United Nations
Department of Peace Operations
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Policy

Joint Operations Centres (JOC)

Approved by: Jean-Pierre Lacroix, USG DPO
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Contact: United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC)
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**DPO POLICY ON
JOINT OPERATIONS CENTRES (JOC)**

A.   PURPOSE

1.   This policy provides guidance on the establishment and functioning of Joint Operations Centres (JOCs) in peacekeeping operations to ensure that missions have in place an entity to provide integrated situational awareness, facilitate integrated operations coordination and planning, and support crisis management.

2.   This policy should be read in conjunction with the associated DPO Guidelines on JOCs (Ref.2019.21), DPKO-DFS SOP on Headquarters Crisis Response in Support of Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2016.17) and the DPO SOP on Integrated Reporting from Peacekeeping Operations to UNHQ (Ref.2019.10).

B.   SCOPE

3.   This policy applies to all peacekeeping operations, although specific application may vary according to each mission's mandate and structure[1].

4.   Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all mission components as well as for offices at DPO United Nations Headquarters, New York (UNHQ) responsible for supporting peacekeeping operations.

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[1] Peacekeeping operations that are not multidimensional or in a drawdown or transition phase may be constrained by limited resources and hence require alternate arrangements than those outlined in this policy. Any deviation from the policy in these circumstances should be consulted with the UNOCC at UNHQ.

C.   RATIONALE

5.   Peacekeeping missions conduct a wide range of mandated activities in fluid and demanding environments. Comprehensive situational awareness supports the ability of senior mission leadership to identify, prevent, mitigate and/or respond to threats and opportunities. Together, JOCs and Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMACs) support the spectrum of situational awareness – incorporating knowledge, understanding and anticipation, which underpins the effective coordination and monitoring of operations. While JOCs focus on contributing to knowledge and understanding through monitoring and reporting of current events, JMACs focus on enhancing understanding and anticipation through analysis and predictive assessment.

6.   In multidimensional peacekeeping missions, there is a need for components to share their plans and coordinate operational activities, at the working level, to ensure that a mission's operational activity is complementary and coherent, and that shared resources are utilised efficiently and effectively. JOCs can play a significant role in information-sharing and, in some missions, coordination[2]. In missions where JOCs have been tasked with the convening function for this effort, they have been able to facilitate the application of relevant civilian, military and police capacities to priority tasks as identified by the leadership.

7.   Given its situational awareness and operational coordination and planning roles, mission JOCs play a critical role in advance of, and during, crises. As such, JOCs provide support to the Crisis Management Team (CMT).

D.   POLICY

D.1   General

8.   Mission JOCs are integrated entities established to support the decision-making of the Mission Leadership Team (MLT) and UNHQ by providing integrated situational awareness through routine and special incident reporting. JOCs are also responsible for facilitating integrated operational coordination and planning so as to ensure that the operational activity of mission components and that of the UN Country Team (UNCT) (as well as the Humanitarian Country Team, if applicable) are complementary and coherent, and that available assets are shared and efficiently and effectively utilised. JOCs also play a critical role in supporting mission crisis management through the increased-tempo provision of situational awareness and support to the CMT.

D.2   Establishment

9.   All missions shall establish a JOC at the mission headquarters level. Establishing a JOC is a priority task at the onset of a new mission.

10.   Missions may establish permanent or temporary JOCs at the regional (or sector/team site) level. The establishment of regional JOCs, their scope, tasks and reporting lines shall be determined at the discretion of the Head of Mission (HOM), advised by the Chief JOC and the regional head of office through the mission Chief of Staff (COS).

11.   The JOC shall be one of the last entities to discontinue operations during a mission transition or drawdown. Strategic and other reviews should ensure that the JOC is able to fulfil its core functions for situational awareness and crisis response support at all times.

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[2] See the DPKO-DFS "Protection of Civilians Coordination Mechanisms in UN Peacekeeping Missions Comparative Study and Toolkit" (2012).

12. Each mission JOC should develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as outlined in the JOC Guidelines. The JOC should also work with the HOM and COS in the development of guidance relevant to JOC work, such as reporting directives, operational coordination and planning directives, and crisis management SOPs.

13. To facilitate information flow, the JOC shall be co-located with relevant operational, monitoring, reporting and communications centres of the mission, such as the Military Operations Centre (MOC), the Police Operations Centre (POC) and the Security Operations Centre (SOC)[3]. These entities shall establish protocols for information exchange and collaboration as guided by the MLT and mission directives. The MLT may also decide to integrate these entities under a single tasking authority.

14. For ease of information exchange and coordination on operational matters, the JOC should also be located in close proximity to relevant analysis entities such as the JMAC, as well as with the Field Technology Section (FTS) covering geographic information systems (GIS) functionalities, and the office of the COS. Proximity to the Mission Support Centre (MSC) is also warranted particularly in those missions where the JOC facilitates operational coordination and planning.

15. The JOC shall establish information exchange and working relationships with relevant UNCT entities. This should be done under supervision of the DSRSG/RC/HC in integrated missions or through agreement between the HOM and the RC/HC in non-integrated settings.

16. Where there are missions in neighbouring countries, mission JOCs shall establish mechanisms for continuous exchange of information and sharing of best practices. Further details are outlined in the JOC Guidelines.

D.3   Governance

17. The JOC shall report to the HOM, through the COS, where one is in place.

18. The JOC is the focus for current operations communications with UNHQ. The primary JOC interlocutor at UNHQ is the UN Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC).

D.4   Structure and Staffing[4]

19. Mission JOCs are integrated entities and shall comprise international civilian and uniformed personnel, including military and police personnel, as well as national support staff. The staffing framework of the JOC must reflect the multidimensional composition of the mission and its operational requirements. Models for JOC staffing structures can be found in the JOC Guidelines.

20. The JOC shall have a core of permanently assigned positions, depending on the mission's size and complexity. The JOC shall be adequately staffed and equipped with capabilities to undertake integrated situational awareness, operational coordination, operational planning, and crisis management functions. At a minimum, the JOC shall have a Chief (P5), a Deputy Chief (P4), four to six reporting/operations officers, at least one administrative support staff and one dedicated information management officer. Such a structure should also afford the potential of career progression within the JOC and Field Offices. In addition, the JOC must maintain a 24/7 watch duty capacity to alert mission leadership to urgent developments and respond to requests, including from UNHQ. At least six duty officers (uniformed and/or civilian) are required to meet the watch duty requirement; further details are outlined in the JOC Guidelines.

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[3] Certain missions may not have a SOC but a Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC) or an equivalent security entity, which includes a mission radio room.
[4] Mission settings that are in a transition phase or have a more restricted observation mandate may require alternate arrangements than those outlined in the policy. Any deviation from the policy and guidelines in these circumstances should be consulted with DPO leadership at UNHQ.

21.   At the determination of the MLT, additional staff may be drawn to the JOC and/or its regional equivalents from relevant mission components or be provided as surge capacity from other UN operations and/or UNHQ if the mission operational tempo so requires. UNCT personnel may be assigned as liaison officers to the JOC.

22.   The Chief JOC position shall be filled through a civilian recruitment process. On an exceptional basis, a decision to draw the Chief JOC from mission uniformed contingents may be made by the HOM in agreement with DPO leadership.

23.   The Deputy Chief JOC position may be a civilian, or a uniformed staff member depending on the mission circumstances. Two deputies, one uniformed, one civilian, may also be considered. A uniformed Deputy Chief JOC may assist in collaboration with uniformed components of the mission.

24.   All staff recruited to the JOC shall have the requisite operational experience and language skills, as outlined in generic job profiles for JOC officers. Military and police personnel assigned to the JOC should meet specified job descriptions issued by the Force Generation Service and Police Division in UNHQ. At a minimum, the Chief and Deputy Chief should have knowledge of, or prior experience working with military and/or police, preferably in a UN context. Uniformed personnel assigned to the JOC in a leadership position should be deployed for a minimum period of 12 months.

25.   Staff assigned to the JOC shall be under the day-to-day supervision and tasking of the Chief JOC and shall not receive direct tasks from their parent component. Further details on chain of command and authority and performance appraisals are included in the JOC Guidelines and are elaborated upon more fully in the DPO-DOS Policy on Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2019.23).

D.5   Functions

26.   Mission JOCs shall fulfil the following functions:
   a.   Provide integrated situational awareness within the mission and to UNHQ;
   b.   Facilitate integrated operational coordination and planning within the mission[5]; and,
   c.   Support mission crisis management.

27.   The focus of JOC work should be on current operational activities, with a time horizon of up to several days. JOCs and JMACs shall align their activities to avoid any gaps and overlap in the provision of situational awareness and analysis support to mission leadership.

Integrated situational awareness

28.   The JOC shall serve as the mission's 24/7 integrated information hub and shall ensure the situational awareness of the MLT and UNHQ. Specifically, the JOC shall:
   a.   Monitor the situation in the mission area;
   b.   Receive and collate daily situational reports and ad hoc alerts from all mission components (and the UNCT, as appropriate);
   c.   Verify and deconflict the information received;
   d.   Manage requisite distribution lists and disseminate daily integrated situational awareness summaries, reports and special incident ('flash') reports to the MLT and to other mission and UNCT personnel as directed;

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[5] In missions established before the adoption of this guidance, the JOC may not be in a position to fulfill this function. In these circumstances, Missions shall consult with the relevant IOT at UNHQ and the UNOCC to assess possible alternate or remedial measures to ensure that integrated operational coordination and planning are carried out within the mission.

e.   Transmit the mission's daily integrated situation report to UNHQ once approved by the mission COS;

f.   Transmit 'flash' reports to UNHQ as appropriate;

g.   Provide regular situational awareness briefings at MLT meetings;

h.   Ensure that an officer is on duty in the JOC on a 24/7 basis to address information or point of contact requests and that during silent hours the Chief, Deputy Chief or senior reporting officer is on call to respond to operational response matters.

29.   The JOC shall produce integrated situational awareness products drawing on all sources of information, including social media. It shall not replace the specialised monitoring and reporting functions within mission components, but draw upon them. JOC staff shall have access to all relevant mission information, including code cables. The JOC shall establish procedures to protect sensitive mission operational information and to prevent breach of confidentiality and informed consent. The JOC shall maintain the integrity of sensitive information, observing high levels of IT security and encryption and adhering to policies regarding the categorising and handling of confidential data and information.

30.   All mission components (and the UNCT, as appropriate) shall provide daily situational reports and ad hoc alerts to the JOC in a timely manner, including through the use of the Sage event and incident tracking system (recently rebranded as the Unite Aware "Incidents" tool) for entering, storing, verifying and validating information in missions where the tool is deployed.

31.   The provision of information to the JOC by mission components (and the UNCT, as appropriate) and the production of integrated situational awareness products shall be guided by a reporting directive, issued by the HOM in accordance with the DPO SOP on Integrated Reporting from Peacekpeeing Operations to UNHQ (Ref.2019.10).

Integrated operational coordination and planning

32.   In peacekeeping missions, integrated operational coordination and planning are complex but vital tasks. JOCs play a critical coordination role between mission components, UNCT and, where applicable, other entities, to ensure that operational activity is complementary and coherent, and that shared assets are efficiently and effectively utilised.

33.   All new multidimensional missions shall equip staff and empower JOCs to carry out these functions. In missions established before the adoption of this guidance, the MLT may opt not to attribute some functions to the JOC but this should be agreed with DPO leadership, in particular with the Integrated Operational Team (IOT) at UNHQ and the UNOCC.

34.   The means and methods of operational coordination and planning will vary with the mission context. The JOC Guidelines expand on how the JOC can fulfill its coordination and planning roles. Generally, where a JOC has been tasked with integrated operational coordination or planning, the JOC shall act as a link between the MLT and the working level. The JOC shall attend MLT meetings, convene integrated operational coordination fora and initiate associated planning activities.

35.   All mission components shall cooperate with the JOC in fulfilling its coordination and planning role. The JOC shall respect the subject-matter expertise of each mission component. Tasking authority [6] shall continue to reside within the established chains of command of each component, unless specifically allocated, within parameters, by the MLT. Programmatic and budget planning shall remain with the relevant mission components.

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[6] As defined in the DPO-DOS Policy on Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2019.23).

36.   The JOC shall focus its integrated operational coordination efforts on cross-cutting operational activities, such as the protection of civilians, which involve the efforts of more than one mission component; JOC planning activities shall not replace discrete planning efforts within mission components. The JOC shall liaise with the MSC to ensure that the appropriate logistics support to the operational activities and plans are agreed upon by mission components.

Crisis management support

37.   Crisis management in mission settings should be guided by relevant DPO and UN system-wide guidance documents[7]. The JOC shall support the mission COS in the development of a mission-level crisis management SOP.

38.   In advance of, in anticipation of and during a crisis, efforts shall be made to accelerate existing decision-making processes within the mission. The JOC shall provide crisis management support to the CMT, and Operations Coordination Body (OCB) when necessary, and specifically:

   a.   Maintain the mission's crisis management venue in a state of readiness, with support from appropriate mission components;

   b.   Ensure 24/7 monitoring of and regular reporting on the crisis situation;

   c.   Act as the sole information hub for all crisis-related information;

   d.   Support 24/7 communications, particularly among the MLT and between the mission and UNHQ;

   e.   Recommend the convening of CMT meetings, as necessary;

   f.   Provide secretariat support for CMT and/or OCB meetings;

   g.   Keep UNHQ updated, including through enhanced reporting as required;

   h.   Assist in the coordination of integrated responses to crises;

   i.   Facilitate mission's crisis preparedness, including through supporting mission's crisis management simulation exercises as well as planning for surge capacity including space for additional personnel to be temporarily stationed at the JOC during crisis.

39.   While providing crisis management support, the JOC will maintain its core tasks of integrated situational awareness and, where applicable, integrated operational coordination in the mission area.

D.6   Resources

40.   Missions shall provide sufficient budgetary allocation for JOC staffing, travel, training, infrastructure, information and communications technology, and business continuity.

   a.   *Staffing.* Sufficient funds shall be allocated to ensure appropriate staffing of the JOC, including its 24/7 watch capacity.

   b.   *Travel and transportation.* Sufficient travel funds and means for travel should be allocated to the JOC to ensure that each JOC officer travels to the field quarterly and that the JOC has proper and adequate transportation arrangements within the mission area to support 24/7 functioning of the watch room.

   c.   *Training.* Sufficient training funds shall be allocated at mission level to ensure that the Chief JOC is able to attend the biennial Chiefs JOC Workshop, and that one or more JOC officers is able to attend annually training relevant to JOC work, in addition to the annual training on Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS)[8], where applicable.

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[7] See normative or superior references outlined in section G.

[8] Under the guidance of the mission COS, the JOC may be assigned responsibilities in the implementation of ORMS within the mission, including, in some cases, the responsibility as the mission ORMS focal point.

d. *Information and Communications Technology.* JOCs require specialised equipment in order to effectively carry out prescribed functions, including cellular phones and satellite phones; telephone connections; database management software for information gathering, storage, access and visualisation; laptop computers; access to open source information; Sage event and incident tracking system (recently rebranded as the Unite Aware "Incidents" tool); GIS platforms and services including abilities to directly task the mission GIS or other relevant component/unit for producing maps and visualization products in support of JOC; secure video tele-conference and internet connection; and other information technology and communications solutions in support of the JOC.

e. *Business continuity.* The JOC shall identify and be provided a dedicated alternate site from where to operate and carry out its functions should its primary workspace be compromised. Missions should provide secure file storage facilities to the JOC to replicate and store all necessary and relevant mission data. The JOC shall also require resources to provide support in the areas of operational planning and coordination of the business continuity activities, if required.

E.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

41.   ***Head of Mission and Chief of Staff.*** The HOM, through the COS, is responsible for ensuring that all mission components support the JOC in fulfilling its mandated activities of providing situational awareness, facilitating operational coordination and supporting crisis management. The HOM shall issue a mission-wide reporting directive to ensure that component inputs are received in time to meet reporting deadlines. The HOM, advised by the COS and the Chief JOC, is responsible for ensuring that the JOC has sufficient capacities and resources to fulfil its functions, including the 24/7 staffing requirement, minimum operational expenses, infrastructure, and information management and communications technology capacity.

42.   ***DSRSG/Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator.*** In line with guidance materials on integration, the DSRSG/RC/HC, in agreement with the HOM, should ensure that the JOC and the UNCT and other relevant entities have established methods for the sharing information as well as having agreed on the nature of participation of the UNCT and others in mission integrated operational coordination fora, including liaison arrangments with or secondments to the JOC. In non-integrated missions, the HOM/DSRSG and the RC/HC should establish an agreement on the frequency, format and method for the sharing of information between the JOC, the UNCT and other entities as well as other types of collaboration.

43.   ***Heads of field offices.*** Heads of field offices are responsible for ensuring that situation reports and ad hoc alert information, especially on localised incidents, is provided to the JOC in a timely manner. These reports should integrate and deconflict any reporting from other mission components.

44.   ***Heads of mission components.*** Heads of mission components are responsible for ensuring that daily situation reports and ad hoc alert information is provided to the JOC in a timely manner. They are also responsible for nominating representatives, at the appropriate level, to take part in JOC-facilitated fora, including integrated operational coordination fora.

45.   ***Chief JOC.*** The Chief JOC is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the JOC and the fulfilment of each of the functions set out above through tasking and supervising the JOC staff. The Chief JOC is responsible for advising the COS and HOM on how best to resource the JOC to ensure it can fulfil its functions and in the development of mission-level guidance relevant to the work of the JOC.

46. ***UN Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC).*** The UNOCC is the primary JOC interlocutor at UNHQ. The UNOCC is also responsible for providing technical and policy support to mission JOCs. In consultation with relevant UNHQ offices, including the relevant DPPA-DPO Regional Divisions, the UNOCC shall work with missions to produce subsidiary guidelines and model approaches and products for the establishment and management of JOCs.

47. The **Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT)** and the **DPPA-DPO/Information Management Unit (DPPA-DPO/IMU)** also provide support to meet the needs of mission JOCs. OICT and DPPA-DPO/IMU work with the UNOCC to ensure that information management and IT solutions in support of JOCs remain relevant, interoperable and fit for purpose.

F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

48. The following terms and definitions apply to this policy:

Crisis – An incident or situation, whether natural or human-made that, due to its magnitude, complexity or gravity of potential consequence, requires a United Nations-wide coordinated multi-dimensional response. Such situations include two or more of the following: a) presents an exceptional risk to the safety and security of United Nations personnel, premises and assets, b) presents an exceptional threat to the effective functioning of a United Nations mission or other field presence, c) presents an exceptional threat to the effective implementation of the mandate of a United Nations mission or other field presence, d) may have a significantly negative humanitarian impact, or e) may give rise to serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law. In addition to major crises as defined above, missions may activate crisis response procedures at the mission level as a result of a critical event or incident which requires mission-level coordinated response.

Crisis Management Team – A leadership-level, cross-pillar decision-making body, chaired by a Crisis Manager, to ensure accelerated and coordinated decision-making in crisis response. The Crisis Manager will usually be the USG/DPO at UNHQ and the HOM in the field for crisis in peacekeeping missions.

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) – Includes UN Funds, Programmes and Agencies, as well as other non-UN humanitarian actors (national and international) involved in the humanitarian response.

Integrated mission – A mission with a single SRSG in authority over two Deputy SRSGs, one of which concurrently serves as the RC/HC, through whom the UNCT is structurally integrated in the mission.

Mission Leadership Team – The senior leadership group, as determined at the discretion of the HOM and typically comprising the HOM, his/her deputies, the mission COS and the heads of mission civilian and uniformed components.

Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operation – A peacekeepign mission comprising a mix of military, police and civilian components working together to implement a mandate from the Security Council.

Operations Coordination Body – A working-level, cross-pillar coordination body, led by a Crisis Coordinator, to support day-to-day operations of the crisis response, including developing policy recommendations, ensuring effective information management and managing common messaging. The Crisis Coordinator will be appointed by the Crisis Manager.

Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) – A comprehensive emergency management system, linking actors and activities across preparedness, prevention, response and recovery, to enhance resilience in order to improve the capacity of the Organization to effecitvely manage the riskes of disruptive events.

Regional JOC – Joint operations centres established at the regional (or sector) level of a peacekeeping operation on an ongoing or temporary basis. The establishment of a regional JOC, its mandate and reporting lines shall be determined at the discretion of the HOM, advised by the Chief JOC and the regional head of office.

Situational awareness – Knowledge, understanding and anticipation of a situation through monitoring and reporting of current events, analysis and predictive assessments.

Situational awareness products – Written reports, alerts and oral briefings.

UN Country Team (UNCT) – The UNCT encompasses all the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition in programme countries. The UNCT is composed of representatives of the UN funds and programmes, specialized agencies and other UN entities accredited to a given country. It could also include representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions.[9]

G. REFERENCES

Normative or superior references

- Secretary-General's Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions (17 January 2006)
- Secretary-General's Decision on Integrated Missions dated 26 June 2008 (Decision No. 2008/24 - Integration)
- Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (9 April 2013)
- Policy on Cooperation and Coordination between DSS and DPKO (October 2006)
- DPO-DOS Policy on Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2019.23)
- United nations Secretariat Policy on the Organizational Resilience Management System (December 2015)
- United Nations Security Management System, Security Policy Manual (as continuously updated and amended)
- Use of Information and Communication Technology Resources and Data (ST/SGB/2004/15, 29 November 2004)
- Secretary-General's Bulletin on Information Sensitivity, Classification and Handling (ST/SGB/2007/6, 12 February 2007)

Related guidance documents

- DPO Guidelines on Joint Operations Centres (Ref.2019.21, 1 November 2019)
- United Nations Crisis Management Policy (19 March 2018)
- DPKO-DFS SOP on Headquarters Crisis Response in Support of Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2016.17, 1 January 2017)
- Standard UN Classification Procedures (ST/SGB 2007/6)
- DPO SOP on Integrated Reporting from Peacekeeping Operations to UNHQ (Ref.2019.10, 1 June 2019)
- DPKO-DFS Policy on Joint Mission Analysis Centres (Ref.2015.03, 1 March 2015)
- Mission Start-up Field Guide (Ref.2010.01, September 2010)
- Mission-specific reporting and crisis management guidance documents
- OHCHR/DPKO/DPA/DFS Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions (Ref.2011.20, 1 September 2011)
- DPKO-DFS Policy on Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (Ref.2018.01, 1 February 2018)

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[9] General Assembly resolution 53/192, preamble 6.

H.   MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

49.   The HOM, or the mission COS, shall be responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy.

I.   CONTACT

50.   The point of contact for this policy is the UNOCC Director.

J.   HISTORY AND REVIEW

51.   This policy supersedes the 2014 DPKO-DFS Policy on Joint Operations Centres (Ref.2014.10).

52.   This policy shall be reviewed no later than two years after its approval.

APPROVAL SIGNATURE:

DATE OF APPROVAL:

NOV 0 7 2019