

4 Workplace Inspections

This chapter is split into two parts:

Part 1: Directive. This part provides direction that you **must** follow to help you comply with (keep to) health and safety law, Government policy and Defence policy.

Part 2: Guidance. This part provides the guidance and good practice that **should** be followed and will help you to keep to this policy.

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[Annex A](#) - Chapter 4 - Assurance Checklist

Amendment record

This chapter has been reviewed by Directorate of Defence Safety (DDS) together with relevant subject matter experts and key safety stakeholders. Any suggestions for amendments to this chapter **should** in the first instance be directed to the Defence organisation's [Safety Centre/Team Group Mailbox](#) and with their approval, sent to DDS at: People-DDS-GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk.

Version No	Date of publication	Text Affected	Authority
1.2	Oct 20	Interim update post-handover of Policy from DSA to D HS&EP.	D HS&EP
1.3	Jan 22	Updated to remove reference to maturity and bring the definition of a competent person in line with the HSE ¹ definition of competence.	D HS&EP
1.4	19 Dec 25	Release of two-part chapter structure.	DDS
1.5	06 Feb 26	Minor grammar amendment and addition of link to The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.	DDS

Terms and definitions

The following table sets out definitions of some of the key terms used in this chapter. General safety terms and definitions are provided in the [Master Glossary of Safety Terms and Definitions](#), which can also be accessed on [GOV.UK](#).

Accountable person	The person whose terms of reference state that they are responsible for making sure there are suitable and sufficient systems in place to control health and safety risks in their unit, establishment, site or platform. This term is used in place of CO, HoE, OC, Station Commander and so on, or as decreed by the Defence organisations.
Commander	<p>This is generally a military person responsible for planning activities, supervising activities, and making sure that personnel under their area of responsibility are safe.</p> <p>This term refers to a role rather than the rank of Commander, and it can be a permanent or temporary role (for example, lasting for the duration of a training exercise). In parts of Defence this person could be referred to as a 'responsible person.'</p>
Control Measures	Actions that are taken to reduce or eliminate the risk of exposure to a hazard. They can also reduce the severity of exposure to a hazard. The hierarchy of control measures are 'elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment (PPE).'
Workplace inspection	A systematic process for examining the work environment to identify reasonably foreseeable hazards, assess and verify compliance with health and safety standards and legislation. Their primary purpose is to make sure a safe environment for personnel, contractors, and visitors, while highlighting opportunities to improve safety practices, equipment, and procedures.
Manager	A person responsible for managing or supervising staff, planning activities, and making sure that personnel under their area of responsibility are safe. This could be a permanent or temporary role, and in parts of Defence this person could be referred to as a 'line manager,' a 'responsible person' or a 'delivery manager.'
Competent person	<p>A person who has the training, skills, experience, and knowledge necessary to perform a task safely and is able to apply them. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence.</p> <p>(See www.hse.gov.uk/competence/what-is-competence.htm for information on competence).</p>

Must and should

Where this chapter says '**must**', this means that the action is a compulsory requirement.

Where this chapter says '**should**', this means that the action is not a compulsory requirement but is considered good practice.

Scope

The policy contained within this chapter:

- a. applies to all those **employed by Defence** (military and civilian) including reservists and those under the age of 18 (for example recruits and apprentices).
- b. applies to all those working on behalf of, or under the supervision of Defence (for example, contractors or visitors).
- c. applies to all Defence activities carried out in any location (UK or overseas).
- d. is not written for young persons in the cadet forces¹, Defence-run schools, nurseries and so on; those organisations **must** maintain their own safety policies and governance and **must** provide statutory compliant infrastructure and appropriate safe systems of work. They may use material from this chapter as a reference point, but where appropriate their respective policies **should** be adapted to meet the needs of young persons and to follow any applicable Department for Education guidelines or legislation.

Assurance

The application of the policy contained within this chapter **must** be assured (that is, its use **must** be guaranteed). As part of their overall assurance activity, the commander, manager, or accountable person **must** make sure that this policy is followed and put into practice effectively. Assurance **must** be carried out in accordance with JSP 815 (Defence Safety Management System), [Element 12](#) - Assurance.

A chapter assurance checklist can be found at [Annex A](#). Please note its use is not mandatory, but it can provide helpful evidence to assist in the assurance and conformance against the policy direction within this chapter.

Alternative acceptable means of compliance

This policy is mandatory across Defence, and the only acceptable means of compliance (AMC) is attained by following the directive and guidance set out in this chapter. However, there may be circumstances where a small number of military units may be permanently unable to comply with (keep to) parts of the policy. In such circumstances an alternative AMC is set out in the [JSP 375 Directive and Guidance](#).

Equality Analysis

The policy in this Chapter has been subject to an equality analysis in accordance with the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and Departmental Policy.

¹ Guidance for cadet forces is set out in JSP 814 (Policy and Regulations for Ministry of Defence Sponsored Cadet Forces).

Part 1: Directive

Introduction and key health and safety legislation

1. Employers have a general duty under the [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act \(HSWA\) 1974, Section 2](#) “to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of [their] employees” and, under [Section 3](#), anyone else who may be affected.
2. There is also a duty on employers under [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations \(MHSWR\) 1999](#) to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees whilst they are at work and to persons not in their employment who may be affected by their work activities. As such, Defence requires commanders, managers and accountable persons to make sure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out, the policy for Defence safety risk assessments is set out in [Chapter 8](#) (Safety risk assessment and safe systems of work) of JSP 375, Volume 1.
3. The [Secretary of State \(SofS\) for Defence Policy Statement on health and safety](#), sets out SofS’s commitment for Defence to comply with all applicable health and safety legislation when in the United Kingdom (UK). When 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 is reasonably practicable to do so.’
4. The HSWA 74 uses the term ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’ however, Defence more commonly uses the term As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) in safety risk management. This Defence policy **must** be followed to manage:
 - a. the safety risks to Defence personnel and those affected by Defence activities; and
 - b. the measures to be taken to eliminate those safety risks or reduce them to ALARP, in order to minimise harm and comply with current UK H&S legislation.
5. The monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures is a requirement of the MHWSR 1999 for which routine workplace health and safety inspections are to be conducted to check that such measures are in place and effective. This chapter provides the direction and guidance for carrying out workplace health and safety inspections in Defence, from this point forward the ‘workplace health and safety inspection’ will simply be referred to as the ‘workplace inspection.’
6. Generally, workplace inspections are straightforward visual observations of the workplace and workplace activities at a particular point in time. They cover specific selected work areas within an organisation and are not to be confused with health and safety audits of a Safety Management System (SMS).
7. All workplace inspections **must** be recorded as evidence of legal compliance with the requirement to monitor and review preventative and protective measures and may form part of an audit trail demonstrating that appropriate arrangements are in place for active monitoring of the SMS.

8. Regular workplace inspections are essential to make sure preventative, and protective measures are in place and are effective. Workplace inspections aim to prevent work-related accidents and ill health by identifying hazards and checking control measures.
9. Workplace inspections can also be undertaken when considering Reasonable Adjustments and or Workplace Passports. For further information see [Reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities or health conditions - GOV.UK](#)
10. Workplace inspections need to take account of premises, equipment, plant, housekeeping, procedures, activities and substances and therefore may need to be undertaken in consultation with other stakeholders (for example, accredited Trade Union safety representatives, employee networks or other employee safety representatives, site estates personnel and / or contractors, and so on). For further information on the areas that need to be considered when inspecting the workplace, see [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#).
11. There may be different frequencies for workplace equipment and some inspections are determined by law for example lifting equipment that is covered by the [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) 1998](#), lifting equipment is covered in more detail in [JSP 975 \(MOD Lifting Policy\)](#).
12. Other work equipment that will require inspections are for example power tools that are covered by the [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#), this type of equipment is covered in more detail in [Chapter 22 \(Work Equipment\)](#) of JSP 375 Volume 1.
13. There have been subsequent amendments made to LOLER 1998 and PUWER 1998 which are detailed in [The Health and Safety \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2002](#).
14. Electrical equipment and systems that are subject to the [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#) are covered in more detail in [Chapter 23 \(Electrical Safety\)](#) of JSP 375 Volume 1.
15. Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels **should** be inspected in accordance with the [Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels \(Health and Safety at Work\) Regulations, Regulation 16](#), for which guidance is available in the [Merchant Shipping Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen, Chapter 3](#).
16. Work equipment which has specific legal inspection requirements (for example, pressure vessels, lifts, cranes, chains, ropes, lifting tackle, scaffolds, local exhaust ventilation, groundworks and so on) and hazardous workplaces (for example, explosive areas, fuel installations and so on) are detailed in the relevant chapters of this JSP or subject specific JSPs or Defence Regulations.

Policy statements

17. Defence has established the following policy statements, which **must** be followed.

a. **Policy Statement 1** Accountable persons **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections of activities and areas on their unit, establishment, site or platform are carried out, records are retained and a detailed report is produced and any issues are appropriately actioned.

b. **Policy Statement 2** Commanders and managers **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections are carried out for the activities and the workplace under their area(s) of responsibility, they may delegate this to a competent person.

c. **Policy Statement 3** Commanders and managers **must** make sure that all personnel under their area of responsibility are actively encouraged to participate and support workplace inspections where required. All personnel **must** comply with requests for access to workplace areas or information when requested by those undertaking workplace inspections.

d. **Policy Statement 4** Workplace inspections **must** be carried out at a frequency determined by the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed but commanders and managers **must** carry out workplace inspections at least every six months.

e. **Policy Statement 5** Where they have been requested to do so and reasonable notice has been provided, commanders, managers and accountable persons **must** make sure that accredited Trades Union safety representatives / representatives of employee safety and where applicable Defence employee networks are given the right of access to inspect the workplace.

Policy Statement 1

Accountable persons **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections of activities and areas on their unit, establishment, site or platform are carried out, records are retained, and any issues are appropriately actioned.

18. The accountable person **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections have been undertaken for the activities and areas on their unit, establishment, site or platform and any issues appropriately actioned. The workplace inspections **must** include common or shared areas (not obviously identifiable as anyone's sole area of responsibility), the inspection process **must** determine whether the workplace is safe and accessible for all personnel.

19. A systematic, holistic and planned approach for undertaking workplace inspections, **must** be adopted which includes methods of escalation where hazards, unsafe conditions, behaviors, or situations have been identified.

20. Workplace inspections **must** be appropriately recorded, the MOD Form 5020 is the recommended workplace inspection checklist and report template, but alternatives specified by a Defence organisation's Safety and Environment Management System (SEMS) may also be used.

21. The workplace inspection reports **must** be retained along with any other safety inspection records as set out in [Chapter 39](#) (Retention of Records) of JSP 375, Volume 1. The workplace inspection reports **must** be made available to relevant personnel upon request.

Policy Statement 2

Commanders and managers **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections are carried out for the activities and the workplace under their area(s) of responsibility and a detailed report is produced, they may delegate this to a competent person.

22. Commanders and managers **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections are carried out for the activities and the workplace under their area(s) of responsibility, they may delegate this to a competent person.

23. Workplace inspections can be done as a standalone activity or as part of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, [Chapter 8](#) (Safety risk assessment and safe systems of work) of JSP 375, Volume 1 provides direction and guidance on the general principles of safety risk assessment.

24. Where practicable, any Trade Union (TU) safety representatives, employee networks or other employee safety representatives who cover areas where MOD civilian personnel may frequent the area / building, **must** be informed of the planned workplace inspections and be invited to participate. (see further information on TU rights to inspection in Policy Statement 6).

25. All deficiencies identified **must** be recorded in a workplace inspection report and **must** be acted upon in a timely manner. Where practical, commanders and managers are encouraged to co-ordinate all interested parties (for example Defence Fire and Rescue, Trades Union representatives and so on) to conduct joint inspections of their area to minimise "over regulation" and help to resolve any grey areas where responsibility is either shared or not clearly defined.

26. Commanders and managers **must** make sure that a workplace inspection report is produced which:

- a. includes detail of the area of responsibility;
- b. includes the date;
- c. includes the name of the person conducting the inspection;
- d. includes the findings / corrective action taken / required (where appropriate required actions added to the unit / establishment / vessel health and safety action plan);
- e. is copied to the relevant managers for action; and
- f. is copied for information to any local TU safety representatives / representatives of employee safety who cover the area / personnel involved.

27. The [MOD Form 5020](#) may be used as a checklist for the workplace inspection / report. It can be modified (for example, expanded to cover issues / hazards appropriate to the area concerned).

28. When conducting workplace inspections and hazards are identified, these will need to be discussed with the relevant commander, manager or accountable person who is responsible for that workplace, the outcome of which may result in a requirement for a workplace risk assessment to be conducted or reviewed where one already exists. Commanders and managers **must** make sure that any deficiencies identified by the workplace inspection are addressed promptly by implementing appropriate control measures.

29. Where applicable, actions failing to meet the target dates or failing to adequately manage the level of risks to ALARP, **must** be elevated in line with their Defence organisation's risk elevation process.

30. Where commanders or managers are unsure of the requirements of any regulations relating to health and safety in their workplace, they **should** contact their local Health and Safety Adviser, local Fire Adviser or the Defence organisation Safety Centre / Chief Environment and Safety Officer (SC / CESO) team (or equivalent) for advice.

Policy Statement 3

Commanders and managers **must** make sure that all personnel under their area of responsibility are actively encouraged to participate and support workplace inspections where required. All personnel **must** comply with requests for access to workplace areas or information when requested by those undertaking workplace inspections.

31. Encouraging Defence personnel, and those working on behalf of Defence, to actively participate in workplace inspections enhances knowledge sharing, supports worker involvement initiatives and processes which are all part of promoting a positive safety culture and aligns with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. Therefore, commanders and managers **must** make sure that all personnel (this includes personnel with disabilities, long-term and or chronic medical conditions) under their area of responsibility are actively encouraged to participate and support the workplace inspection where required.

32. Effective workplace inspections provide personnel with an opportunity to raise concerns that may not normally have been raised or considered. As part of the inspection there may be a requirement for the commander, manager or competent person to obtain information from certain documents, for example, existing risk assessments, asbestos risk registers or equipment maintenance records and so on. Where this is the case, personnel **must** assist them by providing access to such information if they have the delegated responsibility to do so.

33. Compliance with specific legal inspection requirements for work equipment and hazardous workplaces is crucial for maintaining safety standards. Therefore, all personnel **must** comply with requests for access to workplace areas or information when requested by those undertaking workplace inspections.

Policy Statement 4

Workplace inspections **must** be carried out at a frequency determined by the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed but commanders and managers **must** carry out workplace inspections at least every six months.

34. The frequency of inspection will be determined by the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed, however commanders and managers **must** carry out workplace inspections at least every six months.

35. The frequency of workplace inspections will depend on the nature of the work. Inspections may be less often, for example, if the work environment is low risk like in a predominantly administrative office, and where this is the case, this **must** be explained.

36. If there are certain areas of a workplace or specific activities that are high risk or changing rapidly, more frequent inspection may be justified, for example on a construction project or a military physical training environment.

Policy Statement 5

Where they have been requested to do so and reasonable notice has been provided, commanders, managers and accountable persons **must** make sure that accredited Trades Union safety representatives / representatives of employee safety and where applicable Defence employee networks are given the right of access to inspect the workplace.

37. Commanders, managers and accountable persons, **must** involve safety representatives in the inspection process where applicable.

38. The relevant Trades Union (TU) safety representative(s) / representative(s) of employee safety, and where applicable representatives from Defence employee networks, who represent individual or groups of Defence personnel, may (at their discretion) exercise their legal right under [The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977](#) (as amended) Regulations 5 and 6 to inspect the workplace for example; where there has been a notifiable accident or a dangerous occurrence, or there has been a substantial change in the conditions of work.

39. Where it is unclear who the local representative is, or none are available, the matter **should** be referred to the relevant TU representatives at Defence organisation level.

40. Accountable persons, commanders and managers **must** provide facilities and assistance to the TU safety representatives / representatives of employee safety and where applicable representatives from Defence Employee Networks, as they reasonably require (including facilities for independent investigation by them and private discussion with the employees).

41. TU safety representatives / representatives of employee safety and where applicable representatives from Defence Employee Networks, are also entitled to inspect and take copies of any document relevant to the workplace or the safety of the personnel that they represent subject to the consent of the individual to which it applies, data protection laws, the security classification of the document and where disclosure of information would be against the interests of national security.

Part 2: Guidance

This part provides the guidance and good practice that **should** be followed to help you comply with this policy.

Principles of workplace inspections

Policy Statement 1

Accountable persons **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections of activities and areas on their unit, establishment, site or platform are carried out, records are retained, and any issues are appropriately actioned.

1. Workplace health and safety inspections are a crucial part of maintaining health and safety standards in the workplace and the accountable person **must** make sure that they are undertaken regularly for all activities and areas on their unit, establishment or vessel. Workplace health and safety inspections **should** be undertaken based upon the following principles:

a. Purpose of Inspections: Workplace inspections are conducted to identify hazards, assess risks, and ensure compliance with health and safety law, Government policy and Defence policy. They **should** help in preventing accidents, injuries, and work-related disease.

b. Frequency: Workplace inspections **should** be conducted regularly, with the frequency depending on the nature of the workplace, the level of risk involved, and any specific legal requirements. High-risk areas may require more frequent inspections. However, commanders and managers **must** carry out workplace inspections at least every 6 months.

c. Scope: Workplace inspections **should** cover all aspects of the workplace, including physical conditions, equipment, work practices, and procedures. It is essential to consider if the workplace is accessible for all personnel, both the immediate work environment and any potential risks that may arise.

d. Documentation: It is important to document the findings of inspections, including identified hazards, corrective actions taken or planned, and follow-up measures. This documentation helps in tracking progress and demonstrating compliance.

e. Involvement: Workplace inspections **should** involve a range of stakeholders, including management, health and safety representatives, and the relevant personnel (this includes personnel with disabilities, long-term and / or chronic medical conditions). Involving personnel in the inspection process can help in identifying hazards from their perspective.

f. Training: Those responsible for conducting workplace inspections **must** be competent to do so and **should** receive the appropriate training (for example, NEBOSH General Certificate, IOSH Managing Safely course, mandatory health and safety awareness course on Civil Service Learning (CSL) and so on) to provide them with a basic awareness of health and safety to allow them to effectively identify hazards and unsafe conditions in the workplace. Training helps in conducting thorough and meaningful workplace inspections.

g. Risk Assessment: When conducting workplace inspections and hazards are identified, these will need to be discussed with the relevant commander, manager or accountable person who is responsible for that workplace, the outcome of which may result in a requirement for a workplace risk assessment to be conducted or reviewed where one already exists.

h. Follow-up: It is essential to follow up on identified hazards and ensure that corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner. Regular follow-up inspections can help in monitoring progress and verifying compliance.

i. Communication: Effective communication (for example, safety Noticeboard, appropriate briefings and so on) of inspection findings, corrective actions, and safety improvements is crucial. It helps in raising awareness, promoting a safety culture, and ensuring that everyone in the workplace is informed about health and safety issues.

j. Continuous Improvement: Workplace inspections **should** be seen as a continuous improvement process. Regular review of inspection findings, feedback from personnel, and changes in work processes can help in enhancing health and safety standards over time.

2. The workplace inspection **should** identify remedial actions necessary, by determining the extent to which procedures and controls are being complied with, as well as the condition of plant, equipment, and premises and so on.

3. When conducting a workplace inspection, give consideration to the full spectrum of controls in the hierarchy of controls as set out in [Chapter 8](#) (Safety risk assessment and safe systems of work) of JSP 375 Volume 1, where particular attention **should** be given firstly to hazard elimination or substitution followed by the existence and maintenance of suitable engineering controls (rather than reliance on the use of PPE, which **should** always be the final control measure to be considered); the arrangements to deal with emergencies; the availability of adequate current information; and if necessary, warnings regarding the nature of the equipment / substance hazards concerned (for example where and how work activities are being carried out and the potentially exposed population).

4. The person undertaking a workplace inspection **should** already be familiar with the workplace activity, premises, equipment, personnel and procedures pertaining to their area of responsibility and **should** draw on this knowledge when planning the inspection taking into consideration:

a. Verification that where risk assessments are required, that they have been carried out and that appropriate control measures are in place and being maintained;

b. known issues (individual and collectively) and other factors (who does what, where, when and how) to identify significant hazards;

c. the various categories of people who may be affected by, or impact on, the workplace activity (Defence personnel, contractors, trainees, visitors, Service dependents or members of the public, and so on);

d. suitability, use, control and storage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);

e. the workplace hazards and the existence and effectiveness of related control measures; training and competence of Defence personnel;

- f. reviewing previous inspection reports, safety occurrence reports and other records;
 - g. the timings of the inspection to take place during a time considered to be representative of normal working conditions; and
 - h. that any workplace inspection checklist to be used **should** include general workplace health and safety requirements, and any other significant matters.
5. The following list provides some practical guidance to help complete workplace inspections in the most effective manner:
- a. throughout the inspection, refer to the interaction between people, processes, premises, equipment and substances;
 - b. use an inspection checklist as an aide, but do not let it limit the scope of the inspection;
 - c. review where possible, competencies and training requirements or records for personnel;
 - d. check risk assessments, equipment documentation and maintenance records;
 - e. talk to as many personnel as possible including those personnel from protected groups, listen to their observations, or problems and suggestions;
 - f. expect people to be on their best behavior; beware of false impressions;
 - g. do not get distracted by trivial risks or issues;
 - h. look for potential shortcuts in work procedures or deviations from what has been set out for example, in Policy, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), risk assessments and so on; and
 - i. take account of both normal and potential abnormal work conditions and activities; and where possible, put remedial measures in place immediately.

Types of workplace inspection

Policy Statement 2

Commanders and managers **must** make sure that regular workplace inspections are carried out for the activities and the workplace under their area(s) of responsibility and a detailed report is produced, they may delegate this to a competent person.

6. Workplace health and safety inspections can take different forms, and it is for the commander, manager or the competent person with the delegated responsibility for carrying out the workplace inspection to agree the best methods, they are generally as follows but may be called something different across the Defence enterprise:

- a. **Safety tours** - general inspections of the workplace.
- b. **Safety sampling** - systematic sampling of particular dangerous activities, processes or areas.
- c. **Safety surveys** - general inspections of particular dangerous activities, processes or areas.

d. Occurrence inspections - carried out after a safety occurrence resulting in a fatality, injury, or a near miss that could have resulted in a fatality or injury, or a case of ill health that has been reported to the health and safety enforcing authority.

e. Hazard spotting - a process for identifying obvious hazards such as trailing cables in pedestrian routes, damaged / broken infrastructure and so on, that can be quickly escalated for action. Can be conducted by those not necessarily SMEs in that area / activity.

7. The competent person with the delegated responsibility for carrying out the workplace inspection, should plan the inspection and consider the following non-exhaustive list of planning elements:

- a. Personnel involvement.
- b. Health and safety representative.
- c. Preparation.
- d. Consultation.
- e. Involve the TU or relevant employee representative.
- f. Programme / schedule the inspections.
- g. Agree the number of representatives;
- h. Inspect together;
- i. Consult specialists;
- j. Break down tasks;
- k. Involve a variety of people;
- l. Think about minor incidents;
- m. Plan meetings in advance;
- n. Communicate;
- o. Keep the date; and
- p. Address strategic issues.

8. Advanced warning and appointments for workplace inspections should be avoided where possible to make sure that whilst conducting the inspection, the competent person can view the workplace in its truest sense.

9. The following non-exhaustive list provides some practical guidance of specific areas to consider during a workplace inspection.

- a. Equipment:** Ensuring equipment is safe to operate, adjusted and maintained.
- b. Premises:** Checking the condition of the workplace, including lighting, ventilation and cleanliness.
- c. Working Methods:** Assessing whether safe systems of work are being followed.
- d. Procedures:** Verifying the effectiveness of safety procedures, such as risk assessments and emergency plans.

- e. **Signage and Warnings:** Ensuring clear and visible signage is in place.
- f. **Hygiene:** Checking the availability and condition of hygiene facilities, such as toilets and washing facilities are accessible and appropriate for all genders.

10. Commanders and managers must make sure that any deficiencies identified in the workplace inspection are recorded ([MOD Form 5020](#) may be used) and acted upon in a timely manner. After an inspection the commander or manager **should**:

- a. Explain the reasons for any follow-up action to those involved in the activity and the TU or relevant employee representatives.
- b. Re-inspect to make sure that the issues raised were adequately addressed and record the views of those involved in the activity and the TU or relevant employee representatives.
- c. Communicate the follow-up action taken across the workplace and other relevant parts of the organisation or across Defence (if it is a pan-Defence issue) and the relevant safety forums.

11. There may be times when action may not be appropriate within a reasonable period of time, or when the action is not acceptable to the safety representatives. In these circumstances communication is essential and the reasons for the actions that have or haven't been taken **must** be documented in the detailed inspection report.

Policy Statement 3

Commanders and managers **must** make sure that all personnel under their area of responsibility are actively encouraged to participate and support workplace inspections where required. All personnel **must** comply with requests for access to workplace areas or information when requested by those undertaking workplace inspections.

12. Commanders, managers and the competent persons who have been nominated to carry out a workplace inspection must involve as wide a range of stakeholders as practicable, including health and safety representatives and the personnel (this includes personnel with disabilities, long-term and or chronic medical conditions) who carry out the activities as they may identify hazards that the inspector may not be aware of, for example a range of body types and physical capabilities, including gender differences.

13. Workplace inspections offer Defence personnel, commanders and managers an opportunity to share their knowledge and experience helping the inspection process and **should** be encouraged in line with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) drive to [Improve employee involvement – good practice tips](#) for example, ask personnel if they would like to be consulted directly, through representatives, or a combination of the two, and ask them how often they would like to be consulted, these actions along with the other tips from the HSE provides evidence of increased worker involvement.

14. Where requested to be involved in workplace inspections, personnel **should** make every effort to actively participate in those workplace inspections to ensure their views, concerns and suggestions are taken into consideration.

Policy Statement 4

Workplace inspections **must** be carried out at a frequency determined by the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed but commanders and managers **must** carry out workplace inspections at least every six months.

15. Conducting workplace inspections is essential for ensuring safety, by identifying hazards and control measures and **must** be carried out at a frequency that is appropriate and proportionate to the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed. Basic guidance on how to perform one effectively is:

Preparation

- a. Understand the Purpose:** Inspections aim to identify hazards, ensure compliance, and improve workplace safety.
- b. Review Relevant Documents:** Familiarise yourself with workplace policies, risk assessments, and previous inspection reports.
- c. Create a Checklist:** Tailor it to the specific workplace, covering areas such as equipment, environment, processes, and personnel practices.
- d. Assemble a Team** (where appropriate): Include individuals with knowledge of the workplace and its operations, such as safety representatives or supervisors.

Conducting the Inspection

- e. Observe the Environment:** Look for physical hazards (e.g., spills, obstructions, poor lighting) and environmental risks (e.g., noise, temperature).
- f. Inspect Equipment:** Check for proper maintenance, functionality, and safety features.
- g. Assess Work Practices:** Observe personnel to make sure they follow safe procedures and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) correctly.
- h. Engage with Staff:** Speak to personnel to understand their concerns and gather insights about potential hazards.
- i. Document Findings:** Record hazards, unsafe practices, and areas of non-compliance. Take photos if necessary.

Post-Inspection Actions

- j. Prioritise Hazards:** Rank issues based on their severity and likelihood of causing harm.
- k. Develop an Action Plan:** Assign responsibilities, set deadlines, and outline corrective measures.
- l. Report Findings:** Share the inspection report with relevant stakeholders, including management and safety committees.
- m. Follow Up:** Ensure corrective actions are implemented and monitor their effectiveness.

Good Practices

- n. Conduct inspections regularly and after significant changes (e.g., new equipment or processes).
- o. Use a systematic approach to make sure no area is overlooked.
- p. Encourage a culture of safety by involving personnel and promoting open communication.

Consultation

Policy Statement 5

Where they have been requested to do so and reasonable notice has been provided, commanders, managers and accountable persons **must** make sure that accredited Trades Union safety representatives / representatives of employee safety and where applicable Defence employee networks are given the right of access to inspect the workplace.

16. Defence organisations have a legal responsibility as set out in Part 1 to consult with the TU safety representative / representative of employee safety and where applicable Defence employee networks, but in addition to those legal requirements and their rights, it is Defence good practice that they are given the opportunity to inspect the workplace after any accident / incident (not just those that are notifiable); and to undertake workplace inspections, providing however they have given the accountable person, commander or manager reasonable notice in writing of their intentions if:

- a. they have not completed an inspection within the previous three months;
- b. there has been a substantial change in the conditions of work;
- c. the HSE publishes new information on hazards, the representatives are entitled to carry out inspections before three months have elapsed; or
- d. the intention is to carry out more frequent inspections (with the agreement of the relevant accountable person, commander or manager).

Retention of records

17. Records **must** be maintained of any workplace inspections undertaken (copied to the appropriate TU safety representatives, employee networks or other employee safety representatives) including any inspection notes and checklists raised, as well as any formal post-Inspection Reports and Action Plans produced; these **must** be retained for a period of at least three years in accordance with [Chapter 39](#) (Retention of records) of JSP 375, Volume 1.

18. It is recommended that copies of any work services request; equipment or material demands, and training support requests are kept as evidence of action taken. These records **should** include, as appropriate, the dates of submission, review, any hastening action, and the completion of tasks.

Related documents

19. The following documents **should** be consulted in conjunction with this chapter:

- a. [JSP 375 Volume 1:](#)
 - (1) Chapter 2 - Military and civilian workplace safety
 - (2) Chapter 8 - Safety risk assessment and safe systems of work
 - (3) Chapter 9 - Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
 - (4) Chapter 11 - Management of hazardous substances
 - (5) Chapter 16 - Safety occurrence reporting and investigation
 - (6) Chapter 22 - Work equipment
 - (7) Chapter 23 - Electrical safety
 - (8) Chapter 39 - Retention of records
- b. Other Defence publications and portals:
 - (1) [MOD Form 5020](#) - Workplace inspection checklist / report
 - (2) [JSP 418](#) - Management of Environmental Protection in Defence
 - (3) [JSP 815](#) - Defence Safety Management System (Framework)
 - (4) [JSP 850](#) - Infrastructure and Estate Policy, Standards and Guidance
 - (5) [JSP 975](#) - MOD Lifting Policy
 - (6) [Civilian HR Workplace Adjustments portal](#)
- c. Legislation:
 - (1) [Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974;](#)
 - (2) [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;](#)
 - (3) [HSE ACoP L24 – Workplace health, safety and welfare;](#)
 - (4) [The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 \(as amended\);](#)
 - (5) [The Health and Safety \(Consultation with Employees\) Regulations 1996 \(as amended\);](#)
 - (6) [The Merchant Shipping Act 1995;](#)
 - (7) [Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels \(Health and Safety at Work\) Regulations 1997;](#)
 - (8) [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005.](#)
 - (9) [The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) 1998](#)
 - (10) [The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations \(PUWER\) 1998](#)