

**United Nations**  
**Department of Peacekeeping Operations**  
**Department of Field Support**  
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## **Policy**

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# **Environmental Policy for UN Field Missions**

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Approved by: Alain Le Roy, USG DPKO  
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Contact: Engineering Section, SSS / LSD / DFS  
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## DPKO/DFS POLICY ON Environment for UN Field Missions

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### **A. PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this document is to provide policy for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Field Support (DFS) and field missions on environmental matters and its implementation in field missions. The policy requires that each field mission establish its environmental policy and objectives and control measures which are to be implemented through all phases of the mission. Their implementation is the responsibility of the Head of Mission. All personnel shall conduct themselves in accordance with this document as well as with the DPKO/DFS Environmental guidelines and any associated objectives, instructions, operating procedures issued.

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### **B. SCOPE**

2. This policy deals with environmental issues in field missions. It places responsibilities on senior DPKO and DFS staff members (see Section D.3) in headquarters and within each mission. More specific information on various environmental aspects likely to be encountered in field missions is provided in the DPKO/DFS Environmental Guidelines for UN Field Missions. All DPKO and DFS staff should be aware of this policy.

This Policy supersedes any earlier directives or guidance on the subject issued by DPKO and DFS including Section 3.7 of the Operational Support Manual (Provisional) and Chapter VIII of the Engineering Support Manual (Draft).

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## **C. RATIONALE**

3. This policy was developed to fulfil a need for minimum standards for missions on environmental issues. The policy and its associated guidelines were developed through cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and DPKO.
4. In the past, environmental issues were handled on an ad-hoc basis by individual missions relying upon their own assessments of any problems and, often, the voluntary actions of mission personnel. The issuance of this policy and the associated guidelines for field missions is required to practise internationally acceptable standards.

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## **D. POLICY**

### **D.1 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OBJECTIVES**

5. 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 staff on the environment and to protect human health from such environmental impact.
6. Such measures will be undertaken throughout all phases of a United Nations field mission, including:
  - 6.1. Initial planning of the mission;
  - 6.2. Setting up of logistic arrangements for the mission;
  - 6.3. Maintenance and operations of the mission;
  - 6.4. Closing of the mission.

### **D.2 MISSION FRAMEWORK**

#### **National Laws and Regulations**

7. Environmental issues at the mission will normally be subject to national laws and regulations governing the environment in general or those governing specific subjects such as health, nature and natural resources, wild life conservation, forestry, freshwater, coastal area management or toxic and hazardous substances.
8. Under the Model Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Article IV Paragraph 6, the SOFA contains a provision that the "United Nations peacekeeping operation and its members shall respect all local laws and regulations. The Special Representative / Commander shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the observance of those obligations".

### **Obligations of the Host Country under International Environmental Treaties**

9. Where there is the lack of relevant national laws and regulations governing relevant environmental issues, the international obligations under international environmental treaties to which the host country is a party will provide the standards of conduct with which the mission will need to comply.

### **Environmental Treaties, Norms and Standards Agreed at the United Nations and United Nations Conferences**

10. International environmental treaties, environmental norms and standards agreed at the United Nations or at intergovernmental conferences organized by the United Nations will provide practical information for the mission to establish minimum standards to achieve its environmental objectives.
11. Agenda 21, adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (entered into force in July 1975) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development are examples of the instruments setting out intergovernmentally agreed environmental norms and standards. References listed in Section E should be the minimum standards that the mission considers while establishing its environmental objectives and procedures.

### **Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law (ST/SGB/1999/13)**

12. The Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law sets out fundamental principles and rules of international humanitarian law which are applicable to United Nations Forces conducting operations under United Nations command and control. In the context of environmental protection, the following sections apply:
  - 12.1. Section 6.3 states that the United Nations force is prohibited from employing means of warfare which are intended, or which may be expected to cause, widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment;
  - 12.2. Section 6.6 states that the United Nations force is prohibited from attacking monuments of art, architecture or history, archaeological sites, works of art, places of worship and museums and libraries which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples. It further states that, in its area of operations, the United Nations force shall not use such cultural property or their immediate surroundings for purposes which might expose them to destruction or damage. Section 6.6 concludes by stating that theft, pillage, misappropriation and any act of vandalism directed against cultural property is strictly prohibited.
  - 12.3. Section 6.7 states that the United Nations force is prohibited from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as food stuff, livestock, and drinking water installations and supplies.

### D.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Under-Secretary-General for Field Support**

13. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support will take measures to ensure that all field missions integrate environmental considerations into their respective operations to achieve the environmental objectives of field missions, and to endeavour to secure resources required for this purpose.

#### **Head of Mission**

14. **Environmental Policy and Objectives:** The Special Representative of the Secretary-General or an official acting as the Head of a United Nations field mission will promulgate the environmental policy and objectives of the field mission, noting the basic components presented in Section D.4 below and the information provided in the Environmental Guidelines.
15. The Head of Mission will delegate his/her authority to the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support to establish instructions and operating procedures to implement the mission's environmental objectives.
16. The Head of Mission is to contact other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes operating in the mission area and encourage them to implement their environmental policy or to adopt the mission's environmental policy, guidelines and objectives.
17. **Annual Mission Environmental Statement:** At the start of each year, the Head of Mission is to issue to all mission personnel a signed statement advising/reminding them of the mission's environmental policy and objectives and highlighting any particular environmental goal planned to be achieved during that year.

#### **Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support**

18. Subject to the authority delegated to him/her in writing by the Head of Mission, the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support of the mission is responsible for the mission's compliance with the Environmental Policy and will institute instructions and operating procedures and take other necessary measures to ensure that the mission will comply with the environmental policy and objectives of the mission.
19. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support of the mission is to appoint an Environmental Officer in the mission. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support may direct that specific substantive sections of the mission also appoint an environmental focal point to work with the Environmental Officer.

#### **Force Commander**

20. The Force Commander of the mission, after consultation and in coordination with the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will institute instructions and operating procedures and take other necessary measures to ensure that the military component will comply with the environmental policy and objectives of the mission.

Such instructions and operating procedures will be issued after the concurrence of the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.

### **Head of the Police Component**

21. The Head of the Police Component of the mission, after consultation and in coordination with the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will institute instructions and operating procedures and take other necessary measures to ensure that the police component will comply with the policy and environmental objectives of the mission. Such instructions and operating procedures will be issued after the concurrence of the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.

### **Environmental Officer**

22. The Environmental Officer, subject to the authority delegated to him/her by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will be responsible for coordinating and managing actions on environmental issues in the mission.
23. The Environmental Officer will establish the mission's Environmental Management System by undertaking the following tasks:
  - 23.1. Support the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support in the drafting and/or review of the mission's environmental policy and objectives.
  - 23.2. Conduct environmental assessments and surveys of operations in the mission;
  - 23.3. Produce the mission's environmental baseline study and environmental action plan;
  - 23.4. Advise relevant officers or offices on environmental issues arising from the environmental assessments and surveys undertaken;
  - 23.5. Provide environmental information relevant to the operations of the mission and take actions to promote awareness on environmental issues;
  - 23.6. Establish a list of potentially hazardous installations within the mission (e.g. a petrol station or a warehouse storing flammables) in cooperation with fire marshals or other staff at the mission designated to deal with emergencies;
  - 23.7. Liaise on environmental issues with local authorities or the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and relevant United Nations bodies and agencies present in the country or region hosting the mission;
  - 23.8. Investigate complaints or reports of pollution, contamination, health hazards and other environment-related incidents;
  - 23.9. Recommend to the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support to undertake such measures as may be required to prevent or mitigate environmental problems;
  - 23.10. Keep a record of environmental issues and actions thereon at the mission;

- 23.11. Submit, on a regular basis, a report on environmental issues at the mission, to the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support;
  - 23.12. Provide an environmental briefing to police and military contingents during their induction training, and
  - 23.13. Carry out any other tasks required to support the DPKO/DFS environmental policy and the environmental objectives of the mission as directed by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.
24. **Environmental Baseline Study.** The Environmental Officer is to undertake an environmental baseline study of all mission locations at the beginning of the mission. A baseline study is an audit of the environmental conditions at a specific location at a specific moment in time. Whenever the mission establishes a new location, the baseline study is to be expanded to include an assessment of that location. The baseline study will be updated by periodic assessments of each location to reveal environmental conditions which are improving and those which are in decline. In addition to internal use within the mission, baseline studies are to be held on file for possible use, when required, in discussions with the host country regarding damage or pollution claimed to have been caused by the mission.
25. **Environmental Action Plan.** The Environmental Officer is to create an Environmental Action Plan based on the mission's environmental objectives in which specific achievable, realistic and timely targets for environmental protection measures and actions to be undertaken are detailed. Responsibilities for achieving each specific target are to be clearly stated in the plan.

#### **Appointed Official in the Military Component**

26. The Force Commander will appoint an official of the Force to serve as the focal point within the military component of the mission to liaise with the Environmental Officer and to deal with environmental issues within the military component.
27. The appointed official for the environment in the military component will undertake the following tasks:
- 27.1. Consult with the Environmental Officer on environmental issues on a regular basis;
  - 27.2. Coordinate actions on environmental issues within the military component;
  - 27.3. Advise the Force Commander on appropriate measures to be taken to address environmental issues within the military component in a manner consistent with the environmental measures instituted by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support,
  - 27.4. With the Environmental Officer, provide an environmental briefing to military contingents and personnel during their induction training; and
  - 27.5. Carry out any other tasks on environmental issues as directed by the Force Commander.

### **Appointed Official in the Police Component**

28. The Head of the Police Component will appoint an official of the Police to serve as the focal point within the police component of the mission to liaise with the Environmental Officer and to deal with environmental issues within the police component.
29. The appointed official for the environment in the police component will undertake the following tasks:
  - 29.1. Consult with the Environmental Officer on environmental issues on a regular basis;
  - 29.2. Coordinate actions on environmental issues within the police component;
  - 29.3. Advise the Head of the Police Component on appropriate measures to be taken to address environmental issues within the police component in a manner consistent with the environmental measures instituted by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support;
  - 29.4. With the Environmental Officer, provide an environmental briefing to police contingents and personnel during their induction training; and
  - 29.5. Carry out any other tasks on environmental issues as directed by the Head of the Police Component.

### **D.4 BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND OBJECTIVES OF A MISSION**

30. The environmental policy and objectives of a mission to be promulgated by the Head of Mission will include, but not be limited to, the components listed under this section.

#### **Environmental Responsibility**

31. Each official member of the mission, in all components of the mission, civilian, police and military, will be responsible for ensuring that his/her conduct in the mission conforms to the environmental objectives, any related instructions and operating procedures of the mission as well as the DPKO/DFS environmental policy generally.

#### **Environmental Information**

32. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, the Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component will take measures to ensure that all staff in the mission and contractors and non-UN personnel working for the mission receive information concerning the DPKO/DFS environmental policy, the mission's environmental objectives, the instructions and measures instituted thereon and relevant environmental issues in the mission.
33. For this purpose, the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, the Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component will ensure that all personnel, upon their arrival at the mission, will be given relevant information and advice concerning their responsibility in dealing with environmental issues at the mission.

34. The Environmental Officer will regularly make available to all staff of the mission information or advice on environmental matters and relevant procedures and measures required to address environmental issues.

### **Solid and Hazardous Wastes**

35. Each office or unit generating wastes at the mission will take practicable measures to ensure that:
  - 35.1. The generation of wastes in the mission will be minimized.
  - 35.2. Wastes are segregated at source on the basis of their characteristics.
  - 35.3. Hazardous wastes will be clearly separated from other wastes and handled in an environmentally sound manner in accordance with procedures promulgated by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.
36. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will establish a standing procedure for waste collection in the mission. Until procedures are established for the mission, the mission is to work in accordance with the template provided with the DPKO/DFS Environmental Guidelines
  - 36.1. Recycling or reuse of wastes, if practicable, will be undertaken in accordance with procedures to be established by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.
  - 36.2. Disposal of wastes will be conducted only through procedures approved in writing by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support.
  - 36.3. Where the collection and disposal of wastes are undertaken by contractors, the contractual arrangements will include provisions clearly making the contractors accountable and liable for environmentally responsible behaviours consistent with the environmental objectives of the mission.

### **Energy**

37. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will take measures to ensure that the use of energy is optimised by the mission with the aim to minimize the mission's greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring enough power for proper functioning.

### **Water**

38. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will take measures to ensure that water is properly used by the mission and in accordance with local conditions. He/She will take measures to encourage the reuse of treated wastewater by the mission.

### **Wastewater**

39. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will take measures to ensure that there will be no discharge of wastewaters directly into streams, rivers or

other bodies of water without prior treatment. Sewage will be either treated on-site or connected to a local communal treatment system, if available.

### **Hazardous Substances**

40. Each office or unit that procures, supplies, stores, distributes or uses the following substances will be responsible for safe and environmentally sound handling of those substances, and will keep records concerning those substances and submit copies of such records to the Environmental Officer. The following substances are examples of a wider list provided in the associated DPKO/DFS Environmental Guidelines:
  - 40.1. Pesticides used for indoor or outdoor applications to control malaria and other disease vectors;
  - 40.2. Oil products;
  - 40.3. Hazardous chemicals used for the maintenance of equipment (such as acid for batteries);
  - 40.4. Ozone depleting substances (such as chlorofluorocarbons, R-22 or halons) used in air conditioners, refrigerators and other equipment;
  - 40.5. Construction materials containing hazardous chemicals (such as asbestos);
  - 40.6. Explosive materials;
  - 40.7. Electronic equipment containing hazardous substances (such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury).

### **Wild Animals and Plants**

41. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will issue instructions immediately upon establishment of a mission to:
  - 41.1. Prohibit hunting, logging, harvesting, collecting, purchasing or acquiring wild animals or wild plants, live or dead, or any parts and derivatives.
  - 41.2. Permit fishing only as a recreational activity and only where it does not or is judged not to interfere with local population food resources.
  - 41.3. Prohibit any personnel in the mission from taking any wild animals or plants out of the country, unless prior authorization has been received from the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, and, where applicable, documentation establishing legal acquisition and non-detrimental trade and all relevant customs and transportation documentation has been properly completed.
42. The mission will respect the norms of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
43. The Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component, in coordination with the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will issue directions to their components to comply with these mission instructions.

## **Cultural and Historical Resources Management**

44. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support , the Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component, in coordination with the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will issue directions to their components to protect places of cultural, religious, historical and/or architectural value.

## **Facilities**

45. During the initial planning for determining the locations of facilities within the mission, the relevant offices of the DPKO and DFS and the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will take appropriate measures to ensure that:
  - 45.1. Construction or clearing of sites for use by the mission is conducted in a manner minimizing negative impacts on or damage to the environment including undertaking a historic and archaeological appraisal of the construction site;
  - 45.2. Facilities generating noise (such as heliports or generator houses) are located in a manner minimizing the impact of such noise on the health of staff and local personnel living or working near such facilities;
  - 45.3. Offices and residential buildings, if newly constructed, are built in a manner minimizing the impact on the environment, and materials used for the offices and residential buildings do not contain substances toxic and harmful to human health, nor contribute to the degradation of the local environment and natural resources.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

46. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will prepare a plan and establish procedures for responding to and handling environmental emergencies in the mission. The Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component will provide full support to the plan and procedures prepared by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support and prepare plans for their components to support the mission's emergency plan. Rehearsals of response actions to an environmental incident are to be undertaken once a year.

## **D.5 MONITORING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS**

47. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will institute procedures for monitoring if activities and operations in the mission are in compliance with the environmental policy and the mission's environmental objectives. The Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component, in coordination with the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support, will also institute procedures for monitoring if activities and operations in their components are in compliance with the environmental policy, the mission's environmental objectives and relevant mission procedures.
48. For this purpose, the Environmental Officer, in consultation with the appointed officials on the environment in the military and police components, will oversee day-to-day

observance of the environmental policy, the environmental objectives of the mission, compliance with instructions on environmental issues and, where required, conduct inspections. The Environmental Officer will prepare, on a regular basis, a report reflecting this oversight and make the report available to the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support who will make it available to the Head of Mission, the Force Commander and the Head of the Police Component.

## **D.6 RESOURCES**

49. The budget for the mission will include adequate financial resources for supporting the environmental policy and the environmental objectives of the mission, including the Environmental Officer and other human resources dedicated for this purpose.

## **D.7 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR PERSONNEL**

50. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support will take measures to ensure that:
  - 50.1. The standards of conduct applied to civilian personnel in the mission integrate therein the environmental objectives of the mission and that any instructions on environmental issues are complied with.
  - 50.2. Civilian United Nations personnel in the mission who violate the environmental objectives of the mission or any instructions on environmental issues are made subject to disciplinary measures under the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of the United Nations.
  - 50.3. Non-UN personnel and contractors working for the mission comply with the environmental policy, the mission's environmental objectives, and environmental measures instituted by the relevant instructions at the mission, the violation of which will be dealt with by termination of contract or other appropriate contractual measures in accordance with the contract. Appropriate phrasing is to be included in relevant contracts.
51. The Force Commander will take measures to ensure that:
  - 51.1. The standards of conduct applied to military personnel in the mission integrate therein the environmental objectives of the mission and that any instructions on environmental issues are complied with.
  - 51.2. Military police units in the mission are informed of the environmental requirements expected from military personnel in the mission and that they take appropriate measures in cases of violation of the environmental objectives of the mission and any instructions on environmental issues.
52. The Head of the Police Component will take measures to ensure that:
  - 52.1. The standards of conduct applied to police personnel in the mission integrate therein the environmental objectives of the mission and that any instructions on environmental issues are complied with.

- 52.2. Police units and police personnel in the mission are informed of the environmental requirements expected from all personnel in the mission and that they take appropriate action in cases of violation of the environmental objectives of the mission and any instructions on environmental issues.

## **D.8 SYSTEM-WIDE MEASURES**

53. The Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support may recommend to the Under Secretary-General for Field Support to undertake such actions as may be undertaken jointly by two or more missions addressing common environmental issues.
54. The Under Secretary-General for Field Support will examine such recommendations by the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support and will take appropriate measures.

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## **E. REFERENCES:**

### **55. Normative or Superior References:**

#### **UN Declarations and Programmes of Action:**

Declaration of the UN conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Declaration, 1972)

World Charter for Nature, UN General Assembly Resolution 37/17, 1982

Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992).

UN General Assembly Resolutions 47/37, Protection of the Environment in times of Armed Conflict, 1993, and 49/50, United Nations Decade of International Law, 1995

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002).

Millennium Development Goals, as identified in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (New York, September 2000).

The 2005 World Summit Outcome (New York, September 2005).

#### **Multilateral Environmental Agreements:**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Washington, March 1973)

Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), 1989

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1987

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2001

Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, 1998

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), 1972

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), 1971

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), 1973/78

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil (OILPOL), 1954

UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992

UN Convention to Combat Desertification, 1994

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, 1985

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992

UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention), 1972

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982

**Others:**

Model Status of Forces Agreement (A/45/594)

Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law (ST/SGB/1999/13, 6 August 1999)

**Related Guidance:**

DPKO/DFS Environmental Guidelines for UN Field Missions

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**F. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

52. Compliance with these guidelines shall be monitored by the Chief, Engineering Section in Logistics Support Division, DFS. Within field missions, compliance shall be

managed by the Environmental Officer reporting to the Director of Mission Support / Chief of Mission Support who will be responsible for monitoring.

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**G. CONTACT**

54. The Contact Office for this Policy is the Engineering Section, Specialist Support Service, Logistics Support Division, DFS.
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**H. HISTORY**

55. This is the first edition of this Policy. No amendments have yet been made.
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**APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**



**DATE OF APPROVAL:**

