

Naval Safety Command

Risk Awareness: Keeping the Conversation Going



Over the past three weeks, we've explored key factors that influence safety and mission readiness – from hidden system failures to human limitations and off-duty risks. But risk awareness isn't a one-month effort. It's a daily mindset and leadership habit. Whether you're leading from the deckplates or the command suite, your presence, conversations, and follow-through shape the culture of safety across the Navy and Marine Corps team.

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Risk awareness is not a one-month message – it's a sustained commitment. Continuing to discuss, review, and reinforce these topics in daily operations strengthens safety culture, reduces preventable mishaps, and supports a more resilient, mission-ready force.

Understanding the Foundations of Risk

Mishaps are rarely caused by a single action – more often, they are the result of deeper, hidden issues within our systems, communication, and culture. Unaddressed gaps like outdated processes, unclear tasking, or leadership blind spots can quietly build risk into daily operations. When accountability is inconsistent or feedback isn't valued, these latent failures go unchecked, creating conditions where a single misstep becomes catastrophic. Preventing mishaps means addressing these root causes early, fostering a culture of transparency, and ensuring that safety is not just a compliance requirement but a shared responsibility.

At the same time, human performance is shaped by factors we all face – fatigue, stress, distraction, and complacency. Recognizing those influences, and being willing to talk about them, helps teams stay sharp and mission-ready. Off-duty choices matter just as much. Many of our most tragic mishaps occur during personal time, particularly involving motor vehicles. Reinforcing a risk-aware mindset – on and off the job – starts with leadership presence and everyday conversations. Leaders who check in, set expectations, and lead by example help create an environment where risk is understood, managed, and reduced across the board.

Sustaining a Culture of Risk Awareness

Building a culture of risk awareness doesn't end when the campaign wraps up – it begins with the everyday actions that follow. Real change takes root when leaders consistently model accountability, when teams feel empowered to speak up, and when risk discussions are part of normal operations, not just formal briefings. Embedding this mindset means reinforcing the idea that safety is a shared value, not just a checklist item. From addressing systemic issues to acknowledging the human element and supporting smart off-duty decisions, sustained attention to risk ensures we learn from the past and act before incidents occur.

The long-term impact of this commitment is far-reaching. Commands that prioritize risk awareness see stronger trust, fewer preventable mishaps, and greater mission readiness. When individuals understand how their decisions affect the team – both on and off duty – the result is a safer, more resilient force. By continuing to lead these conversations, challenge complacency, and engage with your teams regularly, you help ensure that risk management isn't a temporary focus – it becomes part of the way we lead, operate, and succeed.



SAILORS CONDUCT PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ON SAFETY EQUIPMENT



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Resources You Can Use

NAVSAFECOM provides a variety of tools and products to help you continue the conversation and strengthen risk awareness across your teams:

- Seasonal Safety Briefings
- Safety Awareness Dispatches
- Sea, Air and Expeditionary Safety Magazines
- Posters and Infographics
- Safety Videos and Shareable Content
- Human Factors Tools and Reference Materials
- Risk Management Information (RMI) Support

Visit NavalSafetyCommand.Navy.Mil to explore downloadable materials for your workspace and leadership engagements.