



# 2016 COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND SAFETY TIPS



The first Fall Season holiday is dedicated to Christopher Columbus' spirit of exploration and courage which inspired his 1492 expedition and discovery of the new world. Columbus Day has been deemed a federal holiday since 1937, and celebrated on the second Monday in October since 1971. Many service members will use this long weekend to travel. If you will be driving during the Columbus Day weekend, be mindful of the impending seasonal changes and potential travel risks. The following "Safety Tips" are provided to maximize your safety and minimize hazards:

**BRIEFING TOPICS:** Travel Safety; Seasonal Changes; Alcohol Awareness – "*Protect What You've Earned*"; and Risk Management/Force Preservation.

## SAFETY TIPS:

❖ **Travel Safety:** Plan trips carefully. Inspect vehicle before traveling. Notify someone of travel plans, route, and ETA. Begin all driving well-rested. **Drive defensively.** Ensure all occupants remain buckled for duration of trip. Continuously self-evaluate to ensure distractions are avoided. Remain vigilant to other motorists. Use scan patterns to keep eyes moving and remain alert. Extend following distances during darkness, inclement weather, and peak travel hours. Expect traffic delays. Keep windshield clean and wiper blades in optimal condition. Keep headlights on to enhance visibility. Maintain a vehicle emergency kit. Avoid allowing gas gauge to drop below one-quarter.

❖ **Seasonal Changes:** Prepare for temperature and time changes. Weather check your route through to destination. Know that moisture or leaves on roadways can create traction issues, and the best defense is to **slow down**. Stay alert for deer crossing roadways. Prepare for reduced daylight hours (daylight saving time ends the first Sunday in November; clocks fall back one hour).

❖ **Alcohol Awareness:** Drink responsibly and **never drink and drive**. Think of the ramifications of a DUI, or injuring someone before getting behind the wheel. Designate a safe, sober driver before going out drinking. Don't ride with a driver who's been drinking; call a taxi, a friend, or stay where you are until sober. Understand and avoid the dangers associated with binge drinking. Monitor friends who have been drinking, and intervene when someone has had too many.

*"Protect What You've Earned" campaign is designed to decrease alcohol related incidents and the destructive behaviors associated with drinking. Poor decisions made when drinking alcohol can affect your health, career, family, and unit readiness. Take care of one another and make smart choices to "Protect What You've Earned".*

❖ **Risk Management/Force Preservation:** Most off-duty injuries and fatalities involve human error. Make it your mission to know and control the common causal factors of off duty injuries and fatalities. Self-evaluate stress levels and notify someone immediately if feeling overwhelmed or depressed. Avoid engaging in demeaning or disrespectful behaviors that undermine our corps values.

**Manage the Risk...Protect the Force!**