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OIA-2024-5177

18th November 2024

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 18 October 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information on New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Defence Health Directive 23/003. Responses to the various parts of your request are set out below.

- *Any communication between NZDF and Veterans' Affairs relating to this health directive;*

On 6 September 2023 and 4 September 2024, the Director of Defence Health Policy provided relevant NZDF personnel and staff policy updates that included Defence Health Directive 23/003. The relevant extracts are at Enclosure 1.

- *With reference to paragraph 12, the number of times Defence Health has been notified "of when an individual has been exposed to military weapons system hazard", broken down by originating unit and month;*

None. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA as the information you have requested does not exist.

- *With reference to paragraph 13, the number of times Defence Health has "conduct(ed) individual cognitive health monitoring of the relevant exposure to military weapons system hazards as set out in this Health Directive";*

One member of the NZDF has been referred for specialist assessment.

- *With reference to paragraph 22, the number of reviews carried out of personnel who reported two or more instances of cognitive symptoms;*
- *With reference to paragraph 22, the number of personnel who have exhibited "persistent deleterious cognitive effects that persist after 4 weeks of rest";*
- *With reference to paragraph 22, the number of personnel who have exhibited "persistent deleterious cognitive effects that persist after 4 weeks of rest" who were "assessed for appropriate grading and potential permanent restrictions on activities", and the outcome of those assessments.*

None. These parts of your request are therefore declined in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA as the information you have requested does not exist.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Extracts from email correspondence

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Enclosure 1

Defence Health Policy Master Monthly Release Register: 06 September 2023

Policy Type	Document Released	Approving Authority	Document/s Withdrawn	Comment	Scope
Health Directives	HD 23/003: Medical Management of Brain Health Hazards in Military Activity, V01	CMO/SG		New	Applies to— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel and to NZDF healthcare professionals (Defence Health and those under the technical control of the Surgeon General).

Defence Health Policy Quality Assurance Register: 06 September 2023

Policy Type	Document Released	Approving Authority	Quality Assurance Requirements	Responsible	Timeframes (If relevant)
Health Directives	HD 23/003: Medical Management of Brain Health Hazards in Military Activity, V01	CMO/SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established cognitive health effects related to military weapons system activity are to be given the diagnostic code 'Concussion – military weapons system related' in Profile. An annual check is to be completed by the Defence Health Directorate on the above diagnostic code in order to look for occurrences of deleterious cognitive health effect related to military weapon system activity in the NZDF. 	CMO DHIS Team	Annual

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Defence Health Policy Master Monthly Release Register: 04 September 2024

Policy Type	Document Released	Approving Authority	Document/s Withdrawn	Comment	Scope
Health Directives	HD: 23/003 Medical Management of Brain Health Hazards in Military Activity, V2.00	CMO	HD: 23/003 Medical Management of Brain Health Hazards in Military Activity, V1.00	Review— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of new para 7— • Significant hazards to brain health can exist in non-weapons system duties and in non-military activities. These hazards, such as direct trauma from blunt force injuries in sports or other activities, can contribute to the cumulative effect if subsequent weapon system exposure without precautions occurs. 	Applies to— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZDF personnel. • NZDF commanders /managers. • NZDF healthcare professionals.

Defence Health Policy Quality Assurance Register: 04 September 2024

Policy Type	Document Released	Approving Authority	Quality Assurance Requirements	Responsible	Timeframes (If relevant)
Health Directives	HD: 23/003: Medical Management of Brain Health Hazards in Military Activity, V2.00	CMO	Paras 24 and 25— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established cognitive health effects related to military weapons system activity are to be given the diagnostic code 'Concussion—military weapons system related' in Profile. • An annual check is to be completed by the Defence Health Directorate on the above diagnostic code in order to look for occurrences of deleterious cognitive health effect related to military weapons system activity in the NZDF. 	Defence Health Directorate	Annual