



## DOSR/RN/2026-01 – Updated MOD Policy for TERP Ranges

Date: 11 February 2026

### References

- A. DSA 03.OME Part 3 Volume 1 Part 2 (Defence Code of Practice for Ranges).
- B. DSA 03.OME Part 3 Volume 2 Chapter 17 (Defence Code of Practice for Ranges).

### Purpose

1. The intent of this DRN is to provide an initial update regarding regulations, requirements, and guidance associated with References A & B.

### Background

2. The MOD and NAD<sup>1</sup> own and operates several specialist ranges designed to support research, acquisition and through-life testing, evaluation and proofing of weapon systems, ordnance, munitions and explosives. These facilities, collectively referred to as Test, Evaluation, Research and Proof (TERP) ranges, are managed by MOD / NAD agencies or organisations and are operated by either MOD / NAD personnel or Contractors.

3. The following agencies / organisations have TERP ranges under their control:

- a. Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) - Contractor operated ranges.
- b. Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) - Fully MOD operated ranges.
- c. Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO) - Contractor operated ranges.
- d. Defence Academy (DA) - Contractor operated (Cranfield) ranges.

4. The designated Range Approving Officer (RAO) will appoint one or more competent staff members to act as the Range Administering Unit (RAU) responsible for ensuring the safety and compliance of the range.

### Contractor Operated TERP Ranges

5. For contractor-operated TERP Ranges, the RAU, Head of Site (HoS), or appropriately appointed accountable manager will appoint a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person (SQEP) to approve and maintain Safe Systems of Work (SSoW) for all range and trial activities. The competency of the SQEP must be reviewed annually by the organisation's Accountable Manager. Approval for the SSoW on contractor operated TERP ranges is given according to the level of remaining risk and in accordance with the contractor's delegations matrix. This SSoW is to be made available to the contracting authority/RAU on request. The RAU shall assure itself that the contractor operating the range is competent and that mechanisms for safe operation are established and maintained.

6. The competence of all contractor staff, with a direct involvement in the planning, conduct and support to trials activities, is to be commensurate with the requirements of the specialist range

<sup>1</sup> National Armaments Directorate



and activity undertaken. A demonstrable background of training and qualification as specified in the Single Skills Framework (Defence Ranges Framework Competencies – V1 2020), with the addition of appropriate training records, specific to the range in use and activity undertaken shall be maintained by the contractor and available to the RAU on request.

7. It is the responsibility of the tasking authority to ensure that all relevant safety, environmental data and where applicable competency training is made available to the range operators in order that full risk assessments for the TERP activities can be undertaken. The validity of all data provided must be certified and approved for release by an appropriately delegated competent authority.

### Approval and Compliance Monitoring

8. For contractor-operated ranges, the requirements for trials approval or compliance monitoring will be specified in the relevant licence, contract, or partnering agreement. The following criteria can guide the determination of MOD monitoring levels:

- a. Activities requiring byelaws established by the Secretary of State for Defence.
- b. Activation of an Air Danger Area (ADA) for range activities.
- c. Activities involving the placement of substances in UK waters that are not immediately removed after testing.
- d. Involvement or potential impact on UK Services or government-employed personnel.
- e. Involvement or potential impact on significant MOD or government assets.
- f. Involvement or potential impact on personnel from foreign governments.
- g. Involvement or potential impact on significant foreign government assets.
- h. Assurance of health, safety, and environmental matters where there is potential for significant impact on designated sites, protected species, scheduled archaeology and/or local community.

9. The MOD RAU has the authority to access all contractor-operated range areas to monitor and observe activities, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation / policy. The RAU may review range logs and records to confirm adherence to requirements. If safety or compliance concerns arise, the RAU has the authority to halt activities immediately.

10. Contractors operating TERP Ranges must ensure all activities are within the scope of the MOD TERP Range Licence (MOD Form 905T). The following documentation must be available for all activities:

- a. A safe system of work.
- b. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- c. Applicable statutory and mandatory environmental assessments/appraisals and statutory consents.
- d. A permit, such as MOD Form 1930T or an equivalent safety Trial Activity Assurance Form.



e. A record of competencies and certification of those personnel associated with the trial / activity. Assurance of this shall be provided to the RAU by the contractors Accountable Manager upon request and on a quarterly basis as a minimum.

### Trial Organisation

11. Trials may only be conducted at facilities licensed through the MOD 905T process, with an approved trial safety assessment in place.

### TERP Ranges used for Military Training

12. Military training on TERP Ranges must be controlled and, where necessary, supervised by competent personnel appointed by the Service unit involved. All activities must be monitored by a competent MOD representative, supported by a Safe Activity Assurance Form (SAAF) and Duty Holding (DH) mechanism.

### Use of Civilian Ranges Facilities

13. Before contracting a civilian TERP Range for trials, the relevant Front Line Command (FLC) / Defence Organisations (DO) or agency must ensure the range owner / operator has the necessary competency, expertise, and facilities. This assurance must be gained through a formal audit or inspection by competent staff from the contracting organisation.

14. The audit / inspection must include a review of the Range Safety Management System, ensuring compliance with legislation, procedures, and Range Orders.

15. If the range meets MOD requirements, it may be authorised for TERP activities. Findings from the inspection must be recorded for future reference.

16. The Range Safety Management System must be audited and reviewed annually to ensure continued safety. Findings must be documented for future reference.

### Remote Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) / Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)

17. **Civilian.** Where a civilian RPAS / UAS is flown on a MOD Range with or without the involvement of any Service or MOD personnel the operation is to be in accordance with the appropriate Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulation or MAA Regulatory Publications (MRP) (if applicable).

18. **Contractorisation.** At present there are two types of contractorisation:

- a. When the MOD owns the aircraft and equipment but has a recognised contractor to operate the equipment to provide a specific service.
- b. When the contractor provides both the equipment and the service. This is how the Combined Aerial Targets Service (CATS) operates.

19. In both cases the aircraft will appear on the UK military aircraft register and be subject to military regulation under MRP for RPAS / UAS undergoing development, test and evaluation for in-service RPAS used in training.

20. **Categorisation.** All RPAS / UAS operating and intending to operate in the Defence Air Environment (DAE) are required to be registered on the UK Military Aircraft Register (MAR) and



are required to be categorized based on physical characteristics and operating environment. Regardless of size, all RPAS / UAS owned and operated by a UK defence organisation must be categorized by the MAA before they can be operated. To ensure proportionate Regulation, the MAA operates a Risk-based approach to RPAS / UAS categorisation that depends on the physical characteristics and operational intent.

21. **Armed.** RPAS / UAS are considered to be armed if they carry a kinetic or Direct Energy Weapon and designed to be launched and recovered to be used again<sup>2</sup>. Armed systems that are not designed to be recovered post launch, may be considered One Way Effect (OWE) systems and need not comply with MAA Regulations. If the RPA / UAS is capable of flight with the munition removed then, when the munition is fitted, it is considered an armed RPAS / UAS and subject to the MRP.

22. **Regulations.** RPAS / UAS Regulation is contained within the MAA 1600 series of Regulatory Articles (RA). This is the overarching document that covers Military registered RPAS / UAS operations and is the start point for organisations planning to conduct RPAS / UAS operations. It is recognised that there may be some ambiguity when determining whether an armed system meets the criteria of RPAS or one way effect system. Examples may include cases where the munition can be removed (rather than built-in) but will never be reused or in the case of a loitering munition that is designed to take an indirect route to the target. Early engagement with MAA and DOSR is essential to ensure the appropriate Regulatory framework is applied.

23. **Duty Holding.** Armed RPAS / UAS present an increased Risk to Life (RtL) that necessitates additional controls to mitigate the Risk to ALARP and Tolerable. As all armed RPAS / UAS will present a credible and foreseeable RtL, they must be operated under a full ADH chain, thus they will be categorised as S2 or Certified, regardless of size or range of operation.

24. Further information can be found in DSA.03 OME Volume 3 Chapter 6 and MAA, Remotely Piloted Air System Manual – Regulatory Process, Categorization, and Compliance.

### Small Work Boats and Pilot Boats

25. **Commercial use.** Where small work boats and dedicated pilot boats are operating at sea or in categorised waters in commercial use, the operation is to be in accordance with the Workboat Code Edition 3 The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats – A Code of Practice<sup>3</sup>.

26. **Remotely Operated Unmanned Vessels (ROUVs).** Vessels of < 24m Load Line Length intending to operate as a ROUV must comply with both the main body and Annex 2 of the Workboat Code Edition 3 The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats - A Code of Practice. Vessel owners/operators wishing to operate a ROUV which cannot meet the requirements of Annex 2 and the main body of the code may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Authority.

<sup>2</sup> Other effectors including chemical, acoustic and target designation are considered armed RPAS/UAS.

<sup>3</sup> Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Workboat Code Edition 3 The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats – A Code of Practice.



## Environmental Hazards Assessment

27. All MOD licenced TERP Ranges are to have a robust and compliant environmental management system in accordance with JSP 418<sup>4</sup>. Contractor operated ranges may have permissions to utilise an approved company policy which details an environmental management structure within which environmental management, sustainable development, legislative compliance, SQEP competence and continual improvement can be managed, this shall be demonstrably as good or better than that detailed in JSP 418.

28. The policy driver for undertaking Sustainability Appraisals (SA) and statutory Environmental assessments such as Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) on MOD plans, programmes and projects (including partnering agreements) re-confirms the MOD commitment to adhering to relevant environmental legislation and MOD Policy as set out within JSP 850 which specifies the requirement for sustainability or environmental appraisals. This guidance and the mandate are applicable across MOD, including Contractors, Partners, Trading Funds and Agencies. All activities conducted on MOD ranges and enabling estate shall be supported by SME produced applicable environmental assessments and appraisals. New, Novel and / or Contentious activities/programmes (including acquisition programmes), including estate support functions on MOD licenced ranges shall be supported by appropriate environmental assessments.

## Audit and Inspections

29. TERP Ranges are to receive the range safety, estate and works technical inspections specified in MOD policy, supplemented by additional audits / inspections as required by the RAU to assure appropriate levels of safety, control and assurance are maintained.

30. **Estate Inspection.** The RAU will ensure that during the annual inspection, signage and boundary demarcation are correctly located and maintained in accordance with Byelaws and DIO mapping. This inspection shall be recorded in red ink on the MOD Form 906B under the auspices of the annual inspection. The RAU shall inform LMS if they suspect the boundary is incorrectly marked. LMS shall check the boundary demarcation is correctly located where a concern has been identified and liaising with the relevant subject matter experts, ensure mapping is updated accordingly.

31. **Works Technical Inspection.** Works Technical Inspections shall be conducted on a rolling programme in accordance with current MOD specifications. These will be conducted on an interval no greater than 24 months. This inspection shall be recorded in red ink on the MOD Form 906B. Additionally, a Professional Appraisal is to be conducted periodically in accordance with DIO Technical Standard TS 2023 - 03<sup>5</sup>.

32. **Infrastructure and Plant Inspection.** On Contractor operated TERP Ranges the Contractor will maintain statutory inspection records in accordance with current legislation and associated regulations. These records shall be made available to the Authority on request.

<sup>4</sup> JSP 418 Management of Environmental Protection in Defence

<sup>5</sup> Electrical Requirements for the Initial Verification, Periodic Inspection and Testing of Explosive Facilities on the MOD Estate (Formerly known as ESTC Standard 6 Part 1 –(Electrical)



### In addition to policy document amendment

33. MOD Form 906B, Test and Evaluation Ranges Log: There are currently 2 versions of the MOD Form 906B, version dated 2012 and 2022. The 2012 version is the only one in printed format and there are >650 copies in existence. Range inspection visits have indicated a requirement for all existing 2012 versions to be removed and replaced with the 2022 version. Due to the amount of MOD funds this would waste and there being no safety critical information omitted in the 2012 version, DOSR has directed that the 2012 version will continue to be used on all MOD Licensed TERP's, until the point that the stockpile has been used or revised direction is provided.

### Aim

34. This DRN is aimed at all service and civilian personnel involved with the management and conduct of MOD TERP / Contractor ranges.

### Implementation

35. Effective 11 Feb 2026.

### Queries

36. Any observations or requests for further guidance on the content of this DRN should be submitted by email to [brendan.o'callaghan155@mod.gov.uk](mailto:brendan.o'callaghan155@mod.gov.uk).

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