

**ANNEX R****MESSAGE FROM THE DEFENCE BOARD ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

As members of the Defence Board, we recognise our individual and collective responsibility for health and safety. We are concerned that, whilst there are examples of best practice, we are falling short of the necessary standards in some areas. More needs to be done to ensure that we reduce the number of health and safety related deaths, including from road traffic accidents both on and off duty, from the current unacceptable levels.

Good health and safety is about sensible management of risk. It is not about promoting a culture of risk aversion which will threaten the achievement of our operational and training goals. It is about striving to achieve objectives while putting in place effective systems to minimize, as far as reasonably possible, the risk of accidents and other incidents. It is a challenge to which we must all rise.

Whilst our obligations are set out in the Secretary of State's Policy Statement<sup>1</sup>, this is not enough: we are determined to provide the visible leadership required to reduce fatalities and serious injuries due to health and safety failures. We expect individuals to raise health and safety concerns and to exercise proper duty of care, including the reporting of near misses, and will support those who do so. But we will not hesitate to take action against those who let us down by flouting safety procedures.

In exercising our duty of care, and to demonstrate our commitment to health and safety, as Board Members and TLB Holders, we will:

- receive reports on health and safety related fatalities at every meeting, review trends and challenge action taken on the lessons identified;
- require 2<sup>nd</sup> PUS, as Chair of the Defence Environment and Safety Board, to report to us on performance and assurance;
- benchmark our health and safety performance against best practice elsewhere;
- embed health and safety considerations in resource allocation decisions;
- focus on health and safety issues during our visits to units and staff;
- accept in person any future Crown Censure.

We expect Commanders and Line Managers at all levels to:

- clarify line accountability, including for contractors and others with whom we work;
- pro-actively monitor performance against Key Performance Indicators and improvement plans;
- implement appropriate arrangements for audit and verification;
- ensure that accidents, incidents and near misses are reported, thoroughly investigated, and lessons identified and actioned;
- involve their staff in health and safety issues;
- ensure that their staff receive training in their health and safety obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> Safety, Health, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in the MOD.