



Ministry
of Defence

JSP 815

Defence Safety Management System (SMS)

Guidance Framework

Foreword

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The requirement to keep people safe – at home and overseas – has been set by the Secretary of State (SofS) for Defence through their Health and Safety Policy Statement. The Policy Statement is a commitment of personal leadership by the SofS and their reliance on Commanding Officers, line managers and all those in leadership roles to make sure that health and safety policy is applied throughout Defence.

Defence has an ambition to put safety at the heart of how it operates and has established safety as a Defence function. This enables Defence to deliver the commitments set out in the SofS Health and Safety Policy Statement and to discharge the Duty of Care that Defence has to all those carrying out Defence activities and those affected by Defence activities.

My role is to lead the Defence Safety Function, which supports Defence in achieving a proactive safety culture that protects our people, enhances operational capability, and strengthens national security. The Safety Function is responsible for setting and owning the policy, strategy and governance framework for safety across Defence and is the owner of Joint Service Publication (JSP) 815 and underpinning safety policy. I recognise that the Safety Function will need to work as a strong horizontal function to achieve pace, integration, and cohesion to drive exploitation at the leading edge.

Preface

Purpose

1. This document sets out the Defence Safety Management System (SMS). The SMS described in this JSP is the overarching authority for safety management across Defence. The information contained herein provides a means to assist Defence Areas to put in place good practices and drive continual improvement in safety performance within their organisation.
2. JSP 815 is made up of 12 Elements and their associated Annexes that provide the direction that must be followed and the guidance and good practice that should be followed by all Defence Areas to assist them to meet their legal duty of care for the safety of their people. The 12 Elements contain the expectations and the performance statements that must be achieved to move Defence to a highly resilient and proactive organisation. The policy has been developed to align with ISO 45001 requirements.

Authority of this Defence SMS

3. The document takes its authority from the Secretary of State's (SofS) Policy Statement for Health and Safety in Defence. All Defence Areas must maintain safety management arrangements that align with the Defence SMS and demonstrate their compliance with it.

Jurisdiction and legislation

4. Any reference within the SMS to compliance with legislation generally refers to UK law. Where organisations conduct overseas activity or have an overseas presence, the SofS Health and Safety Policy Statement requires them to consider the latest Defence policy, guidance on applying UK standards and the host nation's relevant safety expectations, particularly where these are not aligned.

Related Documents

5. This JSP 815 is to be read in conjunction with the Safety Function Operating Model, which describes roles and responsibilities and the role the Safety Function plays in protecting our people, managing risks, maintaining our reputation and delivering our Defence goals.

Further Advice and Feedback – Contacts

6. This document will be subject to scheduled reviews and updated as required. The owner of this document is the Director of Defence Safety & Support (Dir-DSS). For further information or advice on any aspect of this publication or to provide feedback on the content, contact: the Directorate of Defence Safety & Support (DDSS) at People-DDS-GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk.
7. Where this document contains references to policies, publications and other JSPs which are published by other functions, these functions have been consulted in the formulation of the policy and guidance detailed in this publication.

Disclaimer

Nothing contained within this document removes the requirement on anyone to comply with applicable Statutory legislation, the SofS's Policy Statement, other JSPs or Defence Regulations.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessing Statement

This policy has been equality and diversity impact assessed in accordance with Departmental policy. This resulted in a Part 1 screening only completed (no direct discrimination or adverse impact identified).

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Amendment record

This Defence SMS has been reviewed by the Directorate of Defence Safety & Support (DDSS) together with relevant subject matter experts and key safety stakeholders. Any suggestions for amendments should be sent to People-DDS-GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk using the following format:

- subject: Defence Safety Management Restructure;
- sender's reference;
- date;
- Element or Annex, page, and paragraph being addressed; and
- comment.

Version No	Date Published	Text Affected	Authority
1.0	Sep 22	Release of new Defence SMS Part 1	Dir HS&EP
1.1	7 Jun 23	Restructure to Defence SMS Volume 1	DDS
1.2	10 Sep 24	Annual revision and combined element and assurance framework	DDS
1.3	1 Sep 26	Scheduled revision and Defence Reform update	Dir-DSS

Terms and definitions

The term 'Defence Area' refers to one of the four top-level areas of Defence: Department of State (DOS), Armed Forces (MSHQ and Military Commands), National Armaments Director (NAD) Group and the Defence Nuclear Enterprise (DNE). Within Defence Safety Policy (JSP 815, JSP 375 and JSP 376), reference to a 'Defence Area' responsibility applies to the top-level Defence Area however, for the Armed Forces it also applies to their component Military Commands (Army, Air, Navy and CSOC).

General safety terms and definitions are provided in the [Master Glossary of Safety Terms and Definitions](#) which can also be accessed via the [GOV.UK](#) website.

Must and should

Where this Defence SMS says 'must', this means that the action is a compulsory requirement.

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

Scope

The policy contained within this JSP:

- a. applies to all those employed by Defence (military and civilian) including those under the age of 18 (for example recruits and apprentices).
- b. applies to 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.

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

Introduction

1. Responsibility for the management of health and safety is derived from the [Secretary of State for Defence's \(SofS\) Policy Statement on health and safety](#). The SofS Policy Statement sets out their requirement for all Defence Area "senior leaders to comply with relevant Defence Regulations, the Department's Safety Management System, supporting policy, governance and risk management requirements. Additionally, and as required, they must set down and implement health and safety management arrangements that are consistent with these requirements for activities in their areas of responsibility."
2. The amplification of the SofS Policy Statement is contained in Defence policy for health and safety which also sets out the general Organisation and Arrangements (O&A) for Defence to manage health and safety. The minimum necessary management arrangements for complying with Defence safety policy are set out in JSP 815 - Defence Safety Management System (SMS).
3. JSP 815 (this JSP) provides the guiding principles by which all Defence Areas should manage the interrelated parts of their business, in order to conduct and manage activities safely. Each Defence Area is expected to develop and maintain their own safety management arrangements that reflect their activities and support the Defence vision for safety. Each Defence Area's safety management arrangements should relate back to the Defence SMS (JSP 815).
4. The term **safety** is used throughout JSP 815. Safety in this context encompasses **health** by providing safe systems of work and thus protecting people from harm and ill-health. However, there will be some references to health and safety throughout where statute (for example [the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(HSWA74\)](#)) or Defence policy and regulation defines them. Other aspects of health are covered by the Healthcare & Medical Operational Capability Function set out in [JSP 950 \(Medical Policy\)](#) and the People Function set out in [JSP 661 \(Health and Wellbeing\)](#).

Purpose

5. JSP 815 provides the direction that Defence should follow to deliver its 'duty of care' responsibilities towards personnel. It also contributes towards demonstrating compliance with safety legislation such as the HSWA74, applicable parts of other legislation such as the [Equality Act 2010](#) and relevant Government policy, Defence policy and regulations.
6. Assurance of Defence activities, the Defence SMS and the Defence Areas safety management arrangements must be carried out in line with the principles of the three Lines of Defence (LOD) as set out in the HMT [Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts](#) and further detailed in JSP 815 Element 12.
7. Compliance with the 12 Elements of JSP 815 will assist Defence Areas to prevent acute and chronic ill-health issues to their personnel. Defence Areas must assess and manage safety risks and implement safety control measures in order to reduce risks to as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP). Some safety risks for example; exposure to asbestos, noise and vibration may take a long time before ill-health becomes apparent, which Defence Areas must understand and manage by implementing health surveillance and monitoring.

8. Defence Area leaders must make sure that their 'duty of care' extends to all personnel under their area of responsibility and where risk assessments have identified personnel may be exposed to risk those risks must be reduced to ALARP and control measures implemented and where necessary reasonable adjustments must be agreed and implemented.
9. Civilian personnel should discuss any occupational health issues and reasonable adjustments to address those issues with their commander or manager and seek advice where required from their local safety adviser, and if further advice is needed, the Chief Environment and Safety Officer (CESO) or equivalent. The procedures for workplace adjustments are set out on the [Civilian HR People Portal – Workplace Adjustments](#).
10. Military personnel must discuss any occupational health issues and reasonable adjustments with their commander or manager and seek advice where required from their Safety Centre or local safety adviser and the local medical facility.
11. The Defence SMS is structured around 12 Elements. The direction that must be followed and the guidance and good practice that should be followed, can be found in the individual JSP 815 Elements and their annexes.
12. The Defence SMS should be read in conjunction with the [Defence Safety Function Operating Model](#), and is supported by JSP 375, JSP 376 and JSP 426. The Defence safety policy and regulation framework can be seen below in Figure 1.

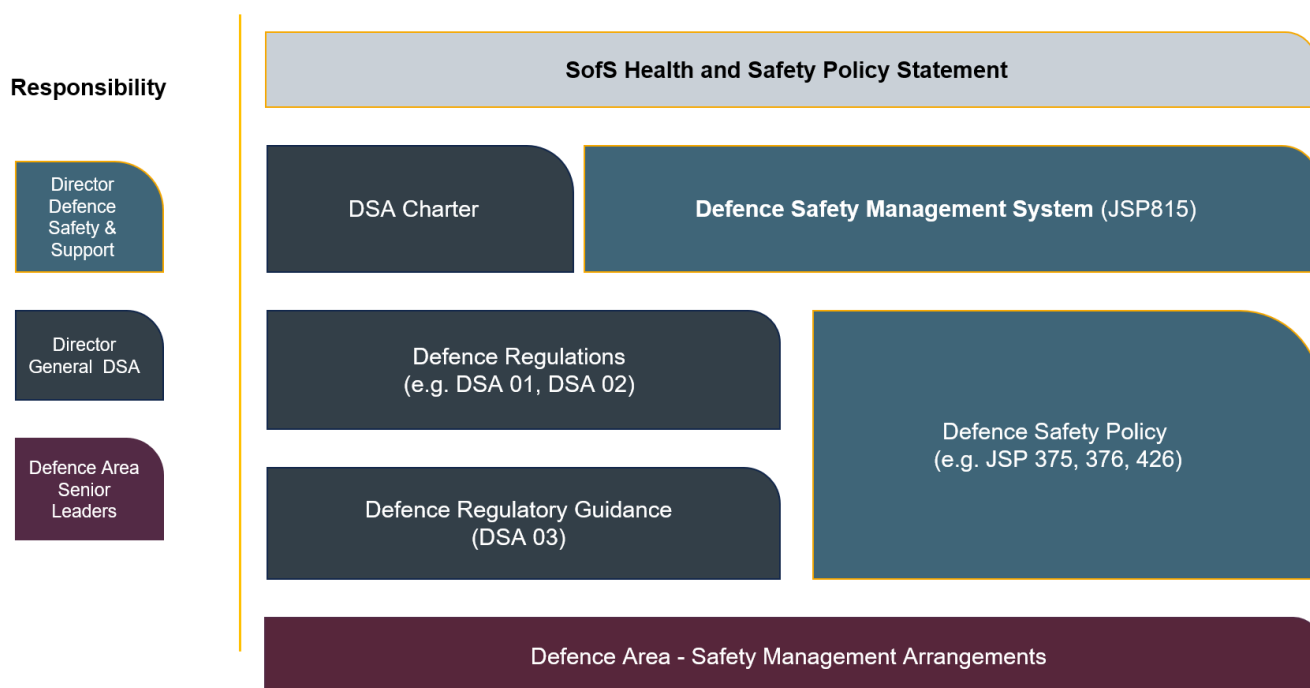


Figure 1 - Defence safety policy and regulation framework

13. Where possible, the Defence SMS seeks to avoid prescribing approaches or requirements, as these may not be generally applicable or relevant for all users but sets goals and provides direction on what good would look like.

Management system approach

14. A management system comprises a range of practices, processes, documents, and information systems used to organise, direct and control safety management within an organisation, these are often referred to as their safety management arrangements.

15. The Defence SMS provides direction on the components needed for the cohesive and appropriate safety management arrangements to be introduced and maintained across Defence Areas. The SMS encompasses the Elements required to manage safety in an effective and consistent manner across the Department.

16. The Defence SMS is based on the four-stage 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' approach (Figure 2) which helps to deliver and continually improve the Department's performance against safety management.

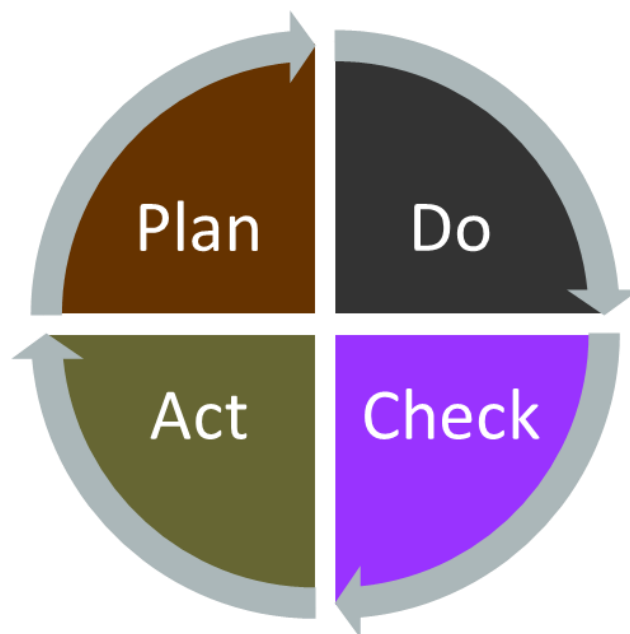


Figure 2 - Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle

17. The Defence SMS:

- a. is non-prescriptive and based on a devolved accountability model of safety management, allowing each Defence Area to manage safety, consistent with Defence requirements, through their own specific organisational governance and operational context;
- b. outlines responsibilities and obligations each Defence Area must consider when managing safety, and includes a set of expectations and performance statements that all Defence Areas must conform to when establishing governance frameworks, developing safety management strategies, processes and performance indicators to regularly monitor and improve their safety management; including the need to establish systems to identify and address performance failures; and
- c. is aligned to ISO 45001, the international standard for occupational health and safety management systems but has some additional and different requirements to meet the specific needs of Defence.

18. JSP 815 is a goal-based approach to managing safety in Defence and sets the safety ambition of Defence; it enables each Defence Area to have the flexibility to develop their own tailored safety management arrangements and pathways to meeting that ambition.

Role of the Defence Safety Function

19. The Defence Safety Function encompasses the safety management structure and processes which enable Defence to deliver operational capability whilst minimising the risk to Defence personnel and equipment. Thus, supporting Defence in achieving a proactive safety culture that protects our people, enhances operational capability, and strengthens national security.

20. Defence function owners are responsible for developing the relevant mechanisms to support their function strategy and are empowered to implement these mechanisms across Defence to drive improvement, for the Defence Safety Function this includes:

- a. responsibility for Defence Safety Function Leadership across Defence through the Dir-DSS, on behalf of the Director General People and Standards;
- b. responsibility for the corporate governance of Defence safety, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary;
- c. owning the Defence Safety Function Strategy, the Safety Operating Model and the overarching Defence SMS; and
- d. conducting 2LOD Function assurance against the Defence SMS and compliance with Dir-DSS owned policies.

Structure

21. The Defence SMS is divided into 12 Elements to cover Defence Area activities. Together, the Elements provide those conducting their own safety management arrangements with a holistic approach to consider how they will control, manage, and respond to relevant safety risks. The 12 Elements which form the Defence SMS are shown in Figure 3.

22. Each Element is supported by a series of Expectations which describe the activities expected to be in place² within each Defence Area's safety management arrangements. They outline typical processes, governance arrangements and other behaviours which are indicators of successful safety management.

23. Each Expectation is further articulated by Performance Statements which set out how compliance and continual improvement is demonstrated. Examples are given of performance across a range of assurance levels from unsatisfactory, through limited, moderate, to substantial assurance.

² Some of the Elements may not be fully applicable for all Defence activities, for example with Adventurous Training, Element 8 is often not required.



Figure 3 - Defence Safety Management System (SMS) -12 Elements

24. The 12 Elements and their supporting Expectations are shown in Figure 4.

E1 Leadership, Governance and Culture	E1.1 Tone from the top E1.2 Continual improvement E1.3 Accountabilities and responsibilities E1.4 Leadership visibility E1.5 Strategic objectives E1.6 Resilient safety management	Element 1
E2 Organisation and Dependencies	E2.1 Safety management arrangements E2.2 Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities E2.3 Allocation of resources E2.4 Sharing information E2.5 Standards of safety management E2.6 Consultation with the workforce E2.7 Changes to structure and personnel E2.8 Dependencies and interfaces	Element 2
E3 Legislation, Policy, Regulations and Guidance	E3.1 Compliance with legislation, Defence policy and regulations E3.2 Defence Area's policy and guidance E3.3 Communicating compliance requirements E3.4 Review of Defence Area policies and guidance E3.5 Exemptions, waivers, and concessions	Element 3
E4 Risk Assessments and Safety Cases	E4.1 Risk Profiles and hazard identification E4.2 Managing safety risks E4.3 Assessing and elevating safety risk E4.4 Communicating risks and controls E4.5 Improving risk management E4.6 Tracking and assessing changes E4.7 Maintaining safety cases	Element 4

E5 Supervision, Contracting and Control Activities	E5.1 Delegation of authority E5.2 Competence of delegated authority E5.3 Risk elevation E5.4 Letter of delegation E5.5 Mitigation of risks to ALARP E5.6 Ceasing activities E5.7 Safe Systems of Work (SSW)	Element 5
E6 Personnel Competence, Resources and Training	E6.1 Resources E6.2 Responsibilities, accountabilities, and delegation E6.3 People development E6.4 Training programme E6.5 Competency assessment	Element 6
E7 Equipment Design, Manufacture and Maintenance	E7.1 Equipment lifecycle risks E7.2 Risk mitigation E7.3 Compliance with statute and Defence regulation E7.4 Equipment maintenance E7.5 Physical equipment changes E7.6 Supply chain risks and dependencies E7.7 Lessons learned E7.8 Equipment and systems integration risk	Element 7
E8 Infrastructure Design, Build and Maintenance	E8.1 Infrastructure lifecycle risks E8.2 Risk mitigation E8.3 Compliance with statute and Defence regulation E8.4 Infrastructure maintenance E8.5 Physical infrastructure changes E8.6 Supply chain risks and dependencies E8.7 Lessons learned	Element 8
E9 Performance, Management Information and Reporting	E9.1 Monitoring safety performance E9.2 Reviewing safety performance E9.3 Management information review E9.4 Leadership performance decisions	Element 9
E10 Accident / Incident Management and Emergency Response	E10.1 Accident / Incident reporting E10.2 Accident / Incident recording E10.3 Accident / incident investigation E10.4 Implementation of actions and learning E10.5 Emergency and business continuity plans tested	Element 10
E11 Communications and Stakeholder Engagement	E11.1 Stakeholder identification E11.2 Stakeholder engagement E11.3 Stakeholder working relations E11.4 Accessing safety information E11.5 Raising safety related concerns anonymously	Element 11
E12 Assurance	E12.1 1 st Line of Defence (LOD) assurance E12.2 2LOD and 3LOD assurance E12.3 Annual self-assessment E12.4 Leadership review of SMA E12.5 Corrective action	Element 12

Figure 4 - Defence SMS 12 Elements and supporting Expectations

Using the SMS

25. It is the responsibility of each Defence Area to develop and implement safety management arrangements that meet the requirements of the Defence SMS - 12 Elements, and accompanying Expectations, for their organisation.

26. Defence Areas should adopt an evidence-based approach to their own safety management arrangements. Several data sources, information and knowledge are likely to be used to measure an organisation's current safety performance.

27. The documentation listed within each Element provides Defence Areas and assessors with an initial starting point to assess their safety management arrangements; the evidence to support performance assessment against each Expectation and to determine overall performance against each Element.

Relationship to the Defence Environmental Management System (EMS)

28. JSP 815 sets out the Defence Safety Management System. The Defence Environmental Management System (EMS) is set out in JSP 816.

29. The JSP 816 Defence EMS contains 12 Elements supported by Expectations and performance statements aligned to the Defence SMS but with the content amended to reflect environmental management and policy requirements. In so far as is practicable, both JSP 815 and JSP 816 have been similarly structured. In view of the similarities in structure, Defence Areas may choose to combine their safety management arrangements with their environmental management arrangements as appropriate for their organisation.

30. JSP 816 should be read in conjunction with other Defence policy where appropriate; such as, but not limited to JSP 418, JSP 426, JSP 392 and JSP 850.

Assurance stages

31. The assurance stages set out in JSP 815 are sequential and build on all previous stages, for example an Organisation can only achieve "substantial assurance" once the Expectations and requirements of "moderate assurance" have been achieved and so on.

32. Figure 5 sets out some of the typical characteristics of processes and controls for each level and aligned with the assessment criteria of the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA).

Assessment and criteria to determine the level of assurance of Defence Area Function / Activity key controls and compliance requirements	
Assessment (GIAA aligned)	Criteria
Substantial	You have robust evidence to demonstrate that prescribed policies, processes and key controls that should be operating in your area are fully embedded. You have robust evidence to demonstrate that policies, processes and key controls actually help you manage your key risks. You have robust evidence to demonstrate that the policies, processes and key controls are actually operating as intended and no weaknesses have been identified.
Moderate	You have evidence to demonstrate that prescribed policies, processes and key controls that should be operating in your area are fully embedded but these could be improved. You have evidence to demonstrate that these policies, processes and key controls actually help you manage your key risks, but these could be improved. You have evidence to demonstrate that the policies, processes and key controls are actually operating as intended, but have identified some minor areas of noncompliance with the defined policies, processes and key controls.
Limited	You have some, but not enough evidence that prescribed policies, processes and key controls are operating and are embedded. You do not have confidence that the policies, processes and key controls are designed to actually help you manage your key risks. You have evidence to demonstrate that the policies, processes and key controls are not actually operating as intended or not operating in numerous instances.
Unsatisfactory	You have evidence that the prescribed policies, processes and key controls are lacking or not well defined or not actually embedded. You have evidence that the policies, processes and key controls are defined, but as designed, do not help you manage your key risks. You have evidence that the policies, processes and key controls are not measured to be able to assess compliance or are not being adhered to.

Figure 5 - Assurance Levels