

***'Caring for Our Nation's Best'***  
**Europe Army Regional Medical Command**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
**COM 06221 17 3317 or 3316**  
**DSN 371-3317 or 3316**

**April 27, 2004**  
**News release**

[kelly.bridgwater@hbg.amedd.army.mil](mailto:kelly.bridgwater@hbg.amedd.army.mil)

**Contact: Staff Sgt. Kelly Bridgwater**  
**DSN 371-3316**  
**COMM 06221-17-3316**

---

**ERMC kicks off summer safety program**

By Staff Sgt. Kelly Bridgwater  
Europe Regional Medical Command Public Affairs Office

With the arrival of spring and summer comes the desire to stay outside for most folks. Barbecues and family fun activities such as baseball and bike riding will soon dominate the landscape as warmer weather makes its approach.

Though these activities often bring fun for all, they can also bring danger. Winter may be long gone but safety issues remain strong, regardless of the weather for all military personnel, their families, DoD civilians and local nationals.

To aid in the prevention of summer related injuries is the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) Summer Safety Program. The ERMC program will correspond with the United States Army Europe (USAREUR) 2004 Summer Safety Campaign requirements. The campaign runs from May 1 to Sept. 30 and according to a USAREUR memorandum the goal of the program is to '... ensure that leaders and Soldiers are trained and ready to prevent summer related accidents and injuries both on and off duty.' This includes personnel deployed down range as well as those working in garrison.

Carol Fontanese, safety officer, ERMC, said one of the most important topics of summer safety awareness and training is that of heat injury prevention.

"ERMC has implemented an Intranet based process for people to conduct the mandatory summer safety classes," said Fontanese.

Personnel assigned to ERMC are required to take the class that is geared toward this particular issue as well as other mandatory summer safety classes that include water safety, refresher risk management, accident prevention measures for summer activities and motorcycle refresher training.

“This provides greater flexibility for people to complete the training to fit their busy work schedule and greater ease as they can complete the training at their workstations,” said Fontanese. “An automated registration form is completed that is automatically sent to the staff development and training office to verify completion of training.”

According to the Medical Command Proponency Office for Preventive Medicine, one Soldier dies from a heat injury every year during training. During Operation Iraqi Freedom I six Soldiers died from heat related causes and 30 were treated for heat strokes.

“What everyone must remember is that heat injuries are preventable and commanders are charged to prevent them,” said Fontanese.

She added that another important part of the heat injury prevention program is to educate Soldiers about the use of Ephedra. It presents an increased risk of heart attack and stroke and should not be used under any circumstance.

“Points to remember for those troops taking part in military training such as the Expert Field Medical Badge, weapons qualification and land navigation is to conduct a pre-planning event that includes keeping Soldiers informed about the use of performance enhancing supplements or medications that may adversely affect the body’s cooling mechanism, conducting a medical screening of Soldiers with acute or chronic medical problems, those taking prescription or over the counter medications or dietary supplements and those with a history of previous heat injury,” she said. “These warnings will be stated during safety briefings prior to training events.”

For Soldiers, their families, DoD civilians and local nationals, the ERM Summer Safety Campaign is geared toward preventing summer injuries or fatalities through education, awareness and prevention of risky summer activities. With education and training you can still enjoy your day in the sun. The key is knowing how to participate in your favorite summer activities safely. For further information about the ERM Summer Safety Program contact Carol Fontanese, ERM Safety Officer at 371-3350.