

Safety and Risk Management



Simple Management Solutions, LLC.

Integrated Facilities Management
and Design

Ian Bigelow

Safety and Risk Management

Safety and Risk Management should receive, by far, the most attention of any aspect of integrated facilities management. The well-being of all people in or near a given facility, activity, or operation, regardless of their reason for being there, should be axiomatic. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a guaranteed safe environment. They simply don't exist, so it's our job to make them as safe as possible. SRM is a continuous process that can never be allowed to end. It is a systematic approach to managing safety by organizational goals, policy, structure, planning, accountability, and safe standard operating procedures. SRM is implemented, monitored, and controlled for continuous improvement, achievement, and sustainability in maintaining the standard by managing the risks associated with an organization.

Developing a viable Safety and Risk Management program, must consider Safety the goal and risk management the means to achieve it. All hazards, known or unknown, in the workplace offer risk and threaten safety. SRM deals with:

1. **Hazard identification:** constant evaluation of the workspace environment for unsafe conditions and practices
2. **Hazard type:**
 - Avoidable: the hazard doesn't contribute to the expected outcome of the enterprise and can be eliminated entirely
 - Unavoidable: the hazard contributes to the expected outcome of the enterprise and requires some kind of mitigation

Example: To be airborne in an aircraft is, without question, hazardous, but that is the purpose of the aircraft. Rendering the aircraft and the procedures surrounding its use, safe enough to convince the public and the FAA that the risk of crashing is insignificant when compared to the convenience of flying, would be the focus of SRM.
3. **Root cause analysis:** What are the contributing factors to a given hazard? Can they be eliminated or circumvented?
4. **Determine the risk of exposure:** (What are the potential effects of exposure to people, property and the environment?)
5. **Develop best practice policies and procedures that control exposure or eliminate hazards altogether.**
 - Managing the elements and outcomes of exposure
 - Hazard elimination to prevent exposure
 - Hazard mitigation to limit exposure
 - Exposure mitigation to buffer the effects of unavoidable exposure.
 - Post exposures protocols and emergency procedures to handle injuries, property damage, and damage to the community at large.
6. **Regulatory Compliance:** All policies and procedures in every work environment, regardless of topic must meet some kind of regulatory compliance. Those focused on the safety of people, property, and the environment are no different. To be sure, there are a lot of regulatory agencies with their eye on your business, so be mindful of them. (OSHA, EPA, NFPA, FDA, JCAHO), just to name a few. Adding to this list is, for most

Safety and Risk Management

federal level agencies, there are also state, county, and municipal agencies to consider. All of these agencies publish their requirements openly on the internet for free, or by subscription.

7. **Continuously test:** Test and evolve policies and procedures to sustain them as best practices.
8. **Training:** Constant and repeated training on all P&P related to safety in the workplace is a requirement under law and it must be scrupulously documented.

For every physical and operational element making up the functions of a workplace environment, these steps must be in constant motion. This process is circular, and loops back on itself in a never-ending fashion.

SRM is complex. It requires as much documentation of what you do as you have things to do. Over my career, I have developed many safety and risk management tools that assist in doing just that. I have written manuals dealing directly with safety management, life safety management and hazardous materials management. All of these are governed, audited, and updated under SRM.

Because of the depth of complication there are several top-flight software programs available to help manage this process. I recommend finding one and using it. SRM is also frequently available as a module that can be added to

Safety and Risk Management

most good computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS), Integrated Workplace Management Systems, (IWMS) and human resource management systems (HRMS). If you don't feel your team has the requisite skills and knowledge to set up a functioning SRM program, call me, I can help.