



The Mission Review Team meets daily at 4 p.m. during onsite mission reviews to summarize what was learned during the day. After all the interviews are completed and the data compiled, the MRT generates the mission review summary report. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

# No surprises – ‘open-book’ approach for mission assessment

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

**N**o surprises – that’s what most people want when taking a test or going through a mission review.

That “no surprise” approach is the goal of the Defense Contract Management Agency Office of Independent Assessment Mission Review Team, or MRT, when they conduct the onsite assessments and generate the final mission review summary reports.

## ONSITE

During mission reviews, morning meetings are part of the constant communication between the MRT and the leadership and key personnel of the directorate, center, or contract management office. The two-way dialogue ensures issues and concerns are identified up front and if any additional information needs to be reviewed.

The meetings are an important part of the assessment, according to DCMA Office of Independent Assessment Executive Director Fred Kuhm. “At the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. meetings, we go over the previous day’s findings and get it out in the open and explain it. “It gives everyone an opportunity, a second chance, to explain ‘Hey, this is why we did this’. It allows more of a dialogue—a discussion on it.”

After the 8 a.m. meetings, “we go into interviews for the whole day. At 4 p.m.,

we get the team together,” Gary Jungwirth, MRT technical team supervisor, said.

“Then at night, we look at the information we picked up during the day and compile the notes for the next morning’s 8 a.m. meeting.”

## MISSION REVIEW SUMMARY REPORTS

After all the interviews are completed and the data compiled, the team generates the mission review summary report, which addresses findings, opportunities for improvement, policy gaps and Bright Spots.

Findings are written for noncompliance with a regulation, policy or instruction requirement regarding the most critical contract administration service functions identified as the Director’s Special Focus Items.

OFls are written for those areas in which the intent of a requirement is basically met but the effectiveness or efficiency of the process could be improved.

Policy gaps are identified and corrected. This process provides agency policy writers the ability to evaluate trends specific to their policy and determine if findings are a result of gaps in policy.

Bright Spots are used to highlight effective or efficient methods of accomplishing a given task and are worthy of recommendation for sharing with other CMOs.

## OPEN BOOK TEST APPROACH

The principle of preparation is the same for an open-book test or a mission review — to be familiar with the questions and know where to look for the information related to the questions.

For a mission review, the questions are on the MRT website ([https://home.dcmamail.com/DCMAHQ/dcma\\_D/dcma\\_DM/index.cfm](https://home.dcmamail.com/DCMAHQ/dcma_D/dcma_DM/index.cfm)) where information and documents like the MRT assessment guides, review results, and related tools and templates, which explain the scope and methodology of the on-site reviews, are posted.

Twice a year, the Assessment Reporter, a summary of all the reviews conducted in the preceding six months, is generated and also posted to the MRT website.

“The AR doesn’t name the CMOs we visited, but it does summarize what we saw in each of the areas we reviewed,” Jungwirth explained.

“If someone is having an issue in a certain area, somebody else might have the same issue,” he said. “From place to place, we often see of the same deficiencies – things that could be improved. The idea is to pass this information to other people so they can make sure their organization is performing these things in accordance with agency policy.”

The information is useful in assisting CMOs to do their own evaluations. 