

LATENT FAILURES & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

“Fix the system, not just the symptom.”

What Are Latent Failures?

Latent failures are hidden problems built into the systems, procedures, or culture of an organization. They aren't obvious — but they set the stage for mishaps to occur.

Examples include:

- Incomplete or outdated procedures
- Missed inspections or maintenance
- Unclear responsibilities
- Gaps in supervision or training

These conditions often go unnoticed until something goes wrong — but by then, it's too late.

Why It Matters

Latent failures are often the true root causes behind mistakes. When something goes wrong, it's easy to blame the individual — but the real fix usually lives deeper in the process.

Creating a strong safety culture means spotting weak points early, opening up communication, and encouraging your team to speak up about what feels off — even if it's been "that way for a while."

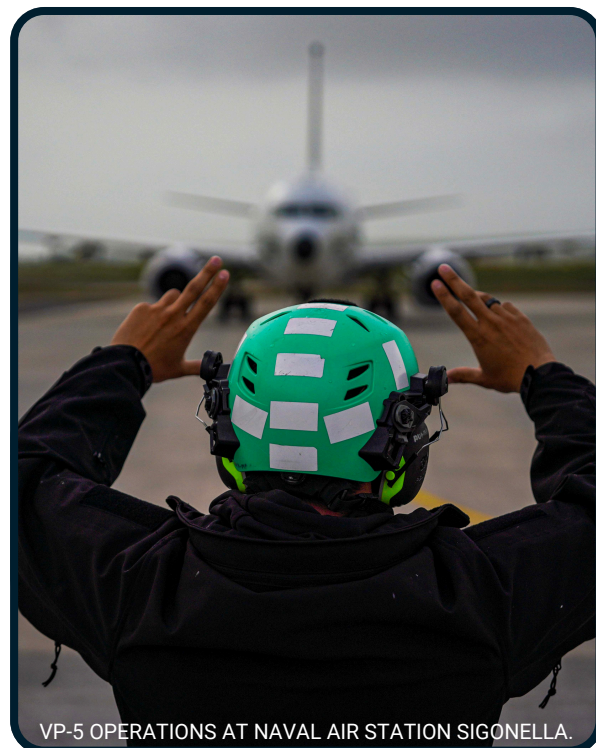
Simple Tool: Try the “5 Whys”

Want to get to the root of a problem? Ask “Why?” five times.

Example: Improper Tag-Out

1. Why? — The equipment was tagged out incorrectly.
2. Why? — The person wasn't trained properly.
3. Why? — The training wasn't scheduled.
4. Why? — The schedule wasn't reviewed.
5. Why? — There's no system to review recurring training.

Result: Now you're fixing the training program — not just blaming the technician.



VP-5 OPERATIONS AT NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA.

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Week 2

HUMAN FACTORS AND RISK MINDSET

"Human error isn't the end of the story - it's where the system begins"

Why Human Factors Matter?

Even the strongest systems can fail when human limitations are overlooked. Fatigue, stress, distraction, and complacency are all risk amplifiers — and they affect everyone, no matter their rank or experience.

Most mishaps are not about negligence or incompetence. They're about operating under pressure, unclear communication, or lapses that build up in busy environments.

Real Conversations Make a Difference

You don't need a formal brief to talk about risk. Personal check-ins and real-time conversations go a long way in helping people feel seen, heard, and supported.

- Encourage your team to speak up when they're fatigued or uncertain.
- Ask questions that open the door to honesty: "Need a second look?" or "You good with this?"
- Model vulnerability by admitting when you need a pause or a peer check.

Risk Mindset in Action

A risk-aware mindset is more than caution — it's about being tuned in, proactive, and accountable.

- Look for early warning signs in behavior and performance.
- Reinforce safe decisions and highlight good judgment.
- Keep communication open, especially during high-tempo operations.
- Use post-task reviews or casual debriefs to reflect on what went well and what could be improved.
- Apply lessons learned to future planning, training cycles, and team check-ins.

A risk mindset is most effective when it's embedded into daily routines — not just safety meetings. It thrives in environments where people feel comfortable raising concerns and leaders consistently show that risk awareness is everyone's job.



Marine Regiment Participates in Live-Fire Ranges

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Week 3

OFF-DUTY RISK & READINESS

"Safety doesn't stop at the gate."

Off Duty, Still On Mission

Most mishaps across the Navy and Marine Corps don't happen on the job — they happen after hours. From motorcycle accidents to risky weekend decisions, the impacts are real: lost readiness, shaken teams, and sometimes, lives.

What you do off duty doesn't just affect you — it affects your fellow Marines and shipmates, your family, and your command. Staying sharp when the uniform comes off is just as important as staying vigilant on watch.

Why It Matters

Safety off duty is about more than avoiding injury — it's about preserving readiness and protecting the people we count on. Every smart choice off duty keeps the mission strong and the team together. One decision — to drive tired, skip protective gear, or stay silent when something feels off — can ripple through a unit in ways we don't always see until it's too late.

How to Apply It

Off-duty safety doesn't require new programs — it starts with small, intentional actions:

- Normalize the conversation. Check in before long weekends or leave: "What's the plan?" can open the door to better choices.
- Lead by example. Model good judgment in how you drive, decompress, and speak about safety. Your tone sets the standard.
- Use real-world context. Bring up recent incidents or trends during informal discussions to make risk feel real and relevant.
- Watch for warning signs. Stress, isolation, or risky behavior off duty can point to deeper challenges — stay connected and follow up.
- Make it part of team culture. Encourage accountability within your group. When peers look out for one another, safety becomes the norm — not the exception.



USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) arrives at Naval Base Kitsap Bremerton

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Week 4

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

"Risk Awareness isn't a campaign - it's a culture."

June Was Just the Start

Risk doesn't pause after a safety campaign ends — and neither should our commitment to managing it. The conversations we started this month around latent failures, human factors, and off-duty risk should carry into every day, evolution, and interaction.

When we make safety a constant — not a checkbox — we strengthen trust, improve performance, and protect our most valuable resource: our people.

How to Keep It Going

- Reinforce key themes in daily briefs, pass downs, and post-mission reviews
- Keep asking questions: What's our risk today? What could go wrong?
- Share lessons learned and recognize good judgment and safe behavior
- Use NAVSAFECOM tools to keep risk awareness visible and relevant
- Encourage peer accountability — safety is a team responsibility

Resources You Can Use

NAVSAFECOM offers tools to help you lead ongoing conversations and build risk awareness into your routine:

- Seasonal Safety Briefings
- Safety Awareness Dispatches
- Sea, Air, and Expeditionary Safety Magazines and safety grams.
- Posters, infographics, and printable materials
- Leadership discussion guides
- Human Factors tools and case studies
- Risk Management Information (RMI) system support

Visit navalsafetycommand.navy.mil to explore and download resources for your workspace and teams.



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