

# Operational Risk Management can work for you on and off the job

**By Tech. Sgt. Mike Higdon**  
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Operational Risk Management is defined as a logic-based, common sense approach to making calculated decisions on human, material, and environmental factors before, during, and after Air Force mission activities and operations, i.e., on and off the job.

The four key principles to ORM are:

- Accept no unnecessary risks
- Make risk decisions at the appropriate level
- Accept risks when benefits outweigh the cost
- Integrate ORM into operations and planning at all levels.

ORM will systematically maximize training realism by reducing unnecessary restrictions and limitations. It can expand operational capabilities in virtually all areas. ORM can significantly enhance overall decision-making skills, power-down decision making, and cut losses.

People may wonder if they can take part in ORM. You're already doing it. Have you ever decided to change your travel plans because the weather was bad somewhere along your projected route? Have you ever changed your travel plans because you assessed certain conditions and determined that traveling at a later date was the best course of action? Have you ever attempted to pass someone on the highway but decided against it because you were running out of room to do it safely? The list could go on and on but the facts are that you already use ORM everyday.

A great deal of these success stories have happened at Charleston AFB. One is the Aircrew

Matrix that is used by the Charleston flight crews before every flight. The crews use the checklist to evaluate certain conditions and assign a point value to them. The points are then added up to determine if the mission falls within a low, medium, or high-risk situation. The final point value of that mission determines who in their chain of command accepts the risks of that particular flight. The ORM checklist alerts the crews of possible risks and allows them time to delay or alter the mission or to reduce the risks that were identified.

Capt. Andy Shelton from the 16th Airlift Squadron recently invited me to fly with him and his crew on a training mission to observe the application of the "common sense approach." The "common sense approach" started the day before the actual flight during the flight-planning phase of the operation. Shelton's assessment of the upcoming flight put the mission in the medium risk category. The crew was made aware of the risks and necessary corrections were made to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

The success of Operational Risk Management in the military will be directly proportional to the level of support from our leaders. Without this level of support the program doesn't stand a chance. ORM has proven its worth on countless occasions.

Operational Risk Management really does work. Remember that it works for you every day of your life. It helps you make logical decisions that keep you and your family safe. Chances are that you are already using ORM at work and don't even realize it. Make ORM a conscious part of everything you do.

## Stay alert in school zones

**By Staff Sgt. Pamela Tobin**  
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Complacency can lead to accidents -- stay alert and remember the rules involving school zones and passing school buses. Here are the rules:

■ The driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking, from either direction, any school bus stopped on the road shall stop before reaching the bus. When the bus displays flashing red lights and/or a stop sign you must stop. You may not proceed until the bus resumes motion or the flashing lights are shut off and stop sign retracted.

■ If you fail to stop for a school bus, you are not only violating South Carolina law, you are also violating Air Force Instruction 31-204/Air Force Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision and the base traffic code. Violators will be fined if cited by the Charleston County Sheriffs Office. If cited by 437<sup>th</sup> Security Forces, violators will not only have to report to their first sergeant or commander, but will be assessed four points on their base driving record.

Don't be complacent when approaching a school bus cross walk or school zone. You can be the best driver in the world, but you cannot predict the actions of a child. It only takes a couple of seconds for a child to dart out into the road and change lives forever.

The next time you approach a school zone, school crossing zone or a school bus in the process of stopping or stopped, think of the children. They may not be your children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or any other relation, but they are our future.

Drive safely and if you see a blatant violation, obtain as much information as possible to include the vehicle license plate number and report the information to the Security Forces Control Center at 963-3600 immediately.