

# Health and Safety Policy

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## Document Control

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4.0	09/02/2023	NOC H&S Team	Minor rewording throughout the document and figure 1 – governance structure updated. Added H&S Procedure section. 27/02/2023 – Chair of H,S&W Committee has been amended to AD of CBS.	NOC Board 09/02/2023
5.0	06/02/2024	NOC H&S Team	Referred to the ships S&E Protection Policy and their safety management system. Added ISO45001 requirements. Some editorial and formatting changes.	NOC Board 06/02/2024

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## 1. Scope

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) is one of the world's top oceanographic institutions and we operate two shore sites, Southampton and Liverpool, two Royal Research Vessels, James Cook and Discovery and work across the world with research partners. All our working locations present different Health and Safety risks and therefore the NOC commits to assessing and reducing the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

The scope of this policy applies to all NOC staff, students, contractors, and visitors located at the two premises in Southampton and Liverpool. University employees and students on both shore sites will follow their respective organisations policy. Our Research Vessels operate under a separate Safety Management System and therefore mariners and any visitors on-board will follow the Ships Safety and Environmental Protection Policy. However, we work closely and report through the same committee.

This policy also applies to the National Oceanography Centre's commercial subsidiary NOC Innovations.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to effectively lay out the responsibilities and commitments in relation to Health and Safety to support our continued adherence to ISO45001, which is the international standard that specifies requirements for an occupational health and safety management system.

## 3. Objectives

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the NOC has a clear governance structure and proactive management system in place to enable it to comply with all relevant statutory H&S legislation.

This policy also ensures that the roles and responsibilities in terms of the management of Health and Safety are clearly defined.

## 4. Policy Statement

The NOC is committed to achieving and maintaining a high level of pro-active H&S culture at work, complying with all relevant legislation, and continuously seeking to improve its H&S performance and management system. To maintain these high standards, we will do the following:

- Manage all aspects of Health and Safety.
- Set and benchmark against Key Performance Indicators'. Reporting these on a quarterly basis for trends.
- Use Key Performance Indicators to establish objectives and appropriate targets for improvement.
- Assess risks in advance of any significant personal exposure.
- Reduce risks through appropriate and effective control measures.
- Appoint competent persons to provide specialist advice to employees and external agencies working on NOC sites.
- Provide appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Implement health surveillance where necessary.
- Routinely inspect and audit our H&S management activities and groups in line with an agreed schedule.
- Learn from our experience to continuously improve our H&S best practice.
- Proactively seek staff input and feedback to develop the H&S management system.
- Promote best practice and champion sharing innovative thinking.
- Work closely with union appointed safety representatives and effectively communicating H&S information to all levels of stakeholders.

- Provide adequate resources for implementing this policy.
- Actively promote H&S activities, team members and procedures through regular communications, events and promotional activities.
- Continue to achieve ISO45001 accreditation.

NOC expects staff, students, visitors, contractors, tenants, and other employers to share the above commitments by complying with all relevant policies and procedures and to understand that they too have legal and moral obligations to themselves and to one another.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

To ensure that the aims set out in the policy statement are effective in promoting safe and healthy workplaces and that both the organisation and employees are able to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation, the following responsibilities have been established across specific roles and groups/committees.

### **5.1. Specific Roles**

#### **The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

Ultimate responsibility for H&S lies with the NOC CEO. Though the responsibilities can be discharged through the normal managerial lines, the CEO must be assured that they are still undertaken. The CEO will ensure:

- That the right resources both in personnel and material are made available to meet H&S obligations.
- They take a lead role in championing a positive H&S culture which is promoted and maintained across all NOC sites and ships.
- H&S is a standing item on the agenda for NOC Board and Executive Committee meetings.
- That the NOC Executive regularly reviews H&S performance.

#### **Directors and Associated Directors**

All Directors and Associated Directors are responsible and accountable through the management chain reporting to them for the implementation and monitoring of this Policy. They will:

- Report at the earliest opportunity to the CEO, details of any incidents involving fatality, major injury, significant dangerous occurrence, or significant damage within their area of control.
- Support managers and staff to ensure that a positive H&S culture is promoted and maintained in their areas of responsibilities.
- Ensure that the work activities they control are resourced and effectively planned to consider H&S risks.
- Ensure adequate assessments of risks are undertaken prior to the commencement of work activities.
- Ensure that staff and students are adequately instructed, trained, and supervised. To assist in this, they are required to make use of the assistance and advice available from the NOC Health and Safety Team.
- Attend appropriate training in H&S matters. This includes the need to attend the mandatory IOSH Leading Safely course.
- Ensure staff attend appropriate mandatory and operational H&S training.
- A member of the Directorate should undertake at least one formal health and safety inspection per annum.
- Follow up with their groups on any raised trends or concerns from H&S reports.

- Use appropriate measures to assess the H&S performance of their staff and take active steps to improve performance where necessary.

### **Group Heads and Managers**

- Identify hazards associated with the operations for which they are responsible.
- Ensure that the H&S risks created by those hazards have been assessed and that appropriate precautions to adequately control them have been put in place for all activities under their control, wherever their staff may work.
- Manage staff and co-operate with peers to ensure that a positive safety culture is promoted and maintained.
- Be accountable to their line manager for health & safety issues under their control.
- Report to their manager on the discharge of these responsibilities.
- Ensure all staff under their management receive a full and appropriate H&S induction and attend all relevant mandatory H&S training. Group Safety Advisors are available to support in the process.
- Attend appropriate mandatory H&S training courses as identified, including any role-specific operational H&S Courses.
- Ensure accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences, occupationally related illnesses and occupational health problems involving their staff have been investigated as appropriate and actions to prevent their recurrence identified.
- Implement recommendations for improved control of risk and other remedial actions as agreed with senior managers and appointed competent H&S persons.
- Attend or ensure team members are available to support with H&S Inspections and Audits.

### **Employees**

- Safeguard their own health and safety, and that of co-workers.
- Co-operate with managers in carrying out safety arrangements.
- Use machinery, equipment, dangerous substances, and safety devices (including personal protective equipment) safely, properly and report any defects, failure, or loss.
- Comply with the requirements of risk assessments and report it to their manager as soon as possible if they consider a risk assessment's review or modification is necessary.
- Attend appropriate mandatory H&S training courses as directed by management.
- Report accidents, incidents, near misses, environmental incidents and occupational health problems via the NOC accident, incident and near miss reporting system (NOC1 Form).
- Inform their manager, appointed competent person or appointed safety representative of any concerns about health and safety.
- Not interfere with or misuse equipment provided for H&S purposes.
- Not undertake any task for which authorisation and/or training has not been given.

### **NOC Safety Advisor**

The appointed full-time safety professional responsible for liaison on all H&S issues within the Centres and between the NOC and key stakeholders. They will hold either the NEBOSH Diploma in Health & Safety or its equivalents recognised by the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH). They will be responsible for advising and assisting the Directors and their Teams on all aspects of health and safety, including:

- Provide competent and informed advice for management and staff.
- Establish and maintain the safety management system of policies, procedures and guidance documents.
- Investigate and keep records of accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences.
- Submit reportable events to the relevant regulatory authority and information provided to local management.

- Supply management with information on H&S performance.
- Keep management informed of trends in good practice and proposed legislation.
- Advise managers on the development of policy, procedures and guidance.
- Help management to carry out audits and inspections.
- Take part in health, safety & wellbeing committee meetings.
- Consult with Specialist Competent Persons/Advisors, or external agencies, for matters outside their experience.
- Accompany H&S enforcing authorities on inspection tours and feedback their findings to senior management.
- Issue a prohibition for any work areas they believe to be unsafe.
- Network with external safety specialists to improve good practice.
- Chair the H&S Working Group.
- Attend relevant meetings with SOES to discuss H&S matters.
- Collaborate and work closely with the Head of Ships Compliance to support the development of the site and ships safety management systems.

### **Head of Ship Compliance (HoSC)**

The HoSC leads on all safety related policies and activities for the RRS James Cook and RRS Discovery and supports the Designated Person Ashore (DPA) in the development and maintenance of the Ships Safety Management System. The HoSC provides professional advice to the Captains and crew, to the Head of Research Ships Operations (HoRSO) and to AD NMF. This includes all areas of the International Safety Management (ISM) and International Ship and Port facility Security (ISPS) codes, including MARPOL, as well as Flag and Class compliance. In addition, the HoSC will provide strategic advice to the RSM regards compliance issues associated with the Code of Safe Working Practices and the Maritime Labour Convention. The HoSC will normally be designated a deputy Designated Person Ashore in accordance with the ISM code. Where appropriate, the HoSC will co-ordinate activities with the NOC H&S Advisor to support collaboration.

### **Group Safety Advisors / Health and Safety Assistants**

Group Safety Advisors are appointed with part-time responsibilities to liaise with the NOC Safety Advisor on H&S issues, they should complete the IOSH Managing Safely course as a minimum, with the opportunity to study the NEBOSH General Certificate if desired.

Health and Safety Assistants are appointed to support the NOC H&S Advisor discharge their roles and responsibilities. They should complete the NEBOSH General Certificate course as a minimum.

Both roles are responsible for advising and assisting employees on all aspects of health and safety, including:

- Providing competent and informed advice for employees.
- Assisting in the development and management of safety documentations.
- Assisting with the investigation of accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences in their areas.
- Supporting line managers in producing and retaining records of risk/COSHH assessments.
- Organise group safety inspections in conjunction with management.
- Attend and contribute to monthly Group Safety Advisors meetings.
- Issue a prohibition for any work areas they believe to be unsafe.
- Support line managers in providing H&S induction training to new staff.

### **Specialist Competent Persons/Advisors**

Specialist Competent Persons/Advisors are responsible to the local management for advice on specific areas of expertise such as radiation, laser, genetic modification, diving.

The contact details for these roles are available via the intranet and when requested by the NOC H&S Advisor, may attend relevant H&S meetings.

## **Union Safety Representatives**

Union Safety Representatives are appointed to represent employees on H&S matters under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and are consulted in discussions on issues that affect the H&S of staff. They have representation on the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee. Contact details for the appointed Union Safety Reps can be found on the intranet.

## **Other Persons Working Under NOC Control**

Students and other persons who are not employees but work under the direct control of NOC staff will be treated in the same way as if they were employees under the H&S at Work Act 1974. They will be afforded the same protection and have the same responsibilities for their own and other person's H&S as other NOC employees.

## **Visitors, Contractors Tenants and SOES**

Other parties who are working on NOC premises such as visitors, contractors and tenants but who are not NOC employees will be monitored on their compliance with all aspects of achieving H&S standards. They will be expected to follow Safe Systems of Work and ensure their own safety and of other persons who may be affected by what they do or omit to do. A formally written agreement between the NOC and the University of Southampton (Schedule 3), is held with the NOC Legal and Governance Team. This agreement details the remit of each organisations H&S Management System and any agreed collaborative working/meetings.

## **5.2. Groups/Committees**

### **NOC Executive Committee**

To ensure NOC follows the HSE guidance (INDG417: Leading H&S at work), the Centre has an Executive Committee whose members are charged with the responsibility to support the NOC CEO with the obligations listed above. They are expected to work collectively, not just in the interests of their own operating area, but also in the interests of the Centre as a whole. The NOC Executive Committee has a standing item on its agenda to address Health and Safety. The Associate Director of NOC Innovations is also the Chair of the NOC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee to ensure that the NOC Executive is kept informed of, and is alert to, relevant health, wellbeing and safety risk management issues.

### **NOC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee**

The NOC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee provides advice to the Chair on H&S issues and planned improvements or changes to both of NOC's safety management systems. The committee is supported by key personnel and specialist advisors (GM, radiation, diving, laser, etc.) as necessary. The committee will, amongst other matters, consider reports, set and amend KPI's, review training, consider accidents and statistics, and endorse Policy, Procedures and Guidance. The committee will meet quarterly with the provision to hold emergency meetings when required. Membership will include local trade union representation. A copy of the current Terms of Reference and membership is available on the intranet.

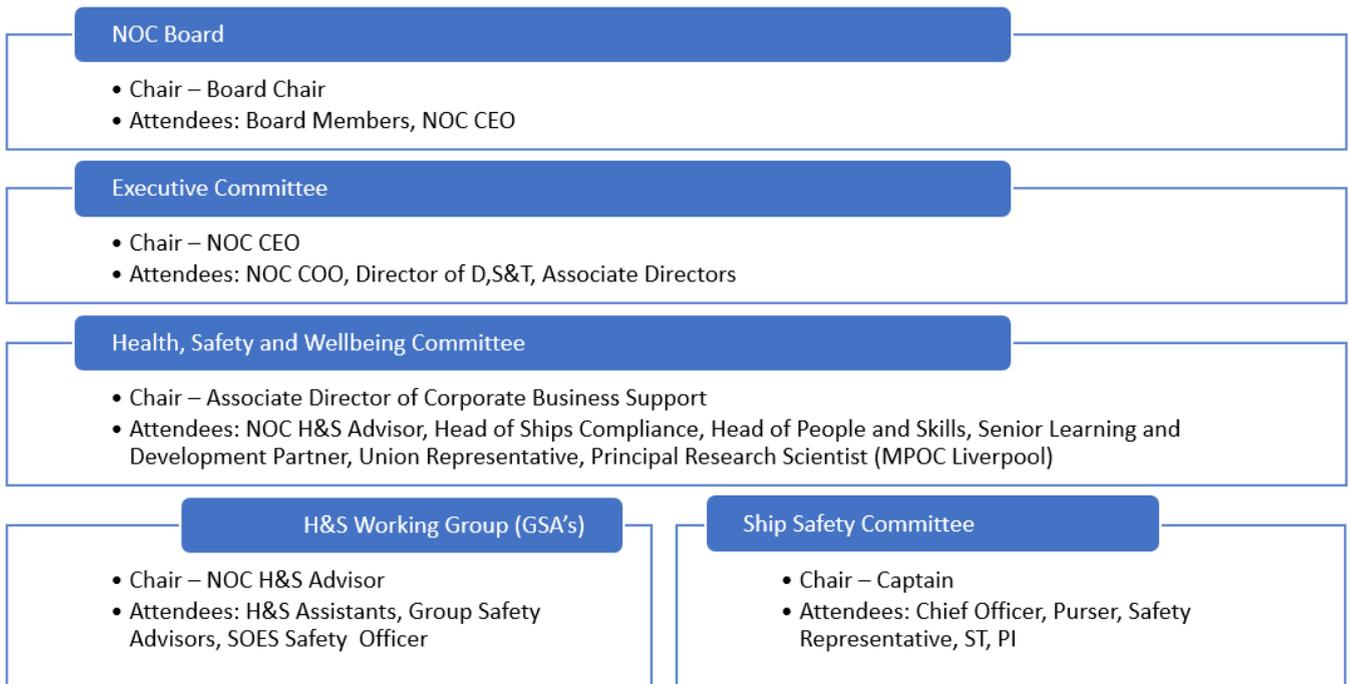


Fig 1 - H&S Governance Structure

### H&S Working Group (Group Safety Advisors)

The H&S Working Group will be responsible for advising on safety issues across the NOC Sites. It will provide an informal access point whereby staff can contribute to the development and implementation of safety measures within the NOC. Each member will provide advice to staff within their group on safety management principles and practice. The Group is supported by the Group Safety Advisors (GSAs) and the NOC H&S Assistants, with the NOC H&S Advisor as Chair. The Group will meet once a month and will be timed to link in with the NOC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee to enable members to take forward items to these meetings. To enable communication with the University of Southampton, the SOES Safety Officer also has attendance to this group.

### Ship Safety Committees

Each ship has a formal Safety Committee which meets once per month. The Safety Committee is chaired by the Captain who also produces minutes of the meetings which are forwarded to the Head of Ship Compliance (HoSC) for review/action. The HoSC is required to formally respond to all points raised in the minutes before the next safety meeting. The safety committee agenda must, as a minimum, consider: a review of all accidents/incidents, a review of the SMS, familiarisation training for new joiners, a report of safety zone inspections and a review of open actions.

## 6. Associated Documents

The University of Southampton's School of Ocean and Earth Science (SOES) shares a waterfront campus with the NOC Southampton. The shared H&S responsibilities of the two owning parties are defined in Schedule 3 of the NOC and University Agreement document. This document is held with the NOC Legal and Governance team and is owned by the Associate Director of Corporate Business Support. This Schedule 3 is reviewed in-line with contractual agreements between both parties.

The Royal Research Ships operate in accordance with their Safety Management System (SMS) as prescribed by the International Maritime Organisation's International Safety Management code. The SMS is operated via a standalone system available to both sea and shore-based staff. The overall responsibility of this system lies with the Designated Person Ashore.

## 7. Overseas Travel & Fieldwork

NOC staff carry out short- and long-term research projects, and attend conferences, overseas. The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 does not apply overseas, but the NOC policy is to act as if it does. While such work would normally be subject to the H&S regulations of the country concerned, NOC cannot allow its staff to work to different standards just because they happen to be working abroad. We therefore require the same standards to be adopted wherever staff are working. For example, if a task is required to be risk assessed in the UK, then you must also have a risk assessment for the work you intend to do abroad. The only difference is that it may involve few additional precautions to when doing the same work in the UK. All employees undertaking overseas travel and/or fieldwork must adhere to the relevant NOC procedure and relevant processes.

## 8. Health and Safety Procedures

This policy is underpinned by the following Health and Safety Procedures:

- HSPRO01 Health and Safety Risk Assessment
- HSPRO02 Risk Assessment for High-Risk Groups
- HSPRO03 Accident and Incident Reporting
- HSPRO04 Manual Handling
- HSPRO05 Use of Hazardous Substances
- HSPRO06 Laboratory Safety
- HSPRO07 Workshop Safety
- HSPRO08 Transport of Dangerous Goods
- HSPRO09 Use of Display Screen Equipment
- HSPRO10 Overseas Travel/Working
- HSPRO11 Smoke Free Workplace
- HSPRO12 Yard and Quayside Safety
- HSPRO13 Management of Non-Estates Contractors
- HSPRO14 Health and Safety Training
- HSPRO15 Inspection and Audits

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often considering any significant changes to legislation or operational conditions.

The NOC will conduct regular internal and external audits and inspections to evaluate the effectiveness of the H&S Management Systems. We strive for continuous improvements and actively seek feedback or suggestions from employees to develop them.

Employees have access to our H&S Management System via the intranet and where a policy affects a wider audience, this can be found on the NOC external website.

The Chair of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee is the document owner of all H&S Procedures and can decide whether local Procedures and Guidance Notes are appropriate in particular areas of Health & Safety Management System.