



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
441 G STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

CECW-CO-N

2 May 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE AND DISTRICT  
COMMANDS; CHIEFS, OPERATIONS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT,  
MAJOR SUBORDINATE AND DISTRICTS

SUBJECT: Public Fatality Reduction Initiative

1. I am strongly committed to reducing public recreation accidents and fatalities at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects and therefore have set an agency goal of decreasing the number of fatalities by 50% by the end of FY14, using the total of 197 fatalities from FY11 as the baseline. This is a challenging goal and accomplishing it will require your concerted effort to include command and leader emphasis, resources, and support of visitor safety, education, and outreach.
2. Promoting public safety is an authorized agency purpose for managing the USACE recreation program as stipulated in 36 C.F.R. §327.1(a), which states, "It is the policy of the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to manage the natural, cultural and developed resources of each project in the public interest, providing the public with safe and healthful recreational opportunities while protecting and enhancing these resources." In addition, ER 1130-2-550, Chapter 2 directs public safety education by stating, "Project personnel will promote, develop, and maintain public interest in recreation safety through the establishment of water safety councils or by participation in other local water safety educational opportunities."
3. Historically, our collective efforts have been successful in reducing the number of recreation-related fatalities through hazard mitigation, educational outreach, and visitor assistance. Our park managers and park rangers have done an outstanding job at implementing many successful and innovative public safety campaigns and strategies that have helped to reduce the number of fatalities during the past 40 years. However, the number of fatalities has leveled off at an average of 164 per year during the past 14 years and, in FY11, recreation related fatalities notably increased on our projects, particularly from incidents involving on-the-water activities. These statistics are highlighted in the attached *USACE Public Recreation Fatality FY98-FY11 Summary* (Encl 1).
4. I have attached the *Strategic Campaign Plan for Reducing Public Fatalities* to assist your districts and projects in working towards achieving the FY14 goal (Encl 2). The National Water Safety Team (WS Team), through the HQUSACE National Operations Center for Water Safety (NOC), prepared this plan which analyzes public fatality data, contains key educational

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messages for target groups, and provides goals, strategies, and actions for reducing public recreation fatalities. I suggest you take full advantage of the best practices identified in this document.

5. I have identified the following actions that all MSC Commanders must address. These actions were identified by the WS Team and the NOC to address corporate-wide issues that often hinder our projects from fully implementing public safety measures.

a. Require unilateral support from applicable directorates within all MSCs. Public safety continues to be a top priority and should be fully supported by all applicable directorates and offices including, but not limited to, Operations, Safety, Security, Counsel, Human Resources, and Real Estate. Public recreation safety support should be included as a TAPES requirement for all field-level Natural Resources Management employees and their supervisors, as well as all appropriate district office team members.

b. Seek innovative ways to reduce office administrative burden for field park rangers in order to increase available time for land and water patrols.

c. Focus public safety education and actions on the greatest at-risk group using serious-toned messaging and new technology communication methods as appropriate.

d. Further expand and improve the Corps Life Jacket Loaner Program. Reference life jacket program guidelines on the NRM Gateway website for further information.

e. Include positive, proactive public safety actions and successes as part of each district's Command Management Review and ensure timely and complete follow-up with all public fatality reports. Share lesson-learned across the districts.

f. Provide multi-lingual training to appropriate field employees at projects with significant non-English speaking visitors. Free online training is available from the Defense Language Institute by going to <http://www.dliflc.edu/index.html> and clicking on Headstart2.

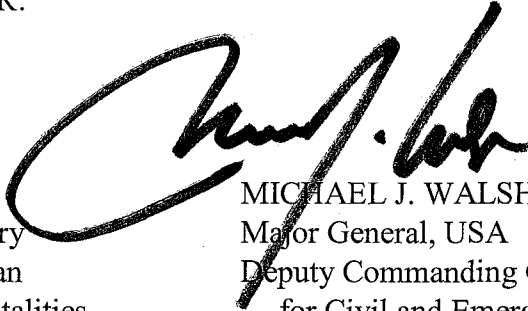
6. The WS Team identified several recommendations that are being addressed in HQUSACE to support the above Strategic Campaign Plan. These actions will assist projects by removing some administrative burden and clarifying policies that can hinder success of public safety efforts. Action items for HQUSACE include a national public safety recognition program, improvements to the public fatality reporting procedures, and a review of safety policies related to boat patrols.

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7. I appreciate your ongoing public safety efforts and accomplishments. Please continue to adapt your efforts to address changes in Corps policy, recreation use, visitor expectations, economic impacts, and modern technology. Additional information regarding water safety programs, partnerships, and strategies can be found on the NRM Gateway Water Safety web site and by contacting the HQUSACE National Operations Center for Water Safety, attn: Jonathan Carlisle at [jonathan.m.carlisle@usace.army.mil](mailto:jonathan.m.carlisle@usace.army.mil).

FOR THE COMMANDER:



MICHAEL J. WALSH  
Major General, USA  
Deputy Commanding General  
for Civil and Emergency Operations

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1. Public Fatality Summary
2. Strategic Campaign Plan  
for Reducing Public Fatalities