



Army launches vehicle safety course

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ARLINGTON, Va. (Army News Service, Oct. 11, 2005) — Everyone who drives an Army vehicle must now complete a new online course designed to make people think about driving safer.

The Accident Avoidance Course is available through the Army Knowledge Online Learning Management Services. All Soldiers, civilian employees and contractor employees who drive Army-owned or leased vehicles must complete the training when they start working for the Army.

Refresher training must be completed every four years. The course meets the four-year refresher training requirements of Army Regulation 385-55 and Army Regulation 600-55.

Installation Management Agency safety officials worked with the Combat Readiness Center and the National Traffic Safety Institute to develop a course that explores how values and attitudes affect an individual's driving behavior. Driving is one of the few critical skills that Soldiers use in both military and civilian life. Changing a Soldier's attitude toward vehicle safety over the span of his career is key to reducing accidents, said Mario Owens, chief of Safety and Occupational Health for IMA.

Training will be customized to each person using a risk assessment of driving behavior and habits. The driver's safety course is expected to motivate people to improve driving skills, Owens said. Awareness of aggressive driving, defensive driving techniques and avoiding distractions will be emphasized through the course.

Discussion of driving under the influence, substance abuse, child safety and weather factors also have been included in the training program. It takes about an hour to complete the course.

Driving accidents — both in Army motor vehicles and privately-owned vehicles — are the number one killer of Soldiers, Owens said. More Soldiers have died behind the wheel in fiscal 2005 than in each of the previous 14 years.

“Soldiers are driving more than ever before, and under a wider variety of conditions than they ever previously. Soldiers must drive everything from passenger cars to Humvees,” Owens said. “This contributes to accidents from human error and behavioral factors. The Army also has more Soldiers who have never driven before entering the Army.”

About 25 percent of new Soldiers do not have driver's licenses when they join the Army. Standardized traffic safety courses for everyone who drives in the Army that incorporate awareness, skills and motivation are one of the first steps in reducing accidents and improving combat readiness, Owens said.

IMA also plans to field in the next year instructors who will hold face-to-face Army Traffic Safety Training Program classes at installations, officials said. IMA already is conducting Motorcycle Safety Foundation training at installations.

Development of standardized Armywide safety training also is expected to save the Army money.

"Some commands were spending more than \$1 million a year for vehicle safety programs of all types," Owens said. "The programs weren't standardized. We should be able to save the Army millions of dollars with a standardized course. It's better for Soldiers as well because it is common training they will carry through their Army careers."

To enroll for the online course, visit Army Knowledge Online, <https://www.us.army.mil>.

Click "Training" under the self-service menu, and then register through the Army's Learning Management System. In the welcome window, click on "Training Catalog." This opens a search window, where users should enter "Army" in the product name block. Then register for the Army Traffic Safety Program, Accident Avoidance Course for Army Motor Vehicle Drivers.

Users will receive an e-mail confirming registration. To access the online course, open "Registrations" under the welcome ALMS welcome page. Click on "Transcripts," and then click on "Contents." Open "Army POV 1-3" to complete course.

"The Army is committed to the public health and safety of our Soldiers and civilian employees," Owens said. "We're convinced we can prevent the senseless deaths and injuries that can result from irresponsible behavior behind the wheel,"

(Information provided by IMA Public Affairs.)