BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

Composite Risk Management

Apart from actual combat, there are myriad other ways a Soldier could be hurt or equipment damaged. Mitigating and moderating the causes behind such accidents are the goals of the Army's Composite Risk Management decision-making process.

Designed to combat the "enemy of human error," risk management seeks to aid Soldiers in identifying hazards and controlling risk across the full spectrum of Army missions, functions, operations and activities. Whether in combat operations downrange or off-duty on rest and recuperation leave, CRM is intended to be a part of all mission or activity planning. It is not "a stand-alone process, a paperwork drill or an add-on feature," the Army's guiding CRM document, FM 5-19, *Composite Risk Management*, states. "Rather, it must be so integrated as to allow it to be executed intuitively in situations that require immediate action."

Photo courtesy 1st Cavalry Division Safety Office

A Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle rests on its turret and hood after a rollover in Baghdad last year. Soldiers can avoid accidents like this through training and by employing composite risk management.

Indeed, while CRM is designed as a leadership tool, effective implementation is up to leaders themselves, said Command Sgt. Maj. Tod Glidewell, former command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, Fort Rucker, Ala., in a message from the center last year. "There is a long list of programs produced by this center and other Army agencies that have been effective in reducing Army accidents, but none compare to effective leadership.

"The single most effective tool against accidents, suicides and indiscipline is still a trained and competent first-line supervisor," he said.

The Army's Composite Risk Management program is defined by five guiding principles:

INTEGRATION INTO ALL PHASES: Effective CRM requires that the process be integrated into each phase of mission or operational planning, preparation, execution and recovery — downrange or at home, on- or off-post.

RISK DECISIONS MADE AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS: CRM is only effective when information is passed to the appropriate levels of command for decision. Commanders are required to establish and publish approval authority for decision-making via policies, regulatory guidance or training guidance. Authority for risk decision-making is usually based on guidance from higher levels.

ACCEPT NO UNNECESSARY RISK: Leaders should not accept a level of risk unless the potential gain or benefit outweighs the potential loss. CRM is a tool to assist leaders in identifying, assessing and controlling those risks inherent to the mission or activity so informed decisions can be made that balance risk costs (losses) against benefits (potential gains).

A CYCLICAL & CONTINUOUS PROCESS: CRM is intended to be a continuous process applied across the full spectrum of Army training and operations, individual and collective day-to-day activities and events, and base-operations functions. It is a cyclical process used to continuously identify and assess hazards, develop and implement controls, and evaluate outcomes.

DO NOT BE RISK AVERSE: Being a Soldier naturally incurs risk, and that risk can neither be eliminated nor avoided entirely. However, Soldiers employing good CRM practices can identify and control the hazards while ensuring the mission is completed successfully.

5 steps: The CRM process

Composite risk management is a cyclical decision-making process used to mitigate risks wherever Soldiers are operating — on- or off-duty. While in the past the Army separated risk into two categories, tactical risk and accident risk, the primary premise of CRM is that it does not matter where or how the loss occurs. The result is the same: decreased combat power or mission effectiveness.

1 IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

Hazards are conditions with the potential to cause injury or death to personnel, damage to or loss of equipment or property, or degradation of the mission. When planning for a mission or activity, factors to consider will fall into the categories of **mission/activity, enemy/disrupters, terrain and weather, personnel and support available, time available, and civil/legal considerations**.

2 ASSESS TO DETERMINE RISK

This step asks, "What is the probability of something going wrong, and what would be the effect if that does occur?" There are three sub-steps: **Assess the probability** of the hazard, **estimate the expected result** or severity of an event or occurrence, and **determine the level of risk** for a given probability and severity using a standard risk-assessment matrix.

3 DEVELOP CONTROLS

Controls are developed and applied and risk is reassessed until an acceptable level of risk is achieved, or the risks are reduced to a level where benefits outweigh the potential cost. Controls are typically categorized as **educational**, **physical** or **avoidance**. Controls must be evaluated as to whether they are suitable, feasible and if they justify the cost in resources and time.

4 IMPLEMENT CONTROLS

The critical check for this step is to convert the controls into clear and simple execution orders. **Leaders must explain** to their Soldiers the control measures, **how the implementation** of the measures takes place and the **individual's role** in the process. To aid in the understanding of the control measures, leaders can conduct rehearsals, drills and briefings.

5 SUPERVISE & EVALUATE

This step asks, "Are risk controls **being implemented and enforced** to standard?" This step also provides the means of **validating the adequacy** of selected control measures. This should be **a continuous process**, so that one can make changes or adjustments to controls based on changing situations, conditions or events.

MAKING USE OF THE GRAT

Introduced in 2008, the online Ground Risk Assessment Tool is designed to help Soldiers identify accident hazards and develop controls for both ground operations and off-duty activities. Accessible at https://crcapps3.crc.army.mil/ako_auth/grat/*, the tool consists of five sections that are frequently updated:*

- ✓ **Current accident statistics:** Features a graph depicting the most recent Armywide accident data.
- ✓ **Accident vignettes:** In various operations categories, scenarios describe different accidents and summarize hazards, results and suggested controls.
- ✓ **Preliminary Loss Reports:** Actual, recent PLRs are provided for wide dissemination in formations to help troops understand the impact of their decisions.
- ✓ **Regulations and publications:** Displays regulations, training circulars, techniques and procedures applicable to each type of accident.
- ✓ **Automated CRM worksheet:** Produces an automated DA Form 7566 based on recommended and input hazards and controls.