

# Crew Cohesion Assessment Tool

**Purpose:** In terms of crew cohesion, each crew is different, and even the same crew with the same people will vary in the level of cohesion from time to time. The Crew Cohesion Assessment is designed to provide a tool to measure crew or team behaviors as they relate to cohesion.

Crew cohesion is no mystery. The factors that make crews and teams cohesive are well known, documented through the centuries in both literature and research. This tool describes behaviors that are grouped into seven general categories representing characteristics of cohesive groups. Although not all-inclusive, the list can provide a place to start in determining the strengths and weakness of your crew or team in relation to team cohesion.

The interpersonal dynamic of teams or crews changes constantly. What was true last year may not be true today. A leader's responsibility is to continually monitor and assess the health and well-being of the crew and its members. This tool can be used independently by a single crew leader, by a leadership team, or with the crewmembers.

**Instructions:** Following are the recommended steps for using the survey tool:

**Step 1:** Determine the time frame to which you will confine your assessment. Although you can use the tool to assess past or present behavior, for the most useful results you should limit your assessment time to a short window of recent time (i.e. the past 4 weeks). Do not mix the distant past and the present because it may blur the focus of the results.

**Step 2:** Rate the *behavior* of the crewmembers and leaders during the assessment period, using a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

Score	Description
1 = never observed	Behavior is not seen except in very rare cases or only with a single person – indicates potential serious weakness that should be addressed immediately.
2 = rarely observed	Behavior is seldom seen or exhibited by only a few crewmembers or leaders – indicates a weakness the improvement plan should address.
3 = sometimes observed	Behavior is seen unpredictably or by only some of the crewmembers – indicating average performance. Improvement plan dependent upon scope and criticality of issue.
4 = often observed	Behavior is evident with most crewmembers most of the time – indicates a definite strength to be preserved. Further improvement is likely limited to working with a few people or specific operations.
5 = always observed	Behavior is seen in all crewmembers and leaders nearly all the time - indicates exceptional strength. Improvement plan should include actions to maintain this strength for the future.

Try to be as honest and pragmatic as possible. Sometimes your initial reaction is the best response you can provide.

**Step 3:** If you are assessing the crew with others, compare your assessment, discussing areas where you have differing perceptions. Discuss which items are the most important to your crew and its mission. Note of items that rate unusually high or low for later discussion.

**Step 4:** Build a plan of action to improve upon the identified weaknesses, and plan ways to sustain the strengths. If crewmembers were not involved with the assessment process, consider sharing your perceptions with the crew and including them in the planning.

**Step 5:** File your assessment and set a date for your next assessment to determine your progress against your planned goals.



## Communication

Crew leaders communicate intent clearly and crewmembers understand the intent of orders that are given.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers are willing to bring up problems, successes, or issues with the leadership team.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers communicate well with the other crewmembers.	1 2 3 4 5

## Conflict

Crewmembers are willing to address conflicts with others when they occur.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers focus on what is right, not who is right, when resolving conflict or other problems.	1 2 3 4 5
Conflicts between individuals on the crew are short-lived and do not persist over extended periods of time.	1 2 3 4 5

## Trust

The crew environment allows and encourages all crewmembers to be heard.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers complete assignments without excessive supervision.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers implement decisions of the leadership team without delay.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers are willing to experiment on new ideas without risking embarrassment.	1 2 3 4 5

## Teamwork

Crewmembers show ownership in the crew's accomplishments or failures.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers show a strong consciousness of the history, tradition, and lore of the crew.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers anticipate the needs of others and act in anticipation of those needs, especially during high tempo operations.	1 2 3 4 5
The intensity of the work is determined more by the crewmembers than by direction from leaders.	1 2 3 4 5

## Effectiveness

Crew remains focused on the quality of the service they provide, even when others do not hold them directly accountable for that service.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew works well with other resources to accomplish the mission.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew actively discusses situation awareness when planning and conducting operations.	1 2 3 4 5
Crewmembers can pause an action to clarify their situation awareness or voice concerns.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew recognizes and successfully transitions between high-stress and low-stress conditions.	1 2 3 4 5

## Leadership

Crew has a complete set of standard operating procedures or crew handbook that is well understood and used.	1 2 3 4 5
Leaders demonstrate and adhere to a consistent set of values and standards.	1 2 3 4 5
Leaders conduct themselves in an ethical manner.	1 2 3 4 5
The leadership team speaks and acts with one voice and mind.	1 2 3 4 5

## Learning

Crew debriefs daily as part of the standard operating routine.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew conducts impromptu on-the-job training events to build crew skill sets.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew conducts training to discuss lessons from other fires or other operations.	1 2 3 4 5
Training is conducted by more than just one or two crew leaders.	1 2 3 4 5
Crew leaders understand their responsibility to mentor crewmembers.	1 2 3 4 5

