



Naval Safety Command

Risk Assurance and the Assessment Process

Risk Assurance involves routine and formal assessments to justify confidence that risk requirements and standards are met. Execution of an effective Safety Management System (SMS) is based on effective risk management. In terms of resilience, assurance means risks and issues associated with equipment and resources, competent persons, infrastructure and compliance are identified, controlled and owned at the appropriate level by an Accountable Person. The Accountable Person has the authority and responsibility for the execution of the SMS or Safety Management Plan (SMP). That person owns the risk within their command and their responsibility cannot be delegated.

We assess behaviors of self-awareness (i.e., I know what my risks are), self-assessment (i.e., I have processes to evaluate and monitor how I manage those risks), self-correction (i.e., I have procedures to correct my risk management issues as they occur) and continual learning to enable a defense-in-depth system that ensures commands are managing risk appropriately through proper risk identification, communication and accountability at the appropriate level.

NAVSAFECOM released its updated mission, functions and tasks (MFT), June 30, 2022. Our updated MFT outlines our increased authority and responsibilities for identifying hazards and reducing risk to our warfighters across the Naval Enterprise.

Expanded authorities and responsibilities include:

- Assuring proper and effective accountability of safety management across the Naval Enterprise.
- Conducting formal, independent third-party assurance functions from Echelon II through unit-level (Echelons IV and V) organizations to evaluate the risk control system and continuous self-improvement of commands and installations worldwide.
- Assessing Echelon II and III certification processes of subordinate commands (e.g., Optimized Fleet Response Plan milestones, weapons, communications, navigation, maintenance, diving, airborne, etc.).
- Conducting no-notice or short notice unit-level risk assessments to evaluate risk controls and continual self-improvement.
- Compel an understanding of cumulative and systemic risk and when warranted, communicate and account for risk at the appropriate level.
- The authority to access, collect and independently analyze a wide range of current and historical data across the enterprise in pursuit of risk-related initiatives, including, but not limited to, operations, personnel, materiel, culture and command climate data to assess the effectiveness of the Navy Safety Management System (SMS).

Assessments

NAVSAFECOM's assessment process determines whether an assessed command inculcates behaviors of self-awareness, self-assessment, self-correction and continual learning to enable a defense-in-depth that ensures the Command is **Safe to Operate and Operating Safely** through proper Risk Identification, Communication and Accountability at the appropriate level.

Our assessments are focused on the following principles:

- **Risk Identification** focuses on risk awareness throughout an organization or unit, as well as the organization's awareness of normalized risk.
- **Risk Communication** looks at communication practices and effectiveness.
- **Risk Accountability** evaluates how risk is assigned and if it is accounted for at the appropriate level.

Historically, NAVSAFECOM's mandate included regular assessments at the Echelons IV and V level. To help conduct the additional level of assessments (Echelons II and III), NAVSAFECOM formed the Assurance Directorate comprised of senior military and civilian employees tasked with assessing the overall effectiveness of risk and safety management practices across the Naval Enterprise.

Third-party assessments improve institutional resilience through Prevention, Correction (Recovery) and Core Principles.

- **Prevention:** Eliminate or mitigate risk through controls
- **Correction (Recovery):** Avoid escalation through controls to prevent or limit harm to achieve mission
- **Core Principles:** Ability to Self-Assess (SA) and Self-Correct (SC)

Assessment Levels

There are three Assessment levels:

- Level I:** Self Assessment: Commands and Units assess the effectiveness of their own risk management through their SMS/SMP.
- Level II:** Senior to Junior Assessment: Commands assess the effectiveness of their subordinate commands' SMS or SMP
- Level III:** External, third-party assessment performed by NAVSAFECOM

- **Level I and II assessments** provide the framework for commands and their subordinates to implement and execute continuous monitoring of their risk control processes. An effective SMS must include an external auditing function -- it must have a system to evaluate the system, i.e., a third-party, outside that unit or organization's chain of command.
- The **Level III assessment** requirement, performed by NAVSAFECOM, ensures that external, third-party assessments are routinely conducted. Assessments will conduct a systems-based evaluation of the organization's ability to identify, communicate and account for risks at the appropriate level.

Level III NAVSAFECOM assessments are further broken down into **Three Tiers**.

Assessment Tiers

The Assurance Directorate is tasked with scheduling a three-tiered assessment program and providing assurance of Echelons II-III risk resilience as well as safety and risk management systems and policies. These assessment tiers are NAVSAFECOM's way of assuring the SMS is effective, we are Safe to Operate and Operating Safely, and are part of our system of systems approach.

- **Tier I assessments:** Echelons II-III assessments performed by NAVSAFECOM's assurance directorate. The focus of these assessments is a systems-based evaluation of the organization's ability to identify, communicate and account for risks at the appropriate level.
- **Tier II assessments:** Assessments of inspection and certification processes conducted by NAVSAFECOM's aviation, shore, afloat and expeditionary directorates. Units include carrier strike groups (CSG) and afloat training groups (ATG).
- **Tier III assessments:** Local area assessments (LAAs) conducted by NAVSAFECOM's aviation, shore, afloat and expeditionary directorates. These assessments are conducted at the unit level, such as a squadron or ship command. Examples of identified categories of Echelon V/Unit-Level Command assessments include: Fire Prevention, Safety and Occupational Health, Risk Management, Third-Party Support and Procedural Compliance.

