

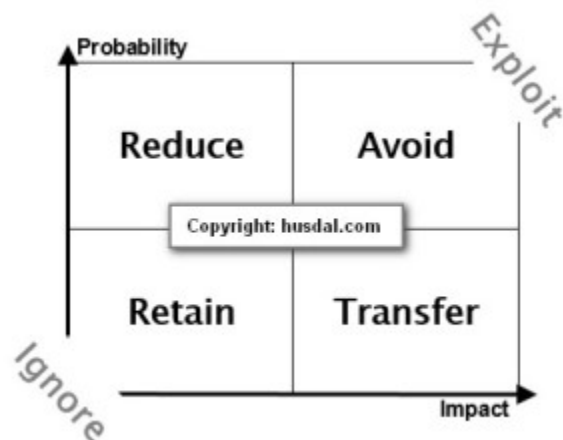
## Risk Management

Professionally run organizations like TRR pay close attention to Risk Management. Risk is something no one can totally avoid and sadly, many organizations tend to adopt the Sargent Schultz (Hogan's Heroes) approach: "I know nothing". There are a number of definitions for the term risk, this is one I like: A **probability** or threat of damage, injury, liability, loss, or any other negative **occurrence** that is **caused by external or internal vulnerabilities**, and that **may be avoided through preemptive action**. Let's look at the three key parts of this definition:

- Probability – No environment is 100% safe (and certainly not Paddle Sports).
- Vulnerabilities – Risk requires some sort of trigger (vulnerability) to lead to an outcome (damages, injuries, etc.)
- Preemptive Action – We can:
  - Accept – The consequences are within our accepted tolerance.
  - Transfer – Purchase Insurance, someone else deals with the risk.
  - Mitigate – Reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
  - Avoid – Suitable selection of venues

The Sergeant Shultz approach is Ignore the risk which is very common and essentially blindly accepting the risk.

There is also such a thing as Positive Risk. A great example of this was the first time TRR lead Lonnie Bedwell down the Grand Canyon. A successful outcome is then Exploited – the Outtasight Clinic and a much larger collection of blind paddlers on the Grand Canyon and other adventures.



### Risk Analysis/Assessment

Chapter Coordinators should perform periodic Risk Assessments. This doesn't need to be anything fancy and becomes much easier over time with practice. A good place to start is your annual meeting in January with your event leaders. Initiate a brainstorming session with a whiteboard and develop a list of realistic **Threats** like:

- Gear Issues
- First Aid
- Judgment
- Pre-Existing Injuries

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- Etc.

Every chapter will have their own unique challenges based on the types of events they organize and their unique participant profile.

Once we have a decent understanding of our potential risks, the next step is assigning **probability** weights. Some examples are:

- Hypothermia – Winter outdoor paddling, HIGH
- Soft Tissue Injuries – MODERATE
- Gear Entrapment - LOW

Finally, we need to evaluate the severity of these threats should they take place. Using the above examples we might have:

- Hypothermia – MODERATE
- Soft Tissue Injuries – LOW
- Gear Entrapment - CRITICAL

You can summarize your analysis in a Risk Matrix. This is a simple example of a matrix.

**Risk Matrix**

Likelihood		Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
Consequences	Fatality	High	High	High	Medium
	Major Injuries	High	High	Medium	Medium
	Minor Injuries	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Negligible Injuries	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

Bill Butler has a great document on this process: [PADL Chart](#).

## Risk Management

Now that we have a solid handle on our Risk Exposure, we should determine how we plan to deal with these risks. The general approaches are listed above:

- Accept – Low Severity & Low Probability
- Mitigation – Either Moderate Severity or Probability
- Transfer – High Severity & Low Probability
- Avoid – High Severity & Moderate/High Probability

Chapters need to develop a Continuous Monitoring approach – essentially SOPs for running their events. We pay very close attention to new participants making certain they are very comfortable performing a wet exit. Group Gear checks which we perform prior to setting shuttle is another example. Get in the habit of developing a Float Plan for your events. Continuous Monitoring helps satisfy a key legal concept: **Do Detect**.

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The above analysis will more than likely identify major areas for improvement. Some mitigations have costs associated with them either in time/effort or monetary. Develop a prioritized list to tackle these issues over time. This effort satisfies a second legal concept: **Do Correct**.

### TRR National

The TRR National staff provides extensive support in helping the chapters meet various issues. Their website provides extensive written protocols, incident form templates, training articles, subsidized ACA training/certification, and consulting support. Just like the chapters, TRR National reviews submitted incident reports and ORRS reporting. Enterprise improvements are periodically deployed like the recent TRR Chapter First Aid Kits and the recent Pool Safety Protocol document. Feel free to contact any of the TRR National staff members with suggestions on how we can best help your chapters.

### Conclusion

Risk Management may seem overwhelming and intimidating at first. Everyone performs informal risk management on a daily basis, we have to in order to survive. Airline Pilots adopt a strict checklist methodology since humans tend to forget things without such reminders. Trained First Aid Responders use a different form of a checklist called SOAP Notes, same goes for TRR Event Leaders via the TRR Incident Report Form. Annual reviews like checking your First Aid Kit for expired/missing items, event planning, are all parts of sound Risk Management practices. With time, these practices become easier and more comprehensive/effective.

A great article on Risk Management is posted on American Whitewater written by Will Leverette: [Risk Management in Six Steps](#).