SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0101

02 APR 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Safety and Occupational Health

1. My most important priority as Secretary of the Army is providing for well-being of the Soldiers, civilian employees and family members of the active component, the Army Reserve, and the Army National Guard. Well-being includes a safe working and living environment. I am very concerned by the rising toll that accidents are taking on the Army. In Fiscal Year, 2004 two hundred and sixty-nine of America's sons and daughters serving our country died in accidents–most of which were avoidable. Every month we average over 41,000 injuries to Soldiers, 1,500 resulting in lost duty time. Civilian injuries and fatalities have risen by 18% and 86%, respectively, during the past two fiscal years. And the Army is currently experiencing an unacceptable increase in tactical vehicle accidents. In the first ten weeks of this year, we have experienced fourteen serious military vehicle accidents, resulting in the death of seventeen Soldiers.

2. Our Army faces many complex challenges in safety and health, including a demanding operational tempo, increased intensity of pre- and post-deployment training, and more cases of personal high-risk behavior following redeployment. We can, and we will, do better in assessing and managing risks and preventing accidents - deployed, in garrison, and off-duty.

3. There are three key elements to ensuring safety. The first is leadership. Safety is a command responsibility, and it is an integral part of everything we do. I expect all leaders to provide the necessary attention and resources to ensure their units and subordinates operate as safely as circumstances permit. The second key element is an aggressively managed safety and occupational health program, tied to performance metrics and accountability. The third key element is proper risk management with compliance to regulatory requirements and a clear understanding of composite risks.

4. I have instructed the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations and Environment to:

- Assess the management of the Army safety program and set the direction for improvements that will achieve significant reductions in Army accidents, and

- Synchronize initiatives from the Defense Safety Oversight Council, the Army Safety Coordinating Panel, Major Army Commands, the Installation Management Agency, and the US Army Combat Readiness Center to ensure the effectiveness of our accident prevention efforts. From this we will establish safety and occupational health performance metrics with quarterly performance and accountability reviews. I expect all Army leaders to employ safety and occupational health performance metrics

appropriate to their organization and to require an accounting of safety and health performance.

5. Our Soldiers, civilian employees and family members are the foundation of all that we do, and there is no higher cause than the defense of our Nation. Our job as leaders is to ensure they have the skills to identify and manage risks, whether on the battlefield, in the workplace, in our communities, or behind the wheel. I do not accept the argument that accidents are the price we must pay for the high-risk nature of our service. Though we are in a dangerous business, we must assess and manage risk intelligently. At the same time, we must reverse current trends and reduce occupational injuries and illnesses, enhancing combat readiness and efficiency while maintaining the well-being, morale, and retention of our people.

Francis J. Harvey

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SUBJECT: Safety and Occupational Health

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