

DEFENCE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Policy Statement by the Secretary of State for Defence

1. I make this Policy Statement for all Environmental Protection in Defence because, as Secretary of State, I am ministerially responsible for matters within the Department. In doing so, I emphasise the importance I place on Environmental Protection through Defence activities, alongside the need to enhance resilience and advance our warfighting readiness.
2. Achieving this requires prioritising environmental considerations, optimising resource and energy use, and building resilience to strengthen operational effectiveness, aligned with Defence outcomes. These efforts are essential to ensuring that Defence remains agile and prepared to meet both current and future challenges.
3. This Policy Statement is a commitment of my personal leadership and responsibility in this area and I rely on all those in leadership roles to ensure my policy is applied throughout Defence. I expect all members of the Armed Forces and MOD employees to work collaboratively and adhere to the principles outlined in this policy. This will enable the MOD to achieve both strategic and tactical advantage while fulfilling its environmental responsibilities.

GENERAL DUTIES

4. I require that:
 - The default position is that within the United Kingdom (UK) we comply with all applicable environmental 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 as far as is reasonably practicable to do so.
 - Where law provides a Derogation, Exemption, or Dis-application from environmental legislation, or where other circumstances require Defence- specific regulation of activities, we will establish Departmental arrangements aimed at achieving equivalent outcomes as required. This ensures the safeguarding of Defence operations without interruption. These Departmental arrangements will be delivered through Defence policy and where necessary Defence regulation.
 - We develop Defence regulation where a gap in UK environmental legislation needs to be filled when considering Defence activity or where other circumstances indicate the need for Defence regulation of activities.
 - Defence is committed to acting in accordance with the Government's Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS), published under the Environment Act 2021. We minimise adverse effects on the environment through the proportionate application of EPPS, and the implementation of an environmental management system to manage environmental risk and, as necessary, improve the environmental performance of our activities.
 - Those of us in leadership positions should foster a culture that empowers everyone to take ownership to ensure that environmental protection supports Departmental outcomes and enables individuals to raise concerns to drive continual improvement of Defence's environmental management.

GOVERNANCE

5. In line with the MOD's commitment to environmental protection, I delegate responsibility for the operational aspects of environmental management to the Minister for Defence, Readiness and Industry (MinDRI). This includes overseeing environmental compliance, risk management, and upholding environmental standards, while providing leadership and direction on environmental matters to enhance operational resilience, effectiveness and warfighting readiness.

6. I appoint the Permanent Secretary (PUS) to oversee Defence environmental matters on my behalf. PUS 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 includes:

- Provision of governance for environment from the Department of State including through dissemination of relevant policy and setting of relevant standards across Defence.
- Setting and championing environmental professional standards.
- Inclusion of environment in the Department's organisational performance management arrangements.
- Safeguarding and supporting the Defence Safety Authority (DSA)'s independent role as defined in its Charter.

7. Through the DSA's Charter, I appoint its Director General (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, assurance of compliance with Defence Health, Safety and Environmental Protection regulations and policy, and investigation of related incidents. In this respect, I require DG DSA to produce an Annual Assurance Report to assess the Department's Health, Safety and Environment Protection performance, which will be considered, and acted upon, by Defence senior leaders.

8. I require the Director Energy and Environment, amongst their other responsibilities, to support and provide competent advice to the PUS in delivering environmental management leadership from the Department of State and, as necessary, ensure the embedding of environment considerations into the Department's policies and processes. This is to include the development of the Department's Environment Management System (EMS), supporting policy, governance, risk management and professional development.

9. I require the senior leaders of each Defence organisation to set down and implement environmental management arrangements through a Defence organisation EMS for the activities under their area of responsibility. The Defence organisation EMS must reflect the policy requirements of the Defence EMS Framework (JSP 816).

10. I require that each Defence organisation's most senior leader be appointed as the accountable person for environmental matters. Where the accountable person considers that their Defence organisation's activities cannot be managed through extant environmental management processes and pose significant risk to Defence, they are required to inform the PUS, CDS/CDN/NAD as appropriate and escalate it to me. If such activities have a pan-Defence or cross-cutting implications, this must also be raised to the senior level committee appointed for the environment.

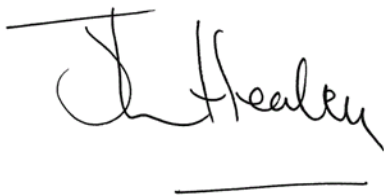
11. I require senior leaders to ensure that commanders and managers to whom they may delegate environmental authority are competent and have adequate resources at their disposal.

12. Any senior leader of a Defence organisation proposing organisational change where there is potential for significant impact on environmental management arrangements, standards and performance is to ensure that, prior to being implemented, the effects of the proposed change are appropriately assessed to demonstrate that any detriment to these standards and performance are effectively mitigated.

13. The detailed organisation and arrangements that amplify this Policy Statement are to be set out in Defence policy (Joint Service Publications), Defence regulations and in Defence organisation level policy.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

14. I require PUS to ensure the currency of this policy. They may propose amendments at any time, and I expect in so doing, they consult with Dir EE, DG DSA and other relevant Defence stakeholders. This policy remains in effect through any changes of the PUS, DG DSA or Director EE. This policy will also be reviewed at least every third year regardless of any interim revisions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Healey', with a horizontal line underneath.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

15th October 2025