Occupational Safety and Health

Instructions

2.18: Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).

2.18.1: Introduction. The personnel of the UN are its greatest asset. The UN has an absolute duty of care to undertake all reasonably practicable measures to minimize fatalities, injuries and ill health due to occupational (workplace and work process related) hazards and risks. The UN's military personnel's ability to deliver its mandate is inextricably linked to the occupational (work) safety and health of its military personnel, and is not only an imperative part of its duty of care as an employer, but also financially and operationally essential to the success of UN military peacekeeping operations.

2.18.2: What is OSH? Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a hazard (non-malicious/accidental) based risk factor which is separate from Security risk. Security is a threat factor based (malicious/deliberate) such and significantly different in many ways. DPKO/DFS recent studies confirms that Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risk factor (risk) to military peacekeeping personnel is significantly higher when compared to Security threat based risk. Occupational Safety and Health (hazard related) fatalities outnumber the Security (threat related) related with 3:1 and injuries are outnumbered with 10:1.

2.18.3: OSH Hazards and Risk Factors. The UN military OSH related fatalities, injuries and illnesses primarily occur within the following safety and health hazard/risk factor categories and incident type:

- Workplace Environment and Process
- Disease and Illnesses
- Psychosocial and Mental
- Road Traffic
- Use of Vehicles, Machinery and Heavy Equipment
- Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives Management
- Fire Safety
- Natural Disasters
- Aviation
- CBRN/Hazardous Materials

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) accidents, harmful exposures, unsafe behaviors or inadequate (unsafe) working conditions have adverse impacts upon military personnel and the organization that include:

a) Death, illness or injury, with personal pain and suffering to the affected personnel or their family;

b) Loss of faith by the personnel in the concern of management for their safety and well-being;
c) Reduction of organizational work capability and loss of productivity;
d) Damage or loss of facilities, equipment and other materiel;
e) Significant financial loss to the UN organization; and
f) Significant reputational damage to the UN organization

2.18.4: Roles and Responsibilities. UN is committed to providing a safe workplace, minimizing the adverse impacts also to its military personnel and the Organization from work-related (occupational) injury and injury and ill-health, and enhancing the well-being of its military personnel. It will include occupational safety and health as a core management activity, establish effective arrangements to manage risks sensibly and proportionately. and create an environment in which military commanders, officers, noncommissioned officers and their military personnel (soldiers) collaborate to achieve these aims.

Occupational safety and health is a line management responsibility. Military Supervisors, at all levels, are accountable and responsible for the occupational safety and health of personnel under their supervision. This includes ensuring workplace equipment is safe and fit for purpose, that staff receive adequate training to work safely, and that work in compliance with established safe work practices and procedures. In turn, military individual personnel are also responsible for taking reasonable care to protect their own safety and health, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts and/or omissions.

2.18.5: UN Force Commanders. UN Force Commanders (FC) have overall accountability and responsibility for the implementation and management of occupational safety and health for military personnel his/her command and control. Heads of Mission (HoM) and/or Force Commanders as HoM have overall accountability and responsibility for the implementation and management of occupational safety and health within the mission. In each case, this includes adequate resourcing and staffing, by each Troop Contributing Country (TCC) to include the appointment (in each individual TCC contingent) of an appropriately senior military capacity to oversee the day-to-day operation of OSH risk management in their mission for military personnel. The core OSH requirement for each TCC personnel is included in the DPKO/DFS Operational Readiness Preparation for Troop Contributing Countries in Peacekeeping missions (Ref. 2016.08)

2.18.6: Military Supervisors. Commanders, Officers and Noncommissioned Officers and military Supervisors at all levels are responsible to ensure arrangements are in place for the occupational safety and health of personnel under their supervision. These individuals are pivotal in providing occupational safety and health leadership within their area of responsibility. Accordingly, they shall:

a) Include occupational safety and health as a core management activity;

b) Provide sufficient resources or assets to enable all occupational safety and health functions and training requirements to be fulfilled;

c) Ensure workplace hazard identification and hazard elimination whenever possible.

d) Where hazard elimination is not possible, they are to ensure that OSH risk assessments are conducted on all relevant work areas and activities, and that they are regularly reviewed, addressed with corrective and risk reduction measures, and communicated in accordance with risk management processes;

e) Ensure competence of personnel through the provision of training, instruction and supervision;

f) Where applicable, ensure supply and use of personal protective equipment (PPE);

g) Where applicable, undertake appropriate occupational safety and health monitoring;

h) Regularly consult and inform personnel on occupational safety and health matters;

i) Where applicable, consult with commercially contracted to ensure that hazards to all persons are identified, assessed and associated risk control measures are in place;

j) Report all occupational safety or health incidents (accidents, exposures, and dangerous occurrences/near misses, and accompanying fatalities, injuries, illnesses and material/financial loss) in accordance with the UN Incident Reporting and Recording requirements to be outlined in an Information Circular;

k) Record all instances where first aid or other medical treatment is given at work or as a result of a work matter, including date, time and place, name and job of injured or ill person, details of the injury/illness and any first aid given, what happened to the casualty immediately afterwards (e.g. went home, went to hospital, returned back to work etc.), name and signature of person dealing with incident; and,

l) Advise and keep the missions appointed primary (senior) military OSH representative, the civilian counterpart (OSH Unit) and the mission's Occupational Safety and Health Committee informed on

occupational safety and health matters affecting their military personnel.

2.18.7: Military Personnel/Soldiers. Individual UN military personnel shall:

a) Take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts and/or omissions at work;

b) Co-operate with their military supervisor, so far as necessary to enable them to successfully comply with duties or requirements imposed by UN OSH policy (including where applicable relevant local laws or regulation);

c) Follow workplace OSH "best practice", including the use of personal protective equipment (where applicable);

d) Not intentionally or recklessly interfere or misuse anything provided in the interests of occupational safety and health; and

e) Inform their supervisor without delay of any work-related injury or illness, or any work situation which may present an OSH risk.

2.26: Environment.

2.26.1: Introduction. Environmental sustainability is part of the mandates of most United Nations organizations to help countries to develop and implement good environmental and natural resources management nationally and internationally.

The United Nations is, *inter alia*, the secretariat of numerous Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) as well as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, declaring their determination "*to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change*." They set out an agenda that explicitly "*involves the whole world*" through "*integrated and indivisible*", "*universal goals and targets*".

Member States agreed that they would "*endeavor to reach the furthest behind first*". (A/RES/70/1) Working in some of the most vulnerable countries on the planet, peace operations have a particular responsibility to ensure that they contribute to this global effort through their presence. The level of commitment from the Security Council to this issue is evident with many calls for appropriate mandates for peace operations in this area; building on existing mandates for missions to consider and manage the environmental impacts of their operations.

The UN, as stated by its Secretary General "should lead by example and must always act responsibly". In addition, the integration of environment concerns into its activities contributes to presenting a positive image of the UN to the local communities, with the host governments and other partners, as well as to improving the health, safety and security of UN personnel and of the surrounding communities.

2.26.2: Objective. In the context of peacekeeping missions, the DPKO/DFS environmental policy's objective is that each United Nations field mission will take actions to integrate environmental measures into its planning and operations in order to avoid and minimize the impact of activities carried out by the mission and its personnel on the environment and to protect human health from such environmental impact.

It is therefore important that any UN peacekeeping operation and its personnel operate in accordance with these UN goals in order to lead by example. To this end, since 2009 the DPKO and DFS have a dedicated Environmental Policy for UN Field Missions, which covers key areas such as energy, wastewater, water, waste, hazardous substances, wild animals and plants, and cultural and historical resources management.

2.26.3: Policy. The Environmental Policy clearly states that "All personnel shall conduct themselves in accordance with this document", and also gives specific responsibility to the military component to implement it. The Force Commander appoints a military officer to serve as the environmental focal point within the military component to liaise with the Mission Environmental officer. The military environmental focal point coordinates actions on environmental issues within the military component.

2.26.4: Responsibility troops. Military units also have an environmental focal point at the camp level to coordinate implementation and provide environmental oversight.

The environment related Mission SOPs include the terms of reference of the different mission's Military Environmental Focal Points and their relations to each other as well as with the Civilian Mission Support Environmental Unit.

It is the responsibility of the commander to ensure that his/her troops are trained/aware of their environmental duties, do not degrade the environment in their area of responsibility, and liaise with the environmental focal point of the mission military component in order to implement the mission environmental objectives.

2.26.5: Duties military commanders. The main duties deriving from the Environmental Policy that military units have to implement are the following:

- Containment basins with enough capacity have to be placed under all fuel tanks and fuel collection points.
- All wastewater has to be treated prior to being discharged to the nature.
- No burn pit. Segregation of waste (including hazardous waste) has to be undertaken for recycling and/or proper disposal in accordance with mission environmental objectives.
- Bring empty (plastic) water bottles used during patrols back to camps for proper disposal (Do not throw away bottles/wraps directly into nature).
- Avoid bringing to area of operations plastic cutlery as well as using it
- Undertake energy conservation measures: switch off all appliances, lights and air conditioning when not in use. Avoid vehicles idle time as much as possible.
- Undertake water conservation measures, especially in water scarce areas.
- Do not bring any plant/seeds from country of origin which is not endemic to country of deployment, and vice versa.
- Do not acquire wild plants and animals, live or dead. Avoid using charcoal.
- Know where the cultural, religious and historical sites are, and behave according to local sensitivities.

Note: Chapter 10 (Mission Support) also highlights particular areas for contingents to look at re-mitigation of environmental impacts.

Military units could also set an example to the local population on environmental management through activities such as tree planting and/or recycling projects, where appropriate and in accordance with the mission's QIPs policy and priorities. Natural resources may also be one of the drivers of the conflict, e.g., illegal exploitation of high-value natural resources and/or competition of scarce natural resources. It is thus important that the battalion is not seen by the local population and host country as contributing to the conflict by interfering with natural resources (e.g., using charcoal) and/or seen as a "resource competitor" (e.g., over water in water scarce areas).

2.26.6: Environmental enhancements in the 2017 COE Manual:

The 2017 COE Manual provides some financial incentives to TCC/PCCs related to environmental enhancements:

- The deployment of generators complying with the ISO 8528 standard has a wet lease reimbursement rate higher than the equivalent prime power rate (Chapter 8, annex A);
- The deployment of 'generators, renewable energy integrated diesel-photovoltaic' has a wet lease reimbursement rate significantly higher than the equivalent prime power rate (Chapter 8, annex A);
- The provision of equipment that generates electricity from renewable energy to replace any or all of the fuel generators is encouraged. Such provision will be assessed as a special case (Chapter 3, annex A, para 12);
- An environmental enhancement supplement of an additional 5 per cent of the reimbursement rate to the troop/police contributor will be added if the provided tentage is shown to have additional features included which are designed to improve the heating and cooling effectiveness and efficiency of the facility (Chapter 3, annex B, para 38);
- An environmental enhancement supplement of an additional 5 per cent of the agreed reimbursement to troop/police contributors will be added if the provided accommodation, including warehouses and equipment storage, is shown to have additional features included which are designed to improve the heating and cooling effectiveness and efficiency of the facility (Chapter 3, annex B, para 42),

The 2017 COE Manual also strengthened the Article 7 (paragraphs 7.28 to 7.29) of the model MOU on environmental compliance and waste management, which includes the appointment of environment focal points and the requirement for contingents to leave premises and physical environment in the condition in which they were provided to them, except in exceptional circumstances of operational imperative.

References:

••DPKO /DFS Environmental Policy for UN Field Missions, 2009.6.

••Draft DPKO /DFS Environmental Guidelines for UN Field Missions (2007).

••DPKO /DFS Waste Management Policy for UN Field Missions (2015.6).

••GA resolutions and relevant mission's mandates given by the UN Security Council (e.g. MINUSMAS/RES/2100(2013) OP32, ad lib, MONUSCO – S/RES/2348(2017) OP48; MINUSCA – S/RES/2387 (2017) OP48, etc.)

••Template SOP on “Appointment of Military Environmental Advisers/Focal Points and Reporting Mechanisms”

••COE Manual, A/72/288