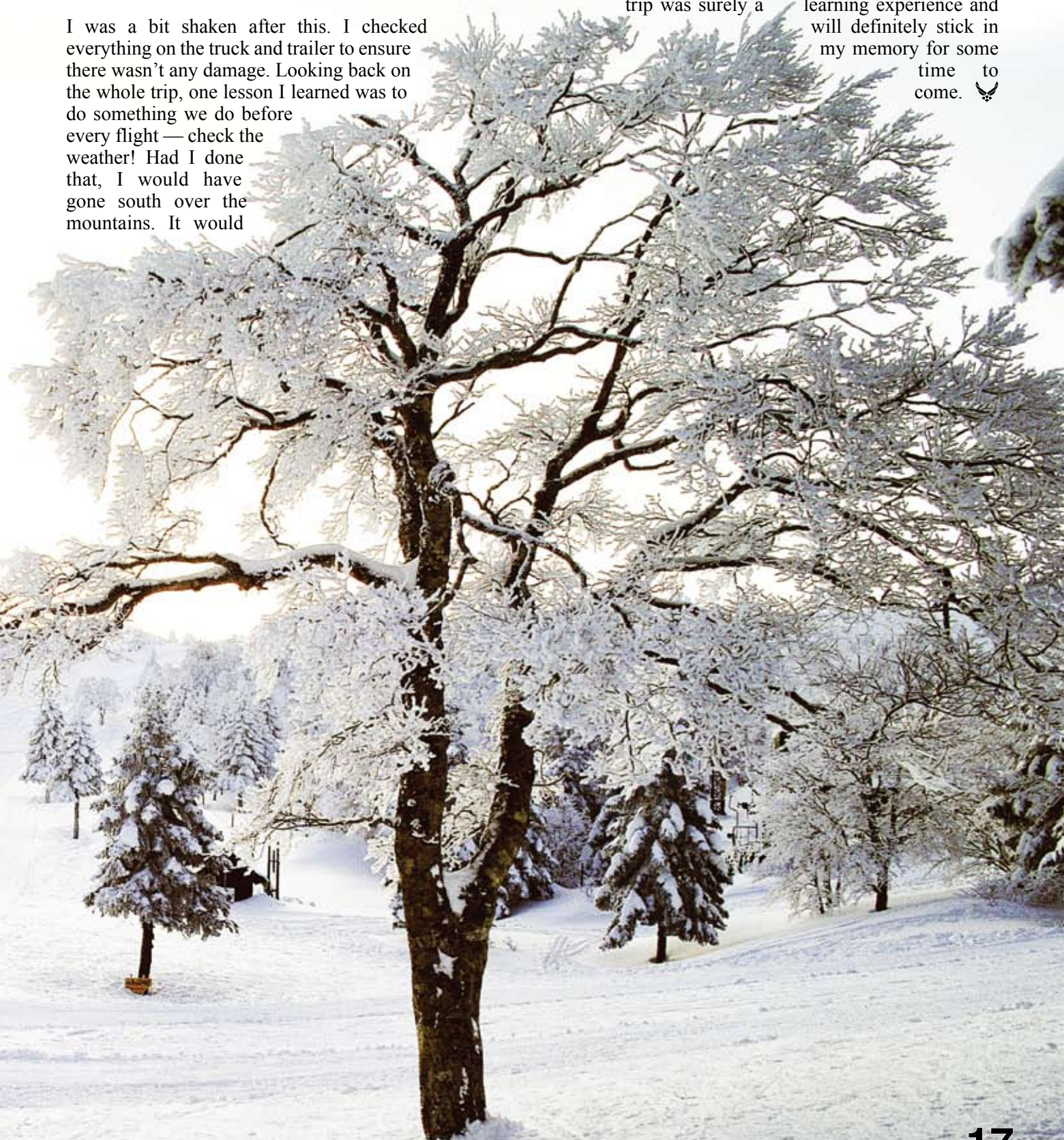
I chose to go north...

... Not a Good Combo!

truck's four-wheel drive that allowed my front tires to get some traction and then drive back to the shoulder of the road.

I was a bit shaken after this. I checked everything on the truck and trailer to ensure there wasn't any damage. Looking back on the whole trip, one lesson I learned was to do something we do before every flight — check the weather! Had I done that, I would have gone south over the mountains. It would

have been clear and sunny for most of the drive. I also learned that if the roads don't look very good, take your time and don't rush to get where you're going. This trip was surely a learning experience and will definitely stick in my memory for some time to come. 🐦



Wingman = Vigilance & Responsibility!

Snapshot on Safety

Digital illustration by Felicia M. Hall

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Snapshot on Safety focuses on several seasonal mishaps involving Airmen. The brief synopses include a short but detailed paragraph of the incident, followed by a paragraph aptly named "Lessons Learned." The purpose of Snapshot is to highlight mishaps that could have been prevented if risk management or better judgment had been applied before mishaps occurred. As safety professionals, our ultimate goal is to provide a safe environment for everyone. We know that's not an easy task, and we definitely understand that we don't control every environment, especially when an Airman clocks out at the end of the duty day. So Snapshot is another method of getting the word out that we care and that you are our greatest asset!

Season's First/Last Ride

On a cool, May evening, an Airman (A1) rolled out a Suzuki GSR-X 750 sport bike for the initial ride of the season. After a long winter, the bike was tuned up and ready to go. After visiting with friends, A1 took to the freeway to get some miles in before heading back to

the base. Shortly after getting on the freeway, a sports car pulled up alongside A1 and began to rev up the engine. The race was on, and soon both vehicles were doing more than 100 mph. As the freeway curved to the right, A1 drifted off the left edge of the road, lost control, took out more than 150 feet of chain link fence and continued over an embankment. A1's injuries were severe, and he succumbed shortly after his arrival at the local hospital. Alcohol and fatigue were not factors in this mishap.

Lessons Learned

A1's reckless behavior was a primary factor in this mishap. Even though this particular motorcycle is built for speed, public roadways are not the place for racing. The roadways are engineered and built with curves that can be managed easily at posted speeds, but are not designed to be taken at double those speeds. A1 was an experienced rider, but after a long winter without riding, A1's skills were not as sharp as they probably would be later in the riding season. Even experienced riders need to reacquaint themselves with their bikes after long periods of inactivity. A1's decision to race was the real killer. Take it easy and don't test your skills until you're ready and in an environment designed for that purpose. Give yourself

a break. If you want to race, use a track and ride safely for many seasons to come.

Football, Motorcycle, Mailbox

On a clear, November night, an Airman (A1) drove a motorcycle home from the bar where friends had gathered to watch Monday Night Football. As often happens when friends gather at a bar, alcohol was consumed. The house was not far away, and A1 didn't have to get on any major or busy streets to get there. It would only take a few minutes to get home, get some sleep and leave the next day to spend the holidays with his family. Two blocks from home, while traveling at twice the speed limit, A1 drifted off the road and struck a brick mailbox. A1 was ejected and died the following morning from massive internal injuries. Alcohol was a factor in this mishap.

Lessons Learned

A1 failed to follow personal risk management practices when choosing to drink and ride a motorcycle from a bar after watching Monday Night Football. Just two days before that, A1 had drinks at the same bar and used good judgment when taking a taxi home. Going even a short distance when impaired is risky on many levels, but riding a motorcycle at twice the speed limit with more than double the legal amount of alcohol in his system created a scenario with a tragic outcome. When impaired, a driver often becomes fixated on objects close to the road and steers toward them. Don't make poor decisions that steer you toward your death. Ride alcohol-free and live.

Shopping

On a cool, October night, an Airman (A1) and spouse had consumed alcohol and were returning from a late night trip to the supermarket. Even though the couple was on a residential street with a speed limit of 35 mph, they were going nearly 100 mph. As the vehicle went through an intersection, it lost contact with the pavement, momentarily going airborne. When it came down, A1 lost control. The car left the roadway, cut through a telephone pole, spun and hit a large tree on the driver's side. A1 expired at the mishap scene. Alcohol was a factor in this mishap.

Lessons Learned

It's extremely difficult to properly identify and manage risks when you have a blood alcohol level 2.5 times the legal limit. It's hard to say what makes someone

In a high-speed crash, a car or truck may be subjected to forces so severe that the vehicle structure cannot withstand the force of the crash and maintain survival space in the occupant compartment.

who had been drinking for several hours decide to drive 100 mph in a 35-mph zone. It has been stated here before and, unfortunately, will probably be stated here again — there's no time or place that's acceptable to drink and drive. This mishap was a tragedy for one family; only circumstance prevented it from being a tragedy for many others. If you drink, don't drive. If you must drive, don't drink. Don't cause heartbreak to your family and others.

Distractions End Leave Forever

On an overcast spring day, while returning from leave with a significant other (P1), an Airman (A1) apparently became distracted and let the vehicle drift off the road. While trying to steer the vehicle back to the road surface, A1 lost control and the vehicle went into a spin, struck a road sign and rolled. A1 suffered multiple blunt force trauma injuries, and P1 was ejected from the vehicle. Both A1 and P1 died from injuries received. Alcohol and fatigue were not factors in this mishap.

Lessons Learned

Risk management principles were followed in the planning of this trip. It was a long drive, and plans were made for rest and food stops and changing drivers along the way. However, sometimes when we get going, the plan goes out the window as our goal of reaching our destination moves to the forefront of our mind. So we travel a little faster, and instead of stopping for food, we try to take care of things while we drive. At highway speeds, even a small distraction can keep us from looking down the road for hundreds of feet, and if we change our body position slightly, we can change the direction we're steering without even knowing it. Making a plan for a trip is a good practice, but a plan is only as good as its execution. Give yourself ample time and take frequent breaks so you can concentrate on the task of driving. Distractions increase the likelihood of having an accident by as much as four times. Don't let distractions lead you to the next life. Arrive alive! 🚗

DWD: Driving

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It was a Saturday night and I was out on a date. We were in the middle lane, the third car back, sitting at a red traffic light. When the light turned green the first car took off and left us behind ... because the car in front of us didn't move. The driver's head was down, and the other people in the car didn't seem to notice that they weren't moving. We wondered if the driver was looking at his shoes or had maybe even dozed off. Just as I started to blow the horn and get his attention, he looked up and rapidly accelerated through a now yellow light. That left us at the same intersection waiting for the light — again.

Once the light turned green again, we caught up to the same car as they were stopped at the next traffic

light. Just as we approached the intersection, the light turned green. This time the car moved right away, so we kept driving behind at a safe distance. That's when we noticed the car was weaving, driving at varying speeds and crossing into the lanes on both sides of the road. Our first thought was the driver was drunk — it was a late Saturday night and that's always a high probability.

As we approached the next light, I changed lanes and pulled up on the right side of the car. Once stopped, I looked into the car to see what might be causing this guy to drive like this. My plan was to pull away when the light turned green and get in front of him — away from the swerving and speed changes. That's when I saw that the driver was young, about 19 or 20 years old, with three other young folks in the car with him. The driver's head was again looking down. From my vantage point I could see he was texting. The passenger in the front seat was fiddling with the controls of a cell phone or an iPod that was plugged into the car, and the two back



*... nearly 6,000 people died
in distracted driving-related
vehicle crashes in 2008.
The biggest distracter?
Texting.*

While Distracted

passengers were leaning forward. They were all engaged in animated conversation. It looked as if they should have been sitting at a table in a coffee shop, but instead, they were in a car. Was the driver distracted? Without a doubt!

How can these simple daily tasks create a problem? When you sit behind the wheel of a car and start multi-tasking, you take away from your driving abilities and attention to the roadway. Driving with all these distractions has become a national focus. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly 6,000 people died in distracted driving-related vehicle crashes in 2008.

The biggest distracter? Texting. The evolution of the cellular phone has seen great strides in the past 10-15 years. However, the great technological advance has presented a vast increase in challenges to drivers. Ten years ago, one out of every 10 drivers may have been using a cell phone while driving. Today, it's not unusual to see five out of 10 drivers using a cell phone, and two of the five are probably texting. Texting has made communicating faster and convenient. But at what expense? Mixing texting with driving is redefining driving under the influence.

According to a study conducted by the University of Utah, texting while driving is worse than drinking and driving. A driver with an alcohol level of .08 — legally drunk in most states — is four times more likely to be involved in an accident than a sober, attentive driver. The driver who is texting is eight times more likely to be involved in an accident!

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood called for a Distracted Driving Summit at the end of September 2009 to address the problem with over 300 safety experts, researchers, elected officials and members of the public to develop recommendations for reducing the problem. The focus grew after several deadly accidents related to texting occurred within the past year. In one accident, a commuter train crash in California involved an operator who was texting and killed 25 people and injured 135 others. In another mishap, a Florida truck driver admitted to texting moments before a collision with a school bus that killed a student. In yet another, a 17-year-old high school student from Illinois was killed when she drove off the road while texting with friends.

In about five seconds, you can read the average text message. When you take your eyes off the road to do that, even for three to four seconds, you will travel the length of a football field if you are traveling at 55 mph. Think about that for a moment. How many people can you pass in that distance? How many cars? How many things can happen in that short distance? So many things can appear — a car changing lanes, another pulling into traffic, a pedestrian crossing the street, a motorcyclist coming from a side road — the list goes on. A Carnegie Mellon study shows that driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with the driving task by 37 percent. While distracted from the road, you may miss an opportunity to recognize and avoid a potential collision.

Utah was the first state to really crack down on drivers who cause fatal car accidents while texting. Instead of a fine, guilty drivers might get up to 15 years in jail — the same as drunk drivers! According to Utah Senator Lyle Hillyard, "In effect, a crash caused by such a multi-tasking motorist is no longer considered an accident like the one caused by a driver who, say, runs into another car because he nodded off at the wheel. It's a willful act if you choose to drink and drive, and if you choose to text and drive, you're assuming the same risk."

... a crash caused by such a multi-tasking motorist is no longer considered an accident ...

The texting-while-driving problem is growing and will only stop when we make a conscious decision to stay off the phone and away from the keyboard when we drive. New phone styles, touch screen multimedia devices and voice-activated technology are all great improvements to our current technology, but when we try to read or reply to a text while driving a car, we put ourselves and others around us in grave danger. New laws that ban texting and threaten prison sentences will change the attitudes and actions of some drivers. An executive order signed by President Barack Obama at the end of September 2009 that bans texting in all government vehicles and personal vehicles used to conduct government

business will stop others too. This executive order bans any form of texting and is defined as, "... reading from or entering data into any hand-held or other electronic device, including for the purpose of SMS texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication." The order goes on to define driving as operating a motor vehicle on an active roadway with the motor running, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic light or stop sign, or otherwise. It does not include operating a motor vehicle with or without the motor running when one has pulled over to the side of, or off, an active roadway and has halted in a location where one can safely remain stationary.





Take the new motto from the National Safety Council and CTIA—The Wireless Association®. They formally announced a new joint education campaign that targets parents — to explain the dangers of distracted driving and to tell teens when they're "On the Road, Off the Phone." While this campaign is aimed at teen drivers, the issue applies to drivers of all ages. We should all follow that simple statement and stay off the phone in any form when we're on the road.


"On the Road, Off the Phone"

The true root cause to distracted driving is us — the human. You, your family, your friends, me ... we all must take this on as a personal responsibility. At the end of the day we're accountable for our own actions — the good and bad decisions. Make the right decision starting today. If a text is that important, get off the road and stop in a safe place. Too many facts and studies support the necessity to stay away from texting while driving. Make the right decision to drive safely and make it to your destination. Drive responsibly, safely and in control. Don't let a quick text ruin your day, or worse, take a life.

HEADS UP ON DISTRACTED DRIVING!

In accordance with the April 20, 2009, release of Department of Defense Instruction 6055.4, DOD Traffic Safety Program:

-  Vehicle operators must comply with applicable state, local and host-nation laws regarding distractions while driving (e.g., using cell phones, text messaging).
-  Operators of government motor vehicles on or off installations must not use cell phones or other hand-held electronic devices unless the vehicle is safely parked or they are using a hands-free device, except for receiving or placing calls in performance of duties from tactical or emergency vehicles. Use of hands-free devices is also discouraged as this creates significant distractions from safe driving performance.
-  The wearing of any listening devices other than hearing aids, single ear-piece hands-free phone devices and motorcycle driver/passenger intercom devices where allowed by law while operating a motor vehicle on installations or when operating a GMV on or off installations is prohibited.
-  Distracting activities, such as hand-held and hands-free cell phones, eating, drinking and operating entertainment systems and global positioning systems, increase mishap potential. Drivers should safely park vehicles before completing tasks that distract attention from operating the vehicle. Accessory equipment should be mounted in a manner that doesn't interfere with drivers.

NOTE: Air Force-specific requirements will be incorporated into the next revision of Air Force Instruction 91-207, U.S. Air Force Traffic Safety Program 



Year of the Air Force Family



U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Cathleen Snow

July 2009 to July 2010 has been designated Year of the Air Force Family, and June 2010 is Safety Month. As you may know, our Airmen are nearly 10 times more likely to die in an off-duty car/motorcycle (PMV) mishap than in combat; and 70 percent of these PMV mishaps are a result of reckless actions (i.e., no seat belt/helmet, speeding, alcohol use or performing extreme maneuvers). The majority of the Airmen killed in these incidents are married, and many have children. The spring edition of *Wingman* magazine will feature more information on YoAFF.

YoAFF is built around four pillars of excellence, all of which include an aspect of safety:



Health and Wellness: Physical health, psychological health, spiritual wellness, financial health, safety, recreation/leisure and social networking/wellness.



Airman & Family Support: Single Airmen programs, deployment support, special needs, child care and youth programs.



Education, Development & Employment: Support and advocacy for children and spouses; personal and professional development for Airmen (includes civilians).



Airman & Family Housing: Safe, affordable and available on- and off-base housing for single Airmen and families; Housing Referral and Relocation Assistance.

Families play an important part in keeping Airmen safe. Let's all work together to make the Air Force a safer place to live, work and play.



TRiPS is a recommended on-line, automated risk-assessment tool to use for leave. You use it before going on leave, especially when driving outside command travel limits. The system helps you and your supervisor recognize — and avoid — common hazards everyone faces on the highway, such as fatigue, not buckling up, speed and distractions.

A typical TRiPS session takes less than 10 minutes. You input information about your travel plans and driving habits. TRiPS presents your overall risk assessment, a map of your route, links to state highway and weather conditions and examples of mishaps. TRiPS also offers you and your supervisor suggestions to reduce that risk.

TRiPS will ask you questions, such as, "Are you planning to wear your seatbelt?" or "Will you drink alcohol within eight hours of beginning your trip?" These questions are not intended to get anyone in trouble. We just want you to stop and think before you get behind the wheel. You can access trips through the AFSC Portal Web site or by registering at the following address: <https://crcapps2.crc.army.mil/TRiPS/af/login.aspx>.



HQ Air Force Safety Center



OUR NEXT MOST LIKELY VICTIM!



PMV-4

MALE
AVERAGE AGE: 26
76% STAFF SERGEANT OR BELOW
35% INVOLVE ALCOHOL
59% OCCUR AT NIGHT (1800-0600)
34% NO SEATBELT

PMV-2

MALE
AVERAGE AGE: 28
70% STAFF SERGEANT OR BELOW
17% INVOLVE ALCOHOL
46% OCCUR AT NIGHT (1800-0600)
16% NO HELMET

Year of the Air Force
Family

