



Air Force News Archive

Off-duty safety critical to Air Force record

by Master Sgt. Ron Tull
Air Force Print News

06/05/02 - **WASHINGTON (AFPN)** -- The annual 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign opened on a sour note over the Memorial Day weekend with a fatal motorcycle accident.

Although the one fatality is an improvement over the three off-duty fatalities for the same period last year, the Air Force is experiencing a bad year for off-duty accidents, according to John Russell, the Air Force's chief of ground safety.

The Air Force lost 56 airmen to a combination of on- and off-duty accidents in fiscal 2001. As of May 28, the Air Force had lost 54 airmen to off-duty accidents alone in fiscal 2002.

"We really need to have a strong showing during the '101 Critical Days' to hold those numbers down," Russell said. "Otherwise we very well could exceed our mishap experience going back eight to 10 years."

According to Russell, Air Force members are experiencing many more private vehicle mishaps than normal, and the trend is high speed and loss of control.

In an effort to reverse this trend, the Air Force is reassessing all of its driving programs through an integrated process team. The team will focus on ways to target young male airmen aged 18 to 24 -- the profile of the individual most likely to be involved in a fatal accident.

"It's very obvious to us that all of these mishaps could've been prevented," Russell said. "The message we want to get to the troops is that they've got to spend more time doing personal risk assessments of both their on- and off-duty activities."

Five of the accidents this fiscal year caused multiple fatalities, killing two Air Force members in each instance.

More AF News

[USAF News](#)
[AF Link Plus](#)
[AF TV News](#)
[AF Press Releases](#)
[AF Radio News](#)
[Airman Magazine](#)
[Base Newspapers](#)
[E-mail subscription](#)
[Feedback](#)

Major Command

[Air Combat Command](#)
[Air Education and Training Command](#)
[Air Force Materiel Command](#)
[Air Mobility Command](#)
[Air Force Space Command](#)
[Air Force Personnel Center](#)
[Air Force Reserve](#)
[Air Force Special Operations Command](#)
[Air National Guard](#)
[DefenseLink News](#)
[US Air Forces in Europe](#)
[Pacific Air Forces](#)

Defense News

[DefenseLink News](#)
[Retiree News](#)

“We see those events as tragic missed opportunities where the passenger could have influenced the outcome,” Russell said.

Statistics do show fewer accidents involving alcohol than in many previous years; 13 of 54 off-duty fatalities were alcohol-related, he said.

While the Air Force studies how to meet the challenge of preventing off-duty mishaps, the on-duty mishap numbers are not as high.

“We’re showing five fatalities so far,” Russell said. “Although our current on-duty experience is not good, our five-year averages show an experience of six fatalities per year.

“It’s difficult to find any trends with such small numbers,” he said. “Four of those five deaths occurred at the member’s home station.”

The Air Force has always done a good job of getting the lessons learned from each fatality situation, Russell said, noting that 2001 was the Air Force’s best year ever, with only three on-duty fatalities.

“We’re not in a position to set any new safety records (this year) but we don’t want to set any bad ones either,” he said. “We just need everyone to realize that personal safety is more critical than ever before,” Russell said.

News Archive

2002: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

2001: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

2000: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

1999: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

1998: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

1997: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

1996: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

1995: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)

