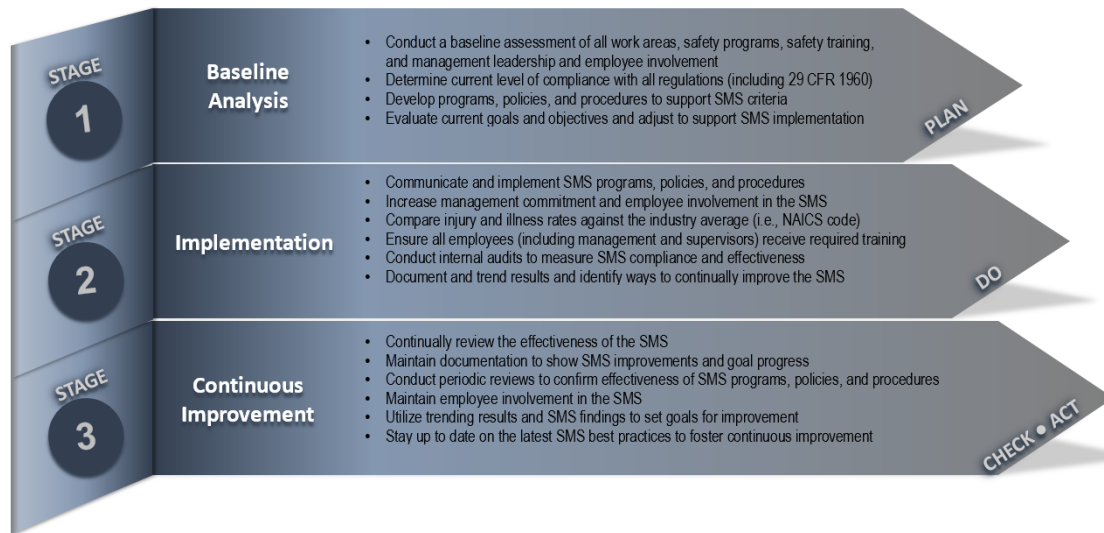


# Overview: The Stages of Safety Management Systems Implementation

The Department of Defense (DoD) Safety Management Center of Excellence (SMCX) has a process to assist workplaces in implementing safety management systems (SMS). The DoD SMCX found that a three (3) stage process of continuous maturity works best to implement SMS criteria, tackle obstacles, and employ activities and initiatives to drive continuous safety improvement. The DoD SMCX uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act Model for Continuous Improvement as the foundation for their process and assists workplaces throughout each phase. The one pager describes the three (3) stage process the DoD SMCX uses at workplaces.



## ★ STAGE 1 – BASELINE ASSESSMENT ★

SMS implementation begins with a baseline assessment, comparing existing safety and health (S&H) processes against SMS criteria. All SMSs assume a foundation of compliance. The assessment team looks at the workplace environment and practices in comparison to applicable S&H regulations (e.g., Occupational Safety and Health Administration, internal requirements, guidance issued by your chain of command, external technical authorities, and [29 CFR 1960](#)).

- Form an assessment team, including safety and industrial hygiene staff, at a minimum; consider adding others with relevant skills (e.g., managers, process owners, qualify specialists)
- Determine assessment tools to use (e.g., written checklists); consider reaching out to other worksites implementing SMS criteria to see if they will share their checklists for your use – list regulatory requirements and SMS criteria to evaluate, leaving space for the team to record assessment results
- Train the assessment team in the assessment process and assessment tools
- Complete the baseline assessment, recording any compliance and/or SMS opportunities

## ★ STAGE 2 – IMPLEMENTATION ★

Create an action plan to address all gaps identified from the baseline assessment. Manage the action plan like a project. Assign responsibilities, identify deliverables, set priorities, and establish target dates for each action item. When it makes sense, assign actions to non-safety professionals (e.g., managers, employees). Ensure those assigned with responsibilities routinely provide status/progress updates in a written tracking system. Additionally, provide periodic progress reports to top leadership so they can stay informed on the status of open action items. Implement SMS criteria and address open action items until all SMS criteria is integrated into your workplace's environment and practices.

- Involve non-safety professionals in developing action plans and taking action to increase their safety knowledge and help build the safety culture (e.g., include on inspection teams, have them correct hazards, write hazard analysis documents, identify workplace hazards continuously, include on internal review teams)
- Train all personnel involved in action plan development and implementation on assigned roles and functions
- Document change plans, implementation progress, and assessment findings, and share them with affected personnel
- Share key changes, implementation progress reports, and process effectiveness assessments with leadership for their continued awareness and support
- Trend S&H data to evaluate the effectiveness of SMS-related changes, including lagging indicators (e.g., accidents, injury and illness rates) and leading indicators (e.g., training completed, near-misses investigated, hazards identified and controlled) – use the findings to make decisions on what is working well, and what needs to be improved



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## ★ STAGE 3 – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ★

Continually improve the SMS and the safety culture. Conduct an honest and comprehensive internal review of the SMS, at least annually, and document opportunities for improvement. Consider conducting periodic external reviews to validate your internal review process and identify any overlooked areas. Higher headquarters, peer sites, or contractors may conduct your external reviews.



Trend the data and findings from internal and external reviews to determine the effectiveness and maturity of your SMS. Include affected employees in addressing recommendations for improvement.

**Effectively applying the three stages of SMS implementation can enable any worksite to build a robust and highly effective S&H program and a great safety culture**

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org/>.



DoD Safety Management Center of Excellence