

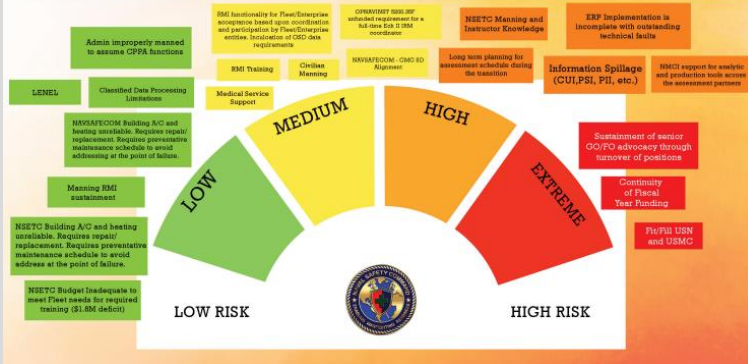


NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND SAFETY AWARENESS DISPATCH



Risk Registry Explained

NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND RISK REGISTRY



In previous dispatches we've described what a Safety Management System (SMS) and Risk Registry are and why they're important ([SA 23-17](#) & [SA 23-23](#)), but now we want to take a closer look at both and clarify a few things.

SMS & Risk Registry explained

First, let's start with the SMS. Every organization must have an SMS or a Safety Management Plan (SMP) to properly identify, communicate and account for the risks around them.

Next comes the second part, the Risk Registry. The Risk Registry portion of a SMS/SMP is a tool for the Commander (CO) to identify risks, which includes information about the impact of those risks and what can be done to resolve or reduce them. Adding this information is a critical step in the SMS because it addresses root causes instead of merely making a list of the deficiencies that require closure. Registries are living documents that help your leadership see the big picture when it comes to identifying risks and determining the impact to the mission and overall readiness.

Who's responsible?

The ownership piece is crucial. Within the Navy's SMS, the **Accountable Person** (AP) is the person who "owns the risk" and is personally accountable to fund or fix that risk. This person, usually a CO, has the authority *and* the responsibility to execute the SMS/SMP. This is where it is also important to note that the AP must have the **ability** to fund or fix. If a leader/CO does **not** have the ability to fund or fix the problem, they are **not** the AP and therefore do not own the problem. In that case the AP may be a more senior commander or a commander in an administrative chain of command. Another important note is that the AP cannot delegate their responsibility. As the AP, they own the risks for their subordinate command.

Risk Registry best practices

A command may face numerous risks that impact their ability to meet mission requirements. When establishing a Risk Registry, COs and their teams may identify potential risks such as:

- The command is lacking critical billets or required NECs.
- Funding for mission-essential items (i.e., tools, training, personnel) is unavailable.
- The command is facing a high operational tempo without scheduled no-fly days or breaks allowing Sailors and Marines to rest and recharge.

If a CO can't fund or fix risks at their level; they are not the AP. By using a Risk Registry, COs can organize these and other risks in a single location, analyze them, prioritize resources, communicate and account for the risks they can't fund/fix (since they are not the AP) to higher authority and develop mitigation plans to manage the risks that haven't been fixed.

Risk Registry Explained

Creating a Risk Registry and what's included

Think “timely and continuous.” Creating a Risk Registry doesn’t have to be a laborious process, but it isn’t just making a list of zone inspection hits to fix. Creating one involves taking the time to think through the risks surrounding your command and then making updates on a continuous basis. When your team meets to think about the risks you face as a command, focus on relevant and critical *safety* risks (the kind that hurt people and break things). From there, branch out to include overall risks that could impact your mission and keep your command from operating safely and effectively. Below are elements you may want to consider including:

- **Risk Categories:** Ask, “What part of life or duty does it affect?” (i.e., time, cost, personnel, training). Determine if it’s operational, strategic, or tactical. Be aware that risk categories are pertinent to the organization and its mission.
- **Description:** Make it easy for others to understand, but ensure you’re including the important details; this is critical to the decision-making process.
- **Analysis:** Assess and quantify risks based on the chance a risk may happen and the impact that risk may have on readiness.
- **Priority:** Where does this risk fall on the scale of importance? Is the risk extreme, high, medium or low? Does the prioritization change as the mission changes? These are all important questions that guide the priority for higher-level decisions on constrained funding and time.
- **Response:** What is your command’s plan/mitigation strategy for mitigating the risk? This is the most important section of the Risk Registry and may require the most thought from your command.
- **Risk Ownership:** Who is the AP? If your Commander can’t fund or fix the risk, then who has that authority? By ensuring risks are properly identified, those risks can then be communicated to those who own the risk. This step is critical to effective risk management.

Key Takeaways

A Risk Registry is a valuable tool for the CO that organizations at all levels must use to identify, communicate and account for risks that can adversely affect readiness.

1. **Everyone must participate:** An effective Risk Registry involves everyone in the organization—from the deckplate to senior Navy and Marine Corps leadership. It’s important be aware of your command’s Risk Registry, know where you fit in, and actively participate in developing and updating this important component of risk management.
2. **Updates are important:** Commands/organizations need to regularly review and update their Risk Registry, especially as they rotate through the stages of maintenance, training, deployment, sustainment, etc.
3. **Identify your AP:** If you can’t “fund or fix” a risk, you don’t own it! Risks require communication to the AP who can effectively fund or fix the risk. If you aren’t the AP, pass it up the chain.
4. **If you see something, say something:** If you identify a risk, either record it or ensure the proper personnel are informed so it can be recorded in the Risk Registry. The more “risk aware” your command, the less likely you will overlook what could be a critical deficiency.

For more on Risk Registries, check out our [Risk Registry FAQs](#) page and check out our website (link below) for further safety information.

And remember, “Let’s be careful out there”