Assessing ORM

Last fall, the Human Performance Center analyzed why the Navy had not yet fully implemented ORM. They identified three things that were lacking: standardization, feedback mechanisms, and accountability. One solution was to develop a standardized process that would measure and help improve risk-management practices in the fleet.

Working with fleet assessment commands, the Naval Safety Center (NSC) has developed two tools: an ORM application assessment and an ORM program assessment. The former looks at how well a unit applies the ORM process during operations. The latter measures how well a unit complies with guiding instructions.

The two assessments depend on a third tool: the evolution ORM assessment sheet (page 20). This sheet lists 20 specific ORM tasks that make up the entire ORM process cycle. It is used to evaluate how well the command applies risk management. It can be used for any type of evolution by grading only those tasks that apply or can be readily observed ("not applicable" or "not observed" doesn't affect the overall score).

The Application and Program Assessments

The ORM application assessment is a collection of evolution grade sheets from various functional areas within the command. These sheets are combined on a single spreadsheet showing ORM task averages along with fleet averages, task proficiency levels, an overall percentile score, and an overall ORM proficiency level. The four levels of proficiency are: O1 (90% or higher) is "exceptional"; O2 (80%-89.9%) is "proficient"; O3 (70%-79.9%) is "needs improvement"; and O4 (lower than 70%) is "not proficient."

An ORM program assessment evaluates a command's ORM organization, training, implementation, and feedback using 14 traits. From one to three evolution grade sheets are combined into a single score for ORM application. The program assessment doesn't provide comparative scores like the application assessment, but it does give an overall percentile score and an overall ORM program level. The four levels of program strength are "exceptional," "good," "fair," and "weak."

Who Does ORM Assessments and When?

Unit commanders should have their ORM managers and ORM assistants do an internal assessment to establish a baseline for their command. Commanders can expect to have ORM assessed externally by the same evaluators who visit them during various phases of the training cycle. Because each community has a different training cycle and are assessed by different commands, we still are working out the details with the individual type commanders.

For training on how to use the ORM assessment tools, information on TYCOM plans for ORM assessments, data on fleet and class averages, assessment observation trends, or to give us feedback on how to improve the ORM assessment process, visit: http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/orm/ORM_Explanation/ORM_assessment.htm ■

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Better Planning = Better Execution

The first ORM application assessment trials began at five units in February 2007, looking at 49 complex evolutions. We've found a strong correlation between the task scores for ORM planning and the scores for execution. The better you plan, brief, and use ORM, the more likely your execution will be better. This was true whether planners used a deliberate or in-depth risk assessment, or if they used an informal ORM process during planning (walking through the basic ORM steps). We've seen the same correlation between the task scores for ORM briefing and execution.