

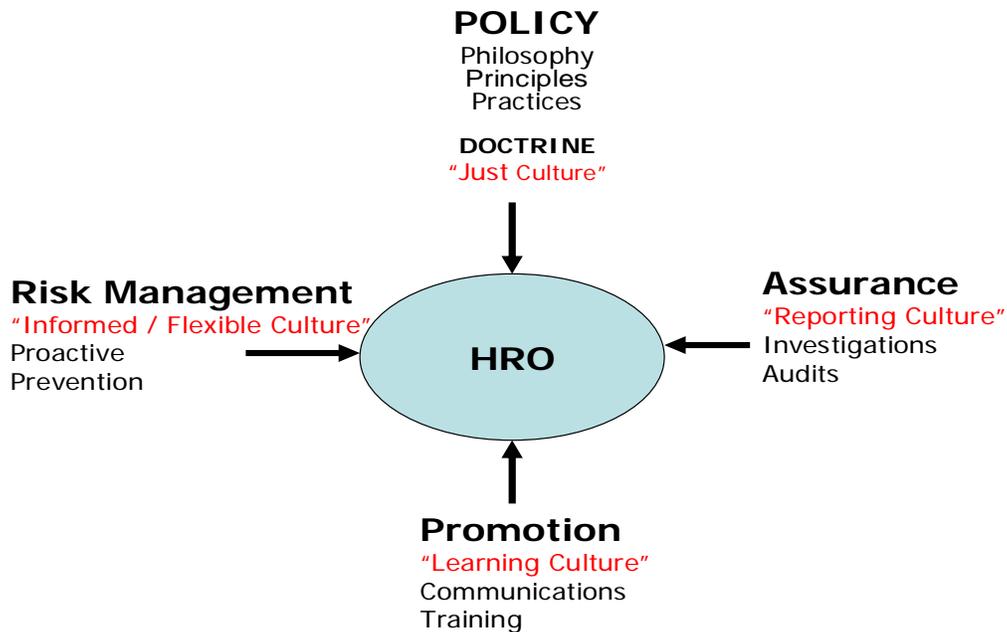
“Doctrine Dialogue”
US Forest Service
Fire and Aviation Management

Update –June 2008

“Systems Safety: A Model for Doctrine and Culture Change”

In this issue of Doctrine Dialogue we describe how and where Fire Suppression Doctrine fits within our organization by illustrating a safety systems approach to risk management. This approach to risk management is not new. It has been used for decades in many other high-risk occupations and has proven to further the evolution of many diverse safety cultures.

The illustration below highlights the 4 key “pillars” required for sustainable risk management. Beneath the Policy pillar is where we define our principles-centered doctrine and recognize our philosophy, rules, guidelines and practices. The Policy pillar is an essential piece of the process that helps build the culture needed to meet our intent for reducing accidents and mishaps.



Together, we want to teach this process - not just state a goal: As logically stated by the Chief:

“Safety is not something we do in addition to the work; it’s how we do the work.”*

With system safety we can now display where our endorsed Fire Suppression Doctrine fits. Notably, much of our top level work has already been accomplished within the Policy pillar: such as rewriting manuals and drafting new direction.** Also notable is that where risk management becomes practice, an organization can begin functioning with higher degrees of “reliability.” The four pillars of systems safety all point to a midpoint labeled-> “HRO”. Many wildland fire personnel are familiar with the term: HRO – or “Highly Reliable Organization.”*** Much work has been done in this area and a plethora of information on HRO’s can be found at the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center’s web site at <http://www.wildfirelessons.net>.)

The tasks and cultures associated with each pillar complement and contribute to a workable HRO. When all the checks and balances, principles, training, communications and commitments that comprise a safety management system are in place; certain culture traits also arise. These cultures, termed as “just, learning, informed and flexible, and reporting” become the new norm.

As mentioned in the 2007 summer issue of *Fire Management Today*:

“High Reliability Organizations are built on integrity, nurtured by culture, and refined in the fire of performance.”

“As we strive in fire and aviation management to be an HRO, we carry the knowledge of how our past has shaped us, how our present situation impacts us, and how our future will challenge us.” – Tom Harbour, “Anchor Point”

Mentioned almost a year ago, these words have even more meaning today when we apply the SMS model to our understanding of the intent of doctrine. Doctrine guides actions through inter-related process, moving from “pillar to pillar”- policy to risk management, through training and learning, to program preview and continuous refinement. Once the processes, and the people associated with them, are all focused on the central objective of the HRO culture, we can finally say that doctrine will have been fully implemented. Flexibility, Innovation, and Adaptability will move the culture forward. And our goal: preventing accidents and mishaps, and attaining a true safety culture will be within reach.

If you would like to view other projects that are working to implement doctrine and to move the FS culture toward the goal of a Highly Reliable Organization, go to the following website at; www.fs.fed.us/fire/av_safety/Systems_Safety/av_risk_mgt/index.html.html On this site you can see aviation’s mission risk assessments, operational risk management reading files, and SMS guides that actually implement the principles we have discussed.

Well we hope in this short dialogue, the first of many to come, that some understanding is gained about doctrine, how it fits, what it fits, and where. Upcoming issues will examine each of the “Pillars” and associated cultures. One thing we do want to leave readers with is the message that “Fire Suppression Doctrine” is alive and well. Please feel free to look at past issues of “Doctrine Dialogue” at www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/dialogues.html / or consider contacting the FS FAM Risk Management Branch Staff listed below. We welcome your feedback and comments!

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NOTES

- * “Chief’s Safety Policy Statement” / 6700 Letter to all employees; (November 7, 2007)
- ** “[Doctrine Dialogue” Spring Issue 2008](#); shares status and timelines for Doctrine implementation. Discusses Policy rewrites in terms of the Forest Service Manual, (FSM 5100 – Fire Management and (FSM 5700 – Fire Aviation Management) / also includes status of Interim Direction.
- *** Insights on the “History of HRO”, by Karlene Roberts, visit: www.apsf.org/resource_center/newsletter/2003/spring/hrohhistory.htm