

## Private Motor Vehicle Mishaps at 20-Year High

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NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) -- Naval Safety Center statistics show Private Motor Vehicle (PMV) mishaps in fiscal year (FY) '06 have started out on a record-setting pace. Unfortunately, the numbers are going in the wrong direction, reaching the highest level in the past 20 years at this point of the fiscal year. This fact is troubling considering that FY '05 showed roughly a 20 percent drop in PMV fatalities.

"We are concerned," said Capt. Bill Glenn, head, shore safety programs at the Naval Safety Center. "Coming on the heels of an excellent 'Critical Days of Summer' campaign, our start this fiscal year is horrible. We know that statistics and mishaps fluctuate, but we had hoped for a better kickoff to this year's mishap-reduction efforts."

The Department of Defense has challenged all services to reduce mishaps 75 percent over the next three years. That goal is aggressive and challenging, but the Naval Safety Center feels it is achievable if personnel pay attention and work together to reduce traffic-related mishaps.

"Most PMV mishaps are preventable," said Bonnie Revell, Traffic Safety Specialist at the Naval Safety Center. "Sailors need to be rested before a long drive, adjust driving techniques to road conditions, maintain control of their vehicles, always wear seatbelts and avoid drinking and driving."

Already this fiscal year, the Navy has lost nine people in fatal mishaps, which is 30 percent of the annual target; four of them were in motorcycle-related mishaps. In one case a motorcycle collided with a truck, but the other three involved no other vehicles. Speed, aggressive driving and fatigue are common factors in many of this year's mishaps. Some have involved alcohol, but definitive results are not available at this time. It often takes several weeks to collect final mishap information; however, it's likely that alcohol will be a causal factor in 10 to 15 percent of these mishaps.

"These numbers are sobering," said Rear Adm. George Mayer, commander, Naval Safety Center. "We must turn this around now. On the PMV side, I think that our E-7s and above are doing a good job exercising intrusive leadership. But we need to get the E-4s and E-5s to do the same. After all, they are the ones who will most likely know when one of their shipmates has just bought a motorcycle, or when their coworker plans to take a long trip after working a full day, or who in the shop is a problem drinker or aggressive driver."

"I truly believe that the young petty officers and noncommissioned officers are a big part of the solution," continued Mayer. "We must let them know what we expect and empower them to take action leading our junior Sailors."

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