



NEWS RELEASE

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Fact Sheet: Ensuring a Robust Training Safety System

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Background

Safety is one of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)'s eight core values. The SAF has established comprehensive safety management systems, governed by safety authorities who conduct regular audits and reviews. With the formation of the Inspector-General's Office (IGO) on 27 February 2019, the SAF has intensified the scrutiny of safety practices at all levels and across all Services and formations. Additional safety initiatives have also been implemented to strengthen the SAF's safety system and safety culture.

SAF's Multi-Layered Safety Audit and Review

The SAF's safety management systems are aligned to the internationally recognised International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) 45001 Standards for Occupational Health and Safety Management^[1]. SAF units' safety systems and practices are audited to ensure that they abide by established safety processes, rules, regulations and directives:

IGO. The IGO audits the Services, focusing on system-level checks on Service-level safety policies and action plans, and how these have translated into the safety management system of the formations and units. IGO also conducts surveys and interviews with the commanders and soldiers, to verify that safety systems are running well on the ground, and to assess the units' safety culture.

External Review Panel on SAF Safety (ERPSS). The ERPSS, consisting of external safety experts and other relevant professionals, also assesses various aspects of SAF safety by conducting visits to the Services, formations, and units to evaluate safety practices and recommend improvements, to build a stronger safety system in the SAF.

Service Safety Inspectorates. In parallel, the Services' Safety Inspectorates conduct regular compliance audits on the safety management system of units and carry out inspections of units during their training and exercises. They also drive the implementation of their respective Service safety policies and standards.

External Auditors. External auditors, accredited by the Ministry of Manpower, also conduct audit checks to ensure SAF units abide by ISO-45001 Standards.

Unit and Formation Safety Officers. At the unit and formation levels, safety checks and inspections are conducted by the unit and formation safety officers respectively.

Reinforcing Safety as Priority at Every Level of the SAF

Since its inception, IGO has audited 70 per cent of all formations and their sub-units across the SAF. Remaining audits will be completed by September 2020. Through these audits, IGO aims to reinforce a strong safety culture at every level of the SAF.

Command Emphasis on Safety. IGO has uncovered that there is strong command emphasis on safety across the Services. Each Service has invested substantial effort and resources to enhance their safety processes and build a strong safety culture. Commanders at all levels have conducted comprehensive reviews of their safety management systems and introduced many initiatives to improve safety outcomes. To shape unit safety behaviour, safety has been included as a core mission outcome in units' training evaluations. Units and soldiers are now evaluated not just on their ability to complete their tasks, but also on whether it was completed safely. The Army is also conducting 100 per cent inspections of all high-risk and field training.

Stronger Safety Culture. IGO's audits also found that safety culture has been strengthened amongst commanders and soldiers on the ground, with safety increasingly embedded into daily routines. For example, commanders from the 6th Army Maintenance Base engage their men on safety matters during daily morning roll calls. During these sessions, safety incidents, near misses, lessons learnt and observations are discussed. In addition, soldiers go through a 'Think-Check-Do' routine with their supervisors before each maintenance task to identify potential risks. **Diagram 1** shows the 'Think-Check-Do' routine that is printed on a pocket-sized card and given to all Army technicians for easy referral. They go through the 'Think-Check-Do' routine as a team before they start a maintenance task. Larger versions are also put up around the maintenance area.

Diagram 1: Think-Check-Do Routine

Promoting Safety Ownership and Inculcating Zero-accident Mindset at All Levels

To promote safety ownership and inculcate a zero-accident mindset among servicemen, the SAF has implemented the following measures:

Evaluation of Safety Performance. Safety performance is incorporated as a core mission outcome during units' training evaluations. For example, it is given a heavier weightage during the SAF Best Unit Competition and Army Training Evaluation Centre (ATEC) assessment. Units, including ground commanders, are scrutinised for safety compromises and penalised for any breaches.

Increased Focus on High-risk Training. Ground audits and inspections are conducted for all high-risk and field training. Training supervision has been strengthened, with full-time safety officers deployed to all training units and experienced, regular trainers conducting all high-risk training for NSmen during In-camp training.

Safety Incorporated as Daily Routine. To strengthen the safety culture, units are making safety part of their daily routines through regular safety briefings and sharing of watch areas, lessons learnt and no-go criteria for high risk activities. They have also appointed soldiers as safety advocates to overcome the rank gradient and promote open reporting. These safety advocates have direct access to the unit safety officers and Commanding Officers. Before/During/After Action Review processes have also been enhanced so that soldiers are encouraged to raise safety observations. These encourage open reporting and promotes safety ownership at the individual and team levels.

Enhancing Capabilities for Accident Prevention and Response

Safety at the Fingertips with SafeGuardian. The SAF has developed SafeGuardian as a one-stop mobile application as a personal safety buddy for every serviceman. It allows servicemen easy and quick access to safety checklists, and taps on a community of users to report safety hazards and incidents anywhere, anytime. This app has been trialled by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the SAF aims to scale it to the rest of the Services in 2020.

Safer Equipment and Platforms. We are introducing new equipment into the SAF that are designed upfront with inbuilt safety features. For example, the Hunter Armoured Fighting Vehicle has been designed with several inbuilt safety features such as emergency stop features, and audio and visual alerts to prompt the crew about vehicle anomalies, potential system failures, as well as hazards during movement and when stationary. Existing vehicles and equipment have also been enhanced, such as the installation of additional emergency horns in all the vehicles of the Bionix training fleet.

Enterprise-Level Safety Sharing. IGO is working with the Services to develop an enterprise-level safety information system. With the data from our units' open reporting, the system will employ data analytics to do trend analyses. With leading indicators, IGO

hopes to share the insights with the Services and prompt early intervention to prevent accidents from happening.

^[1]The ISO 45001 Standards were published on 12 Mar 2018 as the international standard for Occupational Health and Safety management. This new standard, which replaces OHSAS 18001, places increased emphasis on management commitment, worker involvement, and risk control.

More Resources:

- Speech by Senior Minister of State for Defence, Mr Heng Chee How, at the MINDEF Committee of Supply Debate 2020 (Document No: MINDEF_20200302001_1)
- Fact Sheet: Enhancing the National Service Experience (Document No: MINDEF_20200302001_2)

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