

Safety Day Puts Focus On Summertime Hazards

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BY Cheryl Harrison

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- Memorial Day weekend, 101 Critical Days of Summer and safety all are somewhat synonymous and usually mentioned in the same sentence.

As a reminder of the upcoming dog days of summer and hazards involved, Fort Sam Houston and the Army Medical Department Center and School held a Safety Day event May 20 on MacArthur Parade Field with temperatures sweltering around the 95 degree mark. All sobering reminders that summer is here and safety needs to be uppermost on our minds.



(From left) Josie Poirier and Laura Grindle listen as Keith Wells, of Mine Safety Appliances, explains the benefits of different flak vests worn by Special Forces and other Soldiers at Safety Day May 20. Photo by [Cheryl Harrison](#)

Opening the event with stern, yet important reminders about summer hazards and keeping safety first was Col. John Cook, commander, 32nd Medical Brigade. "I charge you with the care and safety of all your Soldiers, employees, Family members and friends. This is our solemn responsibility to each other while serving in the greatest Army in the world. Together we can make safety an everyday part of our lives. Have a great Safety Day, learn as much as you can, and have a fun and safe summer."

On hand for the event were vendors available with safety items and displays, as well as printed material.

New this year to the outdoor event was an obstacle course where Soldiers as well as other visitors to the event could maneuver with a golf cart wearing Drunk Busters Impairment Goggles.

These unique goggles simulate effects of impairment, including reduced alertness, slowed reaction time, confusion, visual distortion, and alteration of depth and distance perception.

The popular safety demonstration showed how it might feel to drive while under the influence. Soldiers wore goggles that represented two to three beers, or two times over the legal limit.

After finishing the course, Spc. Phalina Thomas, U.S. Army South, said, "Everything looked wider than it actually is."

The 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year. The campaign encompasses a time of increased travel and a corresponding increase in off-duty fatalities.

As the 101 Critical Days of Summer kicks off this Memorial Day weekend, safety is a priority when it comes to summer activities. Safety needs to be incorporated into not only daily lives, but off-duty hours as well.

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