

“TRAINING IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT”

TI 03/2020

APPROVED BY:



 DIRECTOR

TRAINING AND EDUCATION BRANCH (J7)

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DF POLICY ON TRAINING IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

1. Explanatory Note

As part of current restrictions on training activities within the DF during the COVID-19 response there will be a requirement to conduct essential courses and training in order to meet Defence Force Capability. Prioritised courses will be authorised to be completed in line with current DF Training Syllabi and there will be a requirement to provide training staff and resources to meet the capability training requirement.

This policy guideline for Commanding Officers of Training Establishments and Units as well as Officers in Charge of Training Activities¹ and all other persons employed in essential training during the COVID-19 crisis will ensure that safe practices and preventative measures in line with current DF and Governmental guidelines are adopted in all training activities undertaken by Defence Forces personnel.

2. Authorisation

This policy will be adopted by all Commanders involved in the delivery of DF training throughout the organisation and is published for the general guidance of members of the DF.

3. Policy Review

The content of this Instruction will be reviewed in line with developments in government-based constraints, restrictions and freedoms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ Training Activities refers to the full spectrum of activities within the Training Landscape including, *inter alia*, the conduct of approved essential courses, exercises, MREs etc.

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

Note: All amendments will take effect from the date thereof, except where otherwise stated.

LIST OF AMENDMENTS

Para No	Amdt No	Date	Reference

Contents

- 1. Introduction.**
- 2. Administration of Courses Guidance.**
- 3. Monitoring of Personnel in the Training Environment.**
- 4. Management of Local Leave & Weekend Passes.**
- 5. Guidance on Temperature Checking.**
- 6. Guidance on Personnel in the Training Environment presenting with COVID-19 Symptoms.**
- 7. Appointment of a COVID-19 Advisor.**
- 8. Guidance on the use of PPE in the training environment.**
- 9. Guidance on the prevention of cross-contamination.**
- 10. Guidance on Training Rooms.**

DF TRAINING POLICY IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

- References:**
- A. OPORD 02/2020.
 - B. GRO 05/2020 – DF General Guidance on COVID-19.
 - C. DF Training & Education Directive (TED) 2020.
 - D. J7 COVID-19 Training guidelines dated 19th of March.
 - E. HSE guidelines www2.hse.ie
 - F. NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide.
 - G. GRO 05/2015 - DF Health & Safety Risk Management Policy.
 - H. 09042020 COVID-19 Response - Consolidated DF Guidance on PPE Decontamination and Cleaning Procedures.
 - I. 17052020 COVID-19 Response - DF Guidance on Reusable Barrier Facemasks.
 - J. TI 02/19 Conduct and Administration of Authorised Courses in the DF.
 - K. Covid-19 Response - DF Guidance on Workspaces, Shared Facilities, and Accommodation.

1. INTRODUCTION:

- a. The DF Mission Statement in OPORD 02/2020 states that ***“The Defence Forces safeguards the health and welfare of our personnel, contributes to the security of the State, maintains framework operations and responds to requests for Aid to the Civil Authority from Government Departments and Agencies, in order to help control the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.”*** This policy is designed to address the needs of DF training institutions and units to safely and successfully conduct approved training activities within current Governmental guidelines.
- b. Essential training activities during the COVID-19 period are categorised as follows;
 - i. Induction Training.
 - ii. Overseas Training (Including enabling training/courses).
 - iii. ATCA Training.
 - iv. ATCP Training.
 - v. Career Courses.
 - vi. Courses deemed essential by DCoS(Ops) to maintain DF Capability.

2. ADMINISTRATION OF COURSES GUIDANCE:

Commanding Officers² (Comds) of Training Establishments and Units as well as Officers in Charge (OiCs) of Training Activities³ will conduct the Four Step Operational Training Risk Assessment in accordance with Reference G, prior to commencement of any training activity. It is imperative that the Governmental Guidelines and DF Guidelines, in particular the references to social distancing measures, hand-washing methodology and coughing etiquette, must be applied to all DF training activities for the immediate future. Additionally, where possible course content and subjects should be delivered remotely through E-Learning.

3. MONITORING OF PERSONNEL IN THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT.

a. Induction Courses (Cadet, Recruit and Apprenticeship Trg).

New Inductees⁴ will:

- i. Restrict social contact at home for two weeks prior to arrival at the training institution (see definition in Annex A).
- ii. On arrival at the training institution inductees will sign a Self-Isolation Declaration Form (Annex B) to state that they have restricted their social contact for the past two weeks and have no symptoms or been exposed to people who may have COVID-19.
- iii. Undertake a temperature check as part of a screening process on arrival on the course and agree to have their temperature checked periodically as determined by the Training Activity COVID-19 Advisor, but not less than twice daily.

b. Serving Members⁵ engaged on DF Cses

Serving Members engaged on DF Cses will

- i. Restrict social contact at home for two weeks prior to the commencement of the course.
- ii. On arrival at the training institution they will sign a Self-Declaration Form (Annex C).
- iii. On arrival on the course undertake a temperature check as part of a screening process and agree to have their temperature checked periodically as determined by the Training Activity COVID-19 Advisor, but not less than twice daily.

² Commanding Officers of Training Establishments and Units, and OiCs of Training Activity will be known hence forth collectively as Commanders.

³ Training Activities refers to the full spectrum of activities within the Training Landscape including, *inter alia*, the conduct of approved essential courses, exercises, MREs etc.

⁴ New Inductees will be informed of the monitoring processes by D J1.

⁵ Serving members will be informed of the monitoring processes in the respective Joining Instruction and Activity Admino.

c. Military Instructors and Training Staff

Military Instructors and Training Staff are key training enablers in ensuring that essential courses are conducted in order to meet DF capability. They are, therefore, an integral and integrated component of any training environment and as such must be subjected to the same screening protocols as the serving members of the DF undergoing the training activity.

d. External Lecturers/Guest Speakers.

Training institutions may invite external lecturers or guest speakers to deliver a lecture or talk to a career course. These visiting personnel will be requested to undergo the same screening requirements as DF personnel. Comds should advise in the Letter of Invitation that

- i. They will be required to undergo a temperature screening upon arrival at the Training Institution.
- ii. They will be required to sign a Self-Declaration Form (Annex C).

4. MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL LEAVE AND WEEKEND PASSES.

All leave will be processed in accordance with DFR A11 and will be at the discretion of the Comd (TI 02/2019). Comds will ensure that all students, instructors and members of Staff follow the institution's / unit's SOPs in relation to the availing of leave. The SOPs should include the following information:

- a. Requirement to include leave restrictions and requirements in Joining Instructions.
- b. Indication that personnel must restrict their movements at home⁶ while on leave, including local leave or weekend pass.
- c. Indication that all leave is at the discretion of the Comd.
- d. Indication that all personnel on Weekend Pass or on Leave (not including weekday local leave) must complete a Self-Declaration Form (Annex C) upon return.

5. GUIDANCE ON TEMPERATURE CHECKING

Comds will ensure that Temperature Checks are conducted on all Students, Instructors and Staff twice daily. Personnel selected to conduct these tasks will receive a briefing from Medical Corps personnel and must be issued with the appropriate PPE prior to the conduct of any testing. All such temperatures taken will be recorded⁷ and retained

⁶ Annex A for definition of Restricted Movements.

⁷ Article 9 of GDPR allows such processing as it is '*necessary for reasons of public interest in the area of public health*'. However in line with the principles of data minimisation and confidentiality it is vital that Comds process this data in strict confidence. Any data collected for this purpose cannot be used for any other purpose or given or processed to any third parties.

on file for future reference. It is recommended that the personnel tasked to carry out this function are MFR qualified.

6. GUIDANCE ON PERSONNEL IN THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT PRESENTING WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS.

If a Student, Instructor or member of Staff feel that they may have symptoms of COVID-19 the following “actions on” will be applied;

- a. ‘Actions on’ the Notification of COVID-19 Symptoms at the Training Institution.
 - i. If practical, the individual will isolate themselves away from fellow students and will contact an instructor.
 - ii. The individual will don a facemask and proceed to the dedicated isolation room.
 - iii. The matter will be reported immediately to the MAP / MO and the COVID-19 Advisor will be informed.
 - iv. After consulting with the patient, the MO will provide the Comd with a clinical advice.
 - v. Based on this advice, and in consultation with the MO, the Comd will conduct a reassessment of the situation and determine how to proceed.
 - vi. The Comd must report the incident to J7 through the normal chain of command.

- b. ‘Actions on’ the Notification of COVID-19 Symptoms from Home.
 - i. In addition to complying with the ‘reporting from home guidelines’ contained in the DF Regulations and Unit / Training Institution SOPs, personnel that feel they may have the COVID-19 symptoms will also report the matter to the Training Institutions or unit conducting the training.
 - ii. Comds will then implement the actions articulated in para 6.a.3 above.

7. APPOINTMENT OF A COVID-19 ADVISOR

- a. Comds will appoint a COVID-19 Advisor to assist in the implementation of all Governmental and DF COVID-19 protocols. This role should be filled by the Chief Instructor (CI) or equivalent.

 - b. The COVID-19 Advisor will complete the following inter alia tasks:
 - i. Ensure COVID-19 compliance within the relevant training environment.
 - ii. Maintain a dedicated training COVID-19 Contact Log Book.
 - iii. Draft the COVID-19 training module for the unit/ institution SOP.
 - iv. Review and retain the student and instructor Self-Declarations.
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- v. Monitor and advise the personnel tasked to conduct the temperature checking.
- vi. Ensure that all locations are cleaned and disinfected after use.
- vii. Ensure that PPE and disinfectant equipment is available.
- viii. Install the necessary COVID-19 notices and restriction aids within the training locations.
- ix. Conduct a pre-course COVID-19 brief for all students, instructors and members of staff.
- x. In consultation with the Health and Safety Officer, determine accommodation and lecture hall capacity in compliance with Governmental and DF Guidelines.
- xi. Restrict and control visitors to the training environment.
- xii. Remain conversant with all relevant governing regulations.

8. GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF PPE IN THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT.

- a. At all times, the mandated social distancing, hand washing methodology and coughing etiquette will be observed and strictly applied. According to Governmental guidelines, PPE is only necessary when social/physical distancing measures are not suitable/appropriate. Annex A to GRO 05/2020 outlines the COVID-19 PPE levels within the DF. Accordingly, appropriate PPE, if available, must be used to mitigate any unaccepted identified risk. Further clarification, if required, on PPE levels may be sourced through the Bde/Fmn H&S and Medical Officer.
- b. Prior to the commencement of any training activity, the Comd will complete a risk assessment. This risk assessment will identify the PPE required to mitigate any identified risk. Any request for PPE stocks must be made in a timely fashion.

9. GUIDANCE ON THE PREVENTION OF CROSS CONTAMINATION.

Comds need to be aware of the potential of cross contamination within the training environment and steps must be taken to reduce the incidence of this in training. In addition to the conduct of risk assessments and enforcement of all Governmental Guidelines and DF Regulations to reduce any potential cross contamination, Comds are advised to, where possible, create Training Pods. These Pods should habitually conduct their training and non-training activities as a designated entity away from other Training Pods and the general population. Additionally, these Pods, where possible, should be allocated clearly designated training zones, which have been reserved exclusively for their use.

10. GUIDANCE ON WORKSPACES/TRAINING ROOMS/ACCOMMODATION

- a. The use and selection of workspaces, training rooms and accommodation will be driven by and aligned with the Defence Forces guidance on the use of Shared Workspaces and Accommodation (Ref K).

- b. Additionally the hierarchy of controls (elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administration controls and PPE) will be employed by all DF members IOT reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. On an individual level the message of meticulous standard precautions for infection prevention and control must be continually reinforced.
- c. Local risk assessments for shared workspaces, accommodation and utility areas will be conducted prior to the commencement of any training activity. The risk assessment will follow the Garrison Risk Assessment protocol as outlined in Part 2, Para 4 of GRO 05/2015; Defence Forces Health and Safety Risk Management. As routine in current circumstances, advice from the necessary SME (e.g. Medical, Eng, H&S etc.) should be sought. Workspace / accommodation managers will be noted in the risk assessment as a control measure.

List of Annexes:

Annex A: Glossary of Terms

Annex B: Self-Isolation Declaration Form

Annex C: Self- Declaration Form

GLOSSARY OF TERMS⁸

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Coronavirus

Broader name for the family of diseases that includes COVID-19, and its entry has been revised to show that relationship.

COVID-19

New name for a new disease, coined as an abbreviated form of coronavirus disease 2019.

Direct contact

Person-to-person contact or spray of droplets during coughing and sneezing.

Direct contact log

Person-to-person contact log of all site attending employees which will assist in contact tracing as and when positive cases arise.

Isolation

Separation of infected individuals and healthy individuals.

Restricted movement

Separating well persons, who have been exposed to the infection, from other well persons during the incubation period of an illness.

Restricted movement and self isolation

Avoidance of contact with other individuals for a period of time during the outbreak of a contagious disease usually by remaining in one's home/room and limiting contact with family members.

Social distancing (physical distancing)

Practice of implementing measures to maintain safe distances for preventing the spread of disease.

Treatment

Medical treatment for COVID-19 symptoms and/or related complications.

⁸ NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide.

Annex D to GRO 05/2020

SELF ISOLATION DECLARATION FORM

Service Number	
Rank	
Name	
Unit	
Date of Birth	
Number of days advised to self- isolate, self- quarantine.	
Date Commencing (DTG)	
Date of Return to Work (DTG)	
Advised to Isolate by	HSE <input type="checkbox"/> GP <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER : _____ (Specify)
Method of Notification (Attach Copy with this form where appropriate)	Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER : _____ (Specify)
Name of adviser (Name of GP, Health professional , other , (specify))	
DTG of advice received	
Details provided to the adviser by you (e.g. Service Details / Contact details of Formation Medical Officer, places and dates of exposure etc.)	
I have attached relevant documentation (where applicable)	

Signed _____ Number _____ Rank _____ DTG _____
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Personnel are reminded of the requirement to keep their unit updated as to their disposal.

UNIT HQ:

Received by _____ DTG _____

SELF-DECLARATION FORM

NO: _____ **RANK:** _____ **NAME:** _____

QUESTIONS	Yes/No
Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?	
Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?	
Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?	
Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?	

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

