

Leaders and Peers Intervene to Save Soldiers' Lives



Pine Tree Counseling Guidance

Managing off-duty risk is critical to meeting our goal of zero Loss of Life. Leaders will be decisively engaged and involved in every aspect of their Soldiers' lives from relationships, and finances, to everyday off duty activities. As a minimum, before weekends and holidays, and before Soldiers go on pass or leave, first-line Officers and Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) will give a composite risk briefing, and first-line NCOs or supervisors will meet with each Soldier to discuss the Soldier's off-duty plans. This process ensures that leaders are aware of their Soldiers' plans and **MUST RESULT** in a **mutual, verbal contract** with them, on the steps to be taken to manage identified risks. Simply put, first-line supervisors must be fully accountable for their Soldiers' conduct, on and off duty, 24 hours a day.

"Pine Tree Counseling"

Pine Tree Counseling is a back-to-basics initiative that shows our commitment as leaders and is truly "taking care of Soldiers." This requirement complements and must be used with individual risk assessments. This is **not intended to be a paperwork meeting** and written records of the meeting are not necessary or desired. The meeting is intended to be a leader-to-led meeting with face-to-face guidance given and a **verbal "safe behavior" contract** agreed to. This **verbal contract** is the Soldier agreeing to take steps to mitigate risks identified in the meeting. Soldiers and their leader will discuss in detail their plan for the off-duty period, identify possible risks and "what-if" scenarios. They will agree on specific and individual control measures to mitigate the identified risks and agree on a **verbal contract** to follow the control measures.

Basic Responsibilities.

First-line Officers and senior NCOs are responsible for conducting unit composite risk-management briefings.

First-line NCOs are responsible for:

- *Knowing the Soldier, and all aspects of his personal and professional life.
- *Reviewing risks associated with their Soldier's activities.
- *Reviewing the range of composite risk management factors and asking pointed questions to determine risks.
- *Reviewing and applying the unit risk-reduction profile.
- ***Providing advice and counsel on risk mitigation.**
- ***Making a "Go" or "No Go" decision on the plan. NCOs will not allow Soldiers to go on pass or leave until they are satisfied that the risks have been identified and sufficiently mitigated, and the Soldier and NCO have made a verbal contract as to how to mitigate the risks.**

Note: Getting drunk and calling for the on-post "drunk van" to pick you up is NOT an acceptable plan. Soldiers watch out for Soldiers – and Soldiers get each other home safely – because they made a good plan to do so.

- *Holding the Soldier appropriately accountable for his or her actions.

The Soldier is responsible for:

- *Making required assessments before the meeting.
- *Openly discussing plans and associated risks for the period under review.
- *Abiding by the verbal contract and following the risk-assessment and risk-management process as conditions affect the contract.

The Soldier and the NCO are jointly responsible for:

- *Making a mutual agreement and executing a verbal "safe behavior" contract covering courses of action for the period under review, and any contingency plans. This is the verbal contract.

Battalion leaders are responsible for:

- *Verifying the integrity of this process and ensuring that subordinate leaders and Soldiers adhere to safety standards.