



What to Ask Your MSP About CMMC Compliance

Navigating the complexities of Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) compliance can feel daunting, especially if you're a contractor or subcontractor in the Defense Industrial Base (DIB). Choosing the right Managed Service Provider (MSP) is critical for achieving and maintaining compliance while safeguarding sensitive data. Here are the key questions to ask your MSP to ensure they can meet your compliance needs:

1 Are You a Registered Provider Organization (RPO) for CMMC?

An MSP who is a certified RPO has the training and expertise to provide CMMC advisory and implementation services. This certification ensures they understand the CMMC framework and are qualified to guide you through the compliance process.

2 What Experience Do You Have with the Defense Industrial Base (DIB)?

Experience in high-stakes industries like defense and aerospace demonstrates that the MSP understands the unique challenges and stringent requirements of CMMC compliance. Ask for examples of similar organizations they've supported and their outcomes.

3 What Experience Do You Have with Implementing the NIST Framework, the Backbone of the CMMC Framework?

The NIST framework is fundamental to CMMC compliance. Your MSP should have in-depth experience implementing NIST SP 800-171 and SP 800-172 controls, which are integral to meeting CMMC requirements.

4 How Do You Approach CMMC Compliance Preparation?

Look for an MSP that offers end-to-end support, including:

- **Gap Analysis:** Identification of gaps in your security controls against CMMC standards.
- **Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M):** Development of a detailed roadmap to close compliance gaps.
- **Technical Remediation:** Addressing vulnerabilities through system enhancements and policy updates.
- **Mock Assessments:** Conducting pre-audit reviews to prepare for third-party certifications.

5 Do You Offer Continuous Compliance Services?

Compliance isn't a one-time achievement. Ask your MSP how they will help you maintain compliance over time, such as:

- Ongoing monitoring of your IT environment.
- Adapting to regulatory updates.
- Conducting regular risk assessments.

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Do You Have a Customized IT Service That Meets My Specific CMMC Requirements?

CMMC requirements vary significantly based on your organization's scope, size, and complexity. Ensure the MSP offers tailored IT services that align with your specific compliance needs and operational goals.

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Can You Integrate CMMC Compliance into My IT and Cybersecurity Operations?

An MSP with integrated solutions can streamline compliance by aligning IT operations with cybersecurity and regulatory requirements. This approach minimizes vendor juggling and ensures seamless compliance.

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Do You Have Relationships with C3PAOs?

Since C3PAOs conduct the final certification assessments, your MSP should have strong relationships with these organizations. This ensures a smoother transition from preparation to certification.

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What Support Will You Provide for Certification?

CMMC certification requires thorough preparation. Your MSP should:

- Help scope your compliance environment.
- Provide documentation support, including System Security Plans (SSPs) and data flow diagrams.
- Train your internal teams to implement compliant practices.

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What Are the Costs Involved?

Costs vary depending on your compliance level and business complexity. After conducting a gap analysis, an MSP should offer a clear estimate and outline a cost-effective plan for achieving compliance.

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How Will You Handle Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)?

Protecting CUI is a cornerstone of CMMC compliance. Ask how the MSP will secure this data through encryption, access controls, and secure enclaves.

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What Makes Your Approach Unique?

Finally, assess what differentiates the MSP. They might stand out by aligning compliance with operational efficiency, offering customized solutions, and addressing all audit points required for CMMC certification.

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