

DEFENCE'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

1. Defence's OHS governance structure has been developed taking cognisance of the following:
 - a. the objectives of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* which, among other things, seek to:
 - (i) ensure that expert advice is available on occupational health and safety matters affecting employers, employees and contractors;
 - (ii) promote an occupational environment for such employees at work that is adapted to their needs relating to health and safety; and
 - (iii) foster a cooperative consultative relationship between employers and employees on the health, safety and welfare of such employees at work;
 - b. the obligation under the Act to establish a health and safety committee in respect of the employer's employees at a particular workplace;
 - c. the obligation under the Act for employees to:
 - (i) take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure they do not create or increase the risk to their own health and safety, and that of other employees; and
 - (ii) co-operate with the employer to the extent necessary to enable the employer to meet his obligation to protect the health and safety of employees.
 - d. the requirement for a fully integrated, corporate OHS governance framework that accommodates the functional imperatives arising from the Defence business model;
 - e. the complexities arising at multi-tenanted sites where there is frequently a requirement to manage and coordinate OHS issues that impinge on multiple chains-of-command; and
 - f. experience in both Australian and overseas private sector organisations of comparable size and/or complexity.
2. In giving effect to Defence's commitment to, and responsibilities under, the Act, the chain-of-command has primary responsibility to ensure workplace and personnel safety within its respective area of control. The OHS governance framework supports the chain-of-command in discharging this responsibility through the incorporation of a tiered committee system and a number of key safety appointments. The former provide a mechanism for consultation and coordination in respect of OHS issues, in particular those that affect multiple workplaces or tenants at a site, and/or that cross Service and Group boundaries. The key safety appointments provide the chain-of-command and the OHS committees with a source of expert advice and administrative support on OHS matters.
3. The committees are linked to the chain-of-command through the chair and, where appropriate, through the inclusion of members from the key supporting organisations under the Defence business model (i.e. the Defence Support Group (DSG) and the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO)). They provide a consultative mechanism to address OHS issues at the

lowest practicable level. However, where an issue cannot be resolved at a local level, they provide an effective mechanism to allow elevation through the appropriate chain(s)-of-command and, when necessary, to a higher committee. As a result, the committees improve visibility of emerging OHS issues for both employees and management, facilitate their early and effective resolution, assist coordination between Services and Groups, increase corporate understanding of OHS issues, and promote organisational learning.

4. Consultation with Defence personnel on OHS issues is an integral element in improving Defence's OHS performance. Defence's commitment to consultation is demonstrated by the establishment of a tiered committee system at workplace, site/establishment/precinct and whole of Group/Service levels culminating in the Defence Occupational Health and Safety Committee (DOHSC).

5. The key components of this committee structure are:

- a. The DOHSC, which is the peak Defence safety committee and accountable to the Defence Committee, the principal Defence management committee:
 - (i) overseeing the Defence OHS Strategic Plan;
 - (ii) assessing Defence's OHS performance;
 - (iii) monitoring the risks to peoples' well being that arise from Defence activities, and the implications for Defence enterprise risks;
 - (iv) evaluating Defence-wide compliance with internal and external OHS requirements;
 - (v) overseeing the progression and management of Defence-wide OHS initiatives and improvements in OHS performance;
 - (vi) monitoring the development and maintenance of Defence's corporate level OHS Management System;
 - (vii) steering the implementation of recommendations arising out of external OHS investigations and audits and facilitating the communication of lessons learned across Defence; and
 - (viii) monitoring resource issues relevant to achieving and maintaining an alignment of resources with responsibilities and accountability.
- b. The OHS Working Group (OHSWG) supports the DOHSC and provides a mechanism for Service and Group representatives to address strategic OHS issues. Where appropriate, issues can be elevated through either the Chair and/or the member's respective chain-of-command and including to the DOHSC.
- c. The Group Safety Coordinators Liaison Forum (GSCLF) provides a mechanism for Group Safety Coordinators (GSCs) to address operational OHS issues that have Defence-wide implications or affect multiple Services and Groups. Where appropriate, issues can be elevated through either the Chair and/or the members' respective chains-of-command as well as the DOHSC.
- d. Each Service Chief and Group Head must implement an integrated governance structure within their respective organisational element that provides for effective consultation on and coordination of OHS issues that integrates with the corporate OHS governance structure. The governance structure must incorporate a mechanism that allows, when appropriate, for the elevation of OHS issues.

- e. Workplace hazards that cannot be managed at the base/unit level and which involve high residual risk to personnel and/or operations must be elevated for resolution or acceptance.
- f. Each Service and Group governance structure encompasses a tiered committee system commencing at the workplace and culminating at the whole-of-Service/Group level. As a minimum, committees should be established at each workplace and must be established at each multi-tenanted site, establishment and/or precinct, and the whole-of-Group/Service level.
- g. The membership of committees at the workplace and site/establishment/precinct level must be representative of all personnel working within the particular workplace, establishment or function.
- h. The workplace and site/establishment/precinct committees are consultative and advisory, providing support to the chain(s)-of-command and the designated Base Commanding Officer or senior military representative.
- i. At multi-tenanted sites, SEC/CDF will appoint an accountable officer to oversight the management of OHS issues for the site and who will chair the base or establishment OHS committee. The appointed officer will have the authority to determine OHS remediation priorities for the site. At single Service establishments, or predominantly single Service establishments, the appointed officer will be the Base CO or senior military representative. At all other multi-tenanted sites it will be a Defence Support Group (DSG) representative.
- j. At all multi-tenanted sites, the organisations present are to provide the appointed officer an assurance, on a regular basis, that their internal SMS is functional and effective.
- k. DSG is responsible for providing corporate OHS advice and administrative support to the base or establishment committee.

See attached diagram for a pictorial representation.

| Defence Structure | Chain of Command OHS Structure | OHS Committee Structure | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Defence HQ | CDF/SEC (Occupational Health, safety and Compensation Branch) | Defence Occupational Health and Safety Committee #1 | |
| Service and Group | Service and Group OHS Sections (eg: Directorate of OHS – Army) | Service/Group Safety Committee (eg Navy Safety and Regulatory Council) | |
| Force Element Group | Force Element Group Safety Managers (eg” Army’s Land Command Safety Manager) | Force Element Group Safety Committee (eg: Navy’s SUBSAFE committee) | |
| Unit | Unit Safety Adviser | Unit Safety Committee | The Defence Support Group provides regional OHS support at bases |
| Workplace | Unit Safety Coordinator | Unit Safety Committee | |

#1 Supports the Defence Committee and is supported by the Occupational Health and Safety Working Group and Group Safety Coordinators Liaison Forum

