

What Goes Unreported Becomes Risk



In December 1974, a Boeing 727 descended toward Washington Dulles in poor weather.

The crew had been cleared for the approach.

They believed they were safe.

They were not.

The aircraft struck the west slope of Mount Weather, killing all 92 people on board.

What investigators later uncovered was even more troubling.

Six weeks earlier, another crew had experienced a nearly identical scenario.

But that information never made it far enough to prevent the accident.

The Problem

For decades, aviation has not lacked *information*.

It has lacked **shared information**.

As one safety leader put it years before the accident:

The barrier is not knowledge—it is fear.

Fear of punishment. Fear of consequences. Fear of speaking up.

And when people don't report:

- Hazards stay hidden
 - Trends go unnoticed
 - Accidents repeat
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The Shift

That realization led to one of the most important changes in aviation safety:

The creation of **confidential, non-punitive reporting systems**.

Programs like:

- ASRS (Aviation Safety Reporting System)
- ASAP (Aviation Safety Action Program)

These programs changed the equation.

👉 *"You can speak up—and you will be protected."*

And when that happened, something powerful followed:

The data started to flow.

The Insight

But here's the part many organizations still miss:

Having a reporting system is not the same as having a **reporting culture**.

A system collects reports.

A culture **encourages them**.

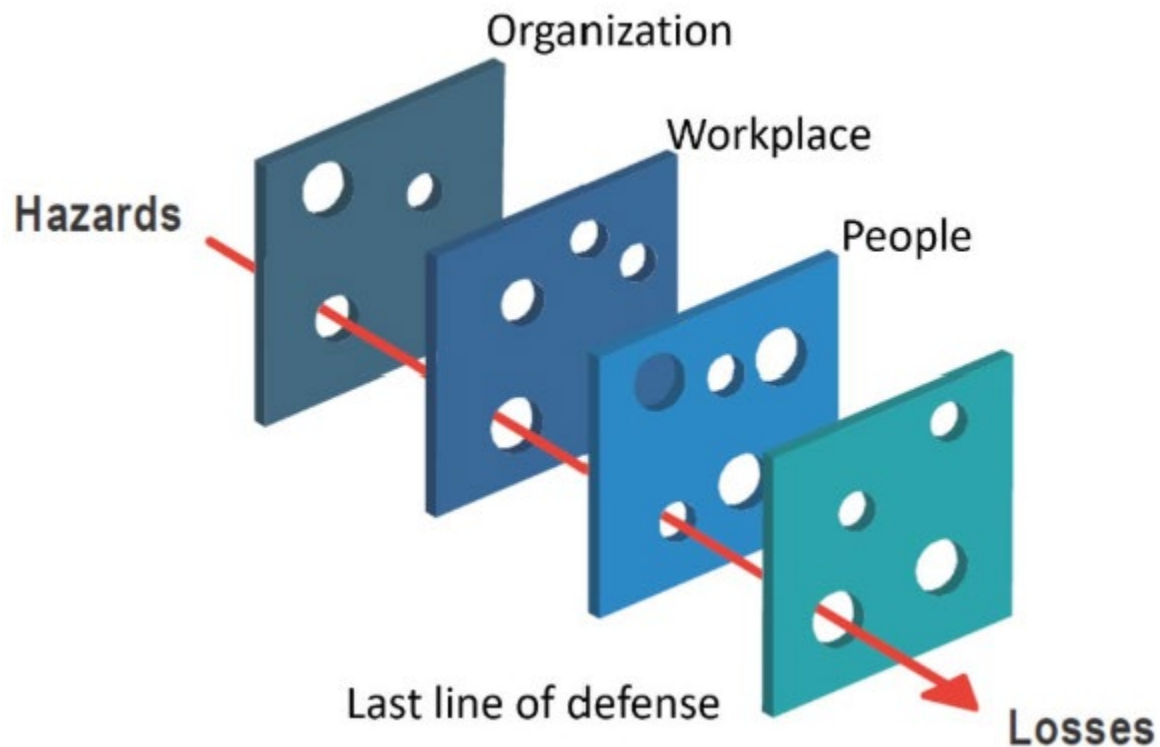
WYVERN's latest Guidance Document reinforces a simple principle:

👉 Reporting should not be reserved for when protection is needed

👉 It should be part of everyday operations

"Let there be no doubt—always fill it out."

This is often visualized through the Swiss Cheese Model of accident causation:



Each layer represents a defense. Each hole represents a weakness - often something that was never reported.

WYVERN Perspective

At WYVERN, our vision is simple:

Every aerospace organization has a healthy safety culture.

And reporting is at the heart of that culture. That's why we go beyond guidance.

We embed **Safety Management Systems (SMS)** into every WYVERN membership—because reporting, hazard identification, and continuous improvement should not be optional or reactive.

They should be **built into how an organization operates every day.**

High-performing organizations don't just have systems.

They:

- Make reporting easy

- Make reporting safe
- Make reporting expected

Because the goal is not compliance.

The goal is **visibility**.

Closing Thought

Every accident has a history. Every event leaves clues. The question is not whether the information exists.

The question is:

👉 *Are we creating an environment where people are willing to share it?*

WYVERN's *Aviation Safety Reporting Programs Guidance* outlines practical ways to strengthen reporting culture and integrate ASRS and ASAP into your SMS.

If your organization is focused on building a proactive safety culture, this is a foundational place to start. Download your free copy on our [Resource Center](#).

Subscribe to our newsletters now at the bottom of this page. For further resources and guidance on implementing Safety Management Systems, contact WYVERN, THE industry expert. Attend our [SMS Training Workshops](#) or ask about our SMS software. [Contact us for a FREE SMS demo!](#) Together, we can elevate aerospace safety and create a safer future.