

THE WATCH LIST

Top Ten Tips for Commanding Officers



- 1. CLIMATE BRIEFS:** From All-Hands to small discussion groups, commit to having routine, ongoing conversations about command climate. Active listening increases your understanding of team concerns and empowers you to adapt as needed.
- 2. WALK THE DECK:** Daily engagement builds rapport, trust and confidence between leaders and Sailors. You are more likely to learn about potential harmful behaviors when you take part in direct conversations with your Sailors in real time. These personal interactions show that you respect your Sailors and care about how they are doing.
- 3. IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING:** If you see or hear inappropriate conduct in public, respond immediately. On the spot corrections communicate standards of professional and appropriate conduct for all Sailors and dispel any confusion about unacceptable behavior.
- 4. ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL:** A single set response to every command climate issue is unlikely to work. In a learning institution, mistakes can be opportunities to learn and grow, and not all comments made are intended to be malicious. As a positive leader with your finger on the pulse of command climate, you can improve morale and esprit de corps by taking all reports seriously and addressing them in a swift manner.
- 5. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL IT ESCALATES:** Early intervention is important. Watch List behaviors are indicators of eroding good order and discipline within your command. Stopping these behaviors early and consistently can prevent more serious destructive behaviors from occurring over time.
- 6. TAKE ALL SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS SERIOUSLY:** Trust your Sailors when they report sexual harassment, as they are trusting you to uphold the standards. Studies show most people have tried everything they can to resolve the situation before making a sexual harassment complaint.
- 7. LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE:** Complaints about Watch List behaviors may indicate deeper issues. Use additional assessment tools such as a command climate survey to better understand how your Sailors are experiencing the climate. Action what you know. Remain flexible and ready to pivot as climate information comes to your attention.
- 8. DEVELOP A REPORTING CULTURE:** Cultivate a command climate where Sailors have confidence to report without fear of reprisal. A firm, fair and consistent approach to reporting wrongdoing builds confidence in the systems that support Sailors. Trivializing Watch List behaviors could lead to a more permissive command climate.
- 9. WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL IN THE EXPERTS:** Most of the Watch List behaviors are violations of Navy instructions and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Routinely check in with a Judge Advocate General officer or other relevant subject matter experts if you are unsure about how to respond to a potential issue.
- 10. DO NOT DELEGATE IT. OWN IT:** Make sure everyone understands your goal is to help and protect those under your command. Hold yourself accountable. If health and welfare are at risk, then you absolutely want to be informed and involved.