

SAFETY, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN DEFENCE

A Policy Statement by the Secretary of State for Defence

Part 1 - Guiding Principles

1. As Secretary of State I am responsible for all safety¹, environmental protection (EP) and other sustainable development (SD) matters within Defence.
2. I require that:
 - Within the United Kingdom (UK) we comply with all legislation which extends to the UK (including legislation giving effect to the UK's international obligations).
 - Overseas we apply UK standards where reasonably practicable and, in addition, comply with relevant host nations' standards.
 - Where there are exemptions or derogations from either domestic or international law applicable to Defence, we introduce standards and management arrangements that produce outcomes that are, so far as reasonably practicable, at least as good as those required by legislation.
 - Where there is no relevant legislation, our internal standards aim to optimise the balance between risks and benefits. This does not mean avoiding risks but managing them responsibly, on the basis of impact and likelihood.
 - We seek to disapply legislation on the grounds of national security as far as possible only when such action is essential to maintain operational capability.
 - Since safety, health, environmental protection and other sustainable development issues are individual as well as line management responsibilities, we play our part by knowing what is expected of us and by following the rules and procedures that apply to what we do.
 - We take reasonable care of our own health and safety, that of others who may be affected by our acts or omissions at work, and of the environment.
 - We report anything likely to endanger individuals or the environment.
 - All managers and commanders promote and lead by example on safety, environmental and wider sustainable development matters as part of normal business, and create a culture where everyone understands and delivers their contribution to protecting people and the environment.
 - Targets are set and our safety, environmental protection and wider sustainable development performance is measured, monitored and reported and is consistent with and supports wider Government initiatives
3. This Policy Statement, which is to be observed throughout Defence, reflects the importance which I attach to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the Armed Forces, civilian employees, contractors and the public, and to protecting the environment.
4. The detailed organisation and arrangements that support this Policy Statement are set out in Part 2 of this statement and in JSP 815.



Secretary of State for Defence

20/09/10

¹ Safety includes occupational health and safety, fire safety and equipment and materiel safety.

SAFETY, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DEFENCE

A Policy Statement by the Secretary of State for Defence

Part 2 - Supporting Arrangements

SCOPE

1. This part of my Policy Statement sets out what I require the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to do and explains the governance arrangements for safety, environmental protection (EP) and other sustainable development (SD) issues. It builds on the overarching Guiding Principles in Part 1.
2. To achieve the targets set out in departmental plans, I require the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to:
 - a. Minimise work-related fatalities, injuries and ill-health.
 - b. Maintain effective emergency arrangements.
 - c. Protect the environment.
 - d. Deliver against the Government's other sustainable development commitments.
3. I expect the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces in their organisation and processes to comply with the guiding Principles in Part 1 and specifically to:
 - a. Ensure clear links between top level Defence strategy, the sub-strategies for safety, environmental protection and sustainable development, and the management activities required to comply with them.
 - b. Implement and maintain coherent safety and environmental management systems which conform to relevant good practice with clear measures of performance and with regular systematic review.
 - c. Ensure that responsibility and accountability for safety, environmental protection and other sustainable development issues are clearly defined through a robust system of delegations.
 - d. Ensure that in the acquisition of materiel, services and equipment of all kinds, safety and environmental management and sustainable development principles are considered at the requirement definition stage and carried forward through life to disposal. This includes all aspects of maintenance and operation.
 - e. Ensure that suitable expertise is available and used to identify the hazards and understand the risks arising from Defence activities.
 - f. Devise and implement workplace precautions and systems to control risks effectively within and across organisational boundaries and from the earliest stages of planning an undertaking.
 - g. Make provision for the open and honest reporting of all accidents, near misses and failures of safety or environmental controls, and their investigation to a suitable depth in order that causes are understood, lessons identified and promulgated, and appropriate remedial action taken.
 - h. Ensure that audit and similar mechanisms are aimed not just to ensure compliance with procedures but also to drive effectiveness and improvement.

- i. Work collaboratively with our regulators, other Government departments, statutory bodies, non-Government organisations, industry and contractors to achieve continuous improvement in safety, environmental protection and sustainable development.
- j. Embed sustainable development considerations into spending and investment decisions.

k. Carry out sustainability appraisals and environmental assessments, as appropriate, for new or revised policies, programmes (including acquisition programmes), office relocations, new projects and new training activities.

l. Ensure that, before being introduced, change to organisational arrangements, processes or equipment is properly assessed for its impact on safety, the environment and sustainable development, and is suitably managed.

GENERAL DUTIES

4. All TLB Holders and Trading Fund Agency Chief Executives are to ensure that adequately detailed statements setting out the organisational structures and management arrangements for discharging their duties in accordance with this Policy Statement, including identifying hazards and controlling potential risks, are in place. They are also to set up processes for monitoring the effectiveness of such arrangements. Commanding Officers and Heads of Establishment are to ensure that they put in place similar statements detailing their local organisation and arrangements. Taken together with this Policy Statement, these statements will meet the legal requirement for a health and safety policy to be in place in each management area. The relevant statements are to be brought to the attention of all members of the Armed Forces, civilian employees and others, including contractors, who might be affected by them.

GOVERNANCE

5. I require Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans to act as the ministerial focus for health and safety at work, equipment and materiel safety, and environmental protection issues, and to be the Department's Sustainable Development Minister. Minister (AF) will have responsibility for nuclear accident response.

6. I delegate to the Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) the duty of ensuring that effective management arrangements are in place for ensuring compliance with this policy. Under his direction, I expect the Defence Board (DB) to ensure that we achieve and maintain high standards by reviewing safety, environmental protection and wider sustainable development performance and demonstrating their commitment by words and action. I require PUS to delegate authority for implementing my policy to Top Level Budget Holders and Chief Executives of Trading Fund Agencies through their Letters of Delegation. I expect them to delegate further as necessary and on a personal basis to Commanders, Directors and Chief Executives of Defence Agencies. I further expect them to ensure that managers and Commanding Officers at every level receive appropriate training, and have at their disposal adequate resources to deliver high standards in safety, environmental protection and wider sustainable development performance.

7. I require the PUS to appoint the Second Permanent Under Secretary (2nd PUS) as Process Owner for Safety, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development to set overarching Strategies for safety, environmental protection and other areas of sustainable development, and to develop and maintain a consistent system of policies, standards, regulation and work practices. 2nd PUS will chair a Defence Environment and Safety Board (DESB) which will provide direction, set objectives, monitor and review performance, and provide assurance to the Defence Board on the effective operation of risk management and internal control systems. 2nd PUS will appoint specific individuals to chair Functional Safety Boards and other organisations as required, and as Key SD Policy owners. These individuals will provide end-to-end assurance on safety and relevant environmental and wider sustainable development issues. Where appropriate, they will assist in the development of policy, the setting of standards, rules and guidance, and ensuring that appropriate scrutiny and regulation is applied to all Defence activities.

8. They will also be members of the DESB and will report annually to it. 2nd PUS will ensure that there is proper separation of responsibility and accountability between those who provide the policy, standards and regulation, and those who are required to deliver Defence capability.

9. 2nd PUS will be responsible for advising Ministers and senior officials on safety, environmental protection and other sustainable development matters in conjunction with specialist staffs, as appropriate; and reporting directly to me any evidence of significant failure to discharge my safety, environmental protection and wider sustainable development responsibilities in any part of the MOD.

10. This policy has been equality and diversity impact assessed in accordance with Departmental policy. This resulted in a Part 1 screening only completed (no direct discrimination or adverse impact identified/policy is a reflection of statutory requirements and has been cleared by a Legal Adviser). This policy is due for review in 2011.