

COMMAND LEVEL BEST PRACTICES

1. An INSURV Material Inspection (MI) is a full spectrum, bandwidth-saturating event. Every division and department will be inspected simultaneously, except for organizations like Legal, Command Religious Ministries, Ship's Office, etc. It's our experience that your crew will require assistance from outside activities to successfully demonstrate all equipment. We recommend you coordinate with your ISIC to obtain this assistance. We focus on the functionality of the equipment, not the source of the Sailor. Ensure these personnel meet your standards for procedural compliance.
2. In your preparation efforts, prioritize war-fighting capabilities over other areas. These are the areas that affect the inspection's overall grade. A ship's material condition can't be considered satisfactory if the ship has one or more significant mission degradations. Some examples: several inoperative engines/generators. An inoperative shaft or MRG. Major sensors or weapon systems inoperative or severely degraded. Discrepancies that prevent conducting flight operations or amphibious warfare missions. Loss of mine warfare capabilities. This is not an all inclusive list; it will depend on the primary missions of your ship.
3. Set your standards for material condition and procedural compliance every day! The Board considers a check UNSAT if the equipment fails to operate within the required specifications when it's demonstrated. You may be able to fix it quickly and re-demonstrate it if time allows. But the grade is based on the "as found" condition, not the "repaired" condition. ("Repair" does not include normal adjustments allowed by the procedure.) Use this standard when you're assessing your crew's performance on a day-to-day basis. It's important to know if equipment required corrective action to operate within specifications. Challenge your crew to report failed attempts to operate equipment so the chain of command can take action to investigate the cause.
4. Scrutinize external assessors closely. As with your crew, it's important to know if they found the equipment operable, or if it required repair before operating correctly. Demand formal documentation of their results and any repairs conducted. Ensure senior officer/enlisted leadership supports their efforts, provides oversight, and takes a formal debrief.
5. Computer system stability is a frequent problem we encounter. Train your crew to treat a computer system crash or freeze as a casualty. Correct the problem, but document it for further investigation.
6. Validate key safety programs during live evolutions. Don't just audit the program notebook; look for real deck-plate compliance with tag-out, climber safety, gas free, electrical safety programs when actually performing evolutions. Ensure your officers & CPOs are sufficiently knowledgeable to recognize deviations from these requirements.
7. Documentation of problems does not equate to repair. Equipment is still scored as inoperative even if a CASREP or CSMP entry is active. Repair is the goal! When not feasible, ensure the problem is documented and temporary standing orders or departures from specification are in place as appropriate.
8. Verify the crew's knowledge of any TSO to ensure compliance. We treat violation of TSOs the same as non-compliance with other authorized procedures.
9. Cannibalization is a valid method of material management. Ensure you comply with all JFMM/TYCOM requirements to document cannibalization. We will scrutinize these documents to ensure compliance. We will not inspect systems with unapproved cannibalizations and will score them as inoperative.

10. Every check will be performed with an INSURV officer or technical assistant observing; get your crew ready for this scrutiny by practicing each event with officer/CPO oversight. If possible, get off-ship observers to provide additional scrutiny.
11. Casualty control and operational risk management take priority over ALL inspection events. No Sailor should be injured or equipment damaged during an MI. Ensure your crew does not hesitate to take appropriate actions for any casualty or unsafe condition that arises during the MI. After your crew has stabilized the situation, we'll work with you to determine the best way forward to get the inspection back on track.
12. It's important to conduct an integrated rehearsal of the entire MI SOE because many events and demonstrations impact on others. Many underway checks have both technical and operational requirements. There are hot area requirements for the gun shoot. The anchor drop test has water depth requirements. The full power run has a number of technical limits (sea state, water depth, rudder angle limits, etc.). The countermeasure wash-down system demonstration can interfere with communications checks. The area & self defense DTEs and communications checks require coordination for external services. Lay out your Day One track carefully to ensure you meet these operational requirements without running into time/distance/location dilemmas.
13. If casualties or operational perturbations disrupt the SOE, bring them to the attention of the Board. Sometimes target aircraft are grounded. Sometimes there's fog in the hot area. We do this every week, and can almost certainly provide some insights into the best way ahead. In general, it's inadvisable to significantly delay the SOE while waiting to resolve a troubled event. It's usually better to proceed on with subsequent events while you address whatever difficulties exist. Otherwise, the problem could affect other events that might have gone just fine.
14. Crew fatigue is a potential threat during a MI. Ensure personnel get adequate rest the weekend before the Board arrives. You'll be putting them through an early morning sea detail, a full day of demanding operations, and then another sea detail late at night (or early the next morning for Norfolk-based ships). Do not hazard the ship just to return to port; we'd rather remain at-sea overnight than risk a late night transit through restricted waters. Ultimately it's the CO's call; understand there is not pressure to return to port in an unsafe condition.
15. The in-port portion of the MI is very demanding. The crew must not lose momentum after mooring; in some regards, the most challenging part of the inspection is just beginning. After a tough day at sea, scores of additional inspectors arrive to conduct in-port checks. Ensure you're ready to support!
16. Electric plant dynamic testing will begin shortly after doubling up lines. This testing will disrupt critical systems throughout the ship. It's essential to properly secure and then restart these systems upon restoration of stable power.
17. "Say not the struggle naught availeth..." Don't lose heart if you think the inspection isn't going well. The MI is an enormous challenge, and some equipment will inevitably fail. The Clausewitzian "friction" generated by these difficulties is less likely to sap the crew's morale or dull their zeal to succeed if your standards for material condition are routinely excellent. About 85% of ships meet this challenge successfully, but it's only because they did the hard work to achieve and maintain a culture of technical readiness.