



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAY 26 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Message to the Force – Commitment to a Safe Summer

The summer season is quickly approaching, and with it comes the warmer weather and longer days that allow for greater opportunities to travel and enjoy recreational activities. As we renew our summer traditions and take well-deserved leave, we must prepare ourselves and engage our people to ensure we exercise sound judgement and focused leadership to lessen the vulnerability of our uniformed, civilian, and contractor workforce to unique summertime hazards. The preservation of our force is paramount. One loss is too many.

Each year the period known as the “Critical Days of Summer” — between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day — proves to be one of the most dangerous times for the members of our force. Last year during this time, we lost 68 Service members, most to motor vehicle accidents. When travelling on roads and highways, be aware and attentive and commit to not driving impaired or distracted. Remember that wearing your seatbelt is not only mandatory but it is also the number one way to reduce your risk of serious injury and death in an automobile accident.

This summer, I encourage you to have fun with family and friends, while also keeping safety and risk management as an integral part of your plans, both on and off duty. Look out for one another, plan ahead, maintain awareness, and always follow fundamental safety protocols. Together we can support and protect the safety and health of our people and save lives.

Thank you for your service and your commitment to our Nation. I wish you and your families a responsible and enjoyable summer season. With our collective focus on safety, we can ensure we maintain the readiness required to meet our objectives.

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