



Ministry  
of Defence

FOI2018-00236

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29 January 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your email of 8 January 2018 in which you requested the following information:

*'Does the RN allow male and female sailors at any grade to share sleeping accommodation on any class of vessel / warship?*

*Is there an official policy / SOP in relation to this? If so can I have a copy?*

*If it is the case that shared sleeping is not permitted, what are the reasons? And what are the consequences of crew failing to follow this policy and or instruction?'*

Your enquiry is being treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held. In response to your request, the Royal Navy has a no mixed sleeping accommodation policy. Accommodation and Messing is contained within Queens Regulations Royal Navy Chapter 81, which can be located at the following link:

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/-/media/royal-navy-responsive/documents/reference-library/brd2/ch81.pdf>

and is amplified in Ships General Orders as detailed below:

**0343. Right of Entry to Messdecks**

a. Entry to messdecks (of which a sailor is NOT a member) allocated to the opposite sex is **NOT** allowed **EXCEPT**:

- (1) Where the safety of personnel or the Ship may be threatened.
- (2) When required to do so, on duty, to carry out rounds or shakes.

(3) When required, on duty, to gain access to offices, equipment, stores or to carry out maintenance in those or adjacent compartments.

(4) For messdecks, access will be allowed between the hours of 0800 and 2230, when an invitation has been extended by a mess member and approved by the President/LHOM (Leading Hand of the Mess) of the mess, providing that messdecks are arranged such that adequate privacy is afforded to those sleeping/changing etc.

**b. Visits to Messdecks.** In amplification of the rule at a sub para (4) above:

(1) All personnel of the opposite sex must be clear of the messdeck they are visiting by 2230.

(2) Visits are to be confined to the recreational spaces of messdecks.

(3) Members of the opposite sex are not to enter the sleeping quarters except as required in the course of their duties or to carry out shakes.

(4) Visits should normally be confined to groups of a minimum of two members of the opposite sex.

(5) If in doubt, Presidents/LHOMs are to seek approval for visits from the Executive Officer or in their absence the OOD (Officer of the Day).

Under section 16 (Advice and Assistance) it may be useful for you to know that the considerations that have been given to maintaining the no mixed sleeping accommodation are for areas concerning the following groups of people: young single people, single people with strong religious beliefs, parents of young people (particularly young females) wishing to join the Royal Navy and the partners of those in mixed accommodation. It should be noted that in the case of ships in a mess deck there is very little space and therefore no privacy.

With regard to the consequences of crew failing to follow this policy, dependent upon the particular circumstances of the case, infringement of the policy may result in disciplinary action.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section