



HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN DEFENCE

Policy Statement by the Secretary of State for Defence

1. I make this Policy Statement for all Health, Safety and Environmental Protection (HS&EP) matters in Defence because, as Secretary of State, I am answerable to Parliament for such matters, and to comply with a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. In doing so, I emphasise the importance I attach to the health and safety of all those who deliver Defence activities, and those who may be affected by Defence activities, and to the protection of the environment.
2. This Policy Statement is a commitment of my personal leadership in this area and I rely on all those also in leadership roles to ensure my policy is applied throughout Defence.

GENERAL DUTIES

3. I require that:
 - We minimise work-related fatalities, injuries, ill-health, and adverse effects on the environment, and we reduce health and safety risks so that they are as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and tolerable.
 - The default position is that in that within the United Kingdom (UK) we comply with all applicable HS&EP legislation.
 - In circumstances where the nature of Defence and Security activities inevitably conflict with health and safety requirements and thus Defence has Derogations, Exemptions, or Dis-applications from HS&EP legislation, or where other circumstances indicate the need for Defence regulation of activities, we maintain Departmental arrangements that produce outcomes that are, so far as reasonably practicable, at least as good as those required by UK legislation.
 - Overseas, we will comply with the laws of Host States, where they apply to us, and in circumstances where such requirements fall short of UK requirements, we will apply UK standards so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so.
 - Those of us in positions of management or command lead by example on HS&EP by giving it the priority it deserves and maintaining a culture that promotes safety, where everyone is empowered to contribute to HS&EP objectives and to raise concerns to help improve our arrangements.
 - We take care of the health and safety of ourselves and others who may be affected by our acts or omissions at work, we protect the environment, and we co-operate with the arrangements that are in place to enable us to discharge the duties placed on us.

GOVERNANCE

4. As the Department's most senior official for HS&EP matters, the Permanent Secretary is to ensure that effective management arrangements are in place to achieve necessary compliance with this Policy Statement, which may be amplified as appropriate, drawing on advice as necessary from across the Department. This shall include:
 - chairing the Defence Safety and Environment Committee (DSEC).
 - safeguarding and supporting the Defence Safety Authority (DSA)'s independent role as defined in its Charter.
 - provision of functional leadership of HS&EP from the Head Office including through dissemination of relevant policy and setting of relevant standards.
 - in future, once the functional leadership role is defined, setting of HS&EP professional standards.

- inclusion of HS&EP in the Department's organisational performance management arrangements.
- obtaining Defence Audit and Risk Assurance Committee assurance of the Department's approach to safety and EP governance.

5. I appoint a Director General Defence Safety Authority (DG DSA) to provide assurance that my policy is being promulgated and implemented in the conduct of Defence activities. This is achieved through three distinct functions: the regulation of compliance with my policy where Defence has authority; the investigation of safety-related accidents, incidents and near misses; and, through providing 3rd party assurance of compliance with Defence Regulations and associated policy. In this respect I require DG DSA to produce an Annual Assurance Report to support the Permanent Secretary's role as the Department's most senior official for HS&EP in being assured of safety and for onward consideration by the Defence Board.

6. I require the Director HS&EP, amongst their other responsibilities, to support the Permanent Secretary in delivering HS&EP functional leadership from the Head Office and to provide assurance of the Department's Safety and Environment Management Systems (SEMS), drawing on the support of the DSA as necessary.

7. I require the senior leader of each Defence organisation to set down and implement HS&EP management arrangements through a SEMS for activities in their area of responsibility and ensure that Commanding Officers and managers to whom they may delegate HS&EP authority are competent and have adequate resources at their disposal.

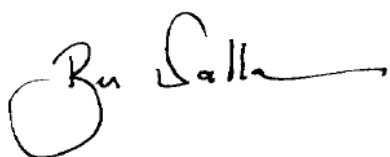
8. Where a Defence activity leads to a Risk to Life that requires management through enhanced safety management arrangements, I require that each Defence organisation's senior leader be appointed as the Senior Duty Holder (SDH), in addition to their legal HS&EP responsibilities. If a SDH considers that a risk from a Defence activity cannot be mitigated so that it is ALARP and tolerable, they are to inform the Permanent Secretary and refer it to me. Where a risk has a pan-Defence or cross-cutting impact this should also be raised to the DSEC.

9. Any senior leader of a Defence organisation proposing organisational change where there is potential for significant impact on HS&EP standards and performance is to ensure that, before being implemented, the impacts of the proposed change are properly assessed through an Organisational Safety Assessment to demonstrate that any detriment to these standards and performance are mitigated to be ALARP and tolerable.

10. The detailed organisation and arrangements that may amplify this Policy Statement are to be set out in policy requirements, Defence Regulations, and guidance.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

11. I require Director HSEP to ensure the currency of this policy. They may propose amendments at any time, consulting with DG DSA, the DSEC, and the Permanent Secretary. This policy remains in effect through any changes of the Secretary of State, Permanent Secretary, DG DSA, or Director HSEP. This policy will also be reviewed at least every fifth year regardless of any interim revisions.



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE
02 April 2020