



REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES
POLICY ON FRATERNISATION

By Command of the
Defence Policy Committee

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
TOWER HILL
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THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES FRATERNISATION POLICYGENERAL

1. Soldiers of all ranks meet and associate with each other in many settings both on and off duty. These meetings and association foster the trust and confidence necessary for mission accomplishment. Soldiers associating with one another are governed in part by "rank" relationships which are basic requirements for maintaining good order and discipline. How these relationships impact authority, discipline and morale is central to evaluating soldier relationships. A relationship that diminishes or predictably will diminish a senior member of the armed forces in the discharge of his duties is unacceptable within the armed forces and has historically been regarded as fraternization. This policy seeks to regulate the manner of interactions between senior and junior service personnel within the RSLAF.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purpose of this policy, except as otherwise indicated, the term:
- a. "Appropriate superior authority" means the officer who at any one time has the responsibility to maintain discipline in an RSLAF unit.
 - b. "Officer" includes commissioned and warrant officers.
 - c. "Relationship" means the connection between two serving personnel and how they relate with one another, especially as regards the way they behave towards and feel about one another, whether in an ordinary or emotional way including but not limited to sexual activity.
 - d. "Serving personnel" means all members of the RSLAF and includes officer cadets and recruits.
 - e. "Soldiers" includes recruit up to the rank of Staff Sergeant.
 - f. "Subordinate" has the same meaning as stated in the RSLAF Act 1961 (as amended).
 - g. "Superior" has the same meaning as stated in the RSLAF Act 1961(as amended).

FRATERNISATION

3. Certain types of personal relationship between officers and soldiers are prohibited. Prohibited relationship includes:

RESTRICTED

a. Ongoing business relationship between officers and soldiers. This prohibition does not apply to landlord/tenant relationship or to one-time transaction such as the sale of an automobile or house, but does apply to borrowing or lending money, commercial solicitation, and any other type of ongoing financial or business relationship. It does apply to business relationships which exist at the time this policy becomes effective and that were authorized under previous existing rules and regulations. It does not apply to relationships that exist due to their civilian occupation or employment.

b. Marriage, dating, shared living accommodations other than those dictated by operational or administrative imperatives, and intimate or sexual relationship between officers and soldiers. This prohibition does apply to a situation which a relationship that complies with this policy will would move into non-compliance due to a change in status of one of the members (for instance, a case where two soldiers are married or dating and one is subsequently commissioned or selected as a warrant officer). In relationships where one of the soldiers has entered into a program intended to result in a change in their status from soldier to officer, the couple must terminate the relationship permanently or one of them will have to resign within either one year of the actual start date of the program before the change in status occurs, or within one year of the publication date of this regulations, whichever occurs later.

c. Gambling between officers and soldiers. There are no exceptions to this rule.

d. Dating, intimate or sexual relationships between service personnel and the spouse or children and dependants of other service personnel. This prohibition does not include children and dependents of consenting age and living outside the auspices of the service personnel but include all those children and dependants living under the auspices of the service personnel even though they may be of consenting age (i.e. 18 years).

e. Dating, intimate or sexual relationship between married service personnel and the children and dependants of other service personnel even though these children or dependants may be of consenting age and living outside the auspices of the service personnel.

f. Inappropriate interaction. This prohibition does not include association between officers and other ranks that occur in the context of community organization, religious activities, sporting teams and event, unit based social functions, or family gatherings but includes all other forms of interaction that will prejudice military discipline.

4. Other relationships between service personnel of different ranks are prohibited if they:

- a. Compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of supervisory authority of the chain of command.
- b. Cause actual or perceived partiality or unfairness.
- c. Involve, or appear to involve the improper use of rank or position for personal gain.
- d. Are, or are perceived to be, exploitative or coercive in nature.
- e. Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale or the ability of the commander to accomplish his/her mission.

OTHER PROHIBITED RELATIONSHIP

5. Trainee and Trainer. Any sexual or intimate personal relationship between permanent members of the MoD/RSLAF training institutions and trainees is prohibited.
6. Recruiter and Recruit relationship. Any sexual or intimate personal relationship between service personnel assigned or attached to the MoD/RSLAF Recruiting Teams and potential MoD/RSLAF entrants, prospects and applicants is prohibited.
7. Fraternalization between Senior and Junior Other Rank or between Senior and Junior Officers when in a senior-subordinate relationship, is also a violation of this policy when there is a violation of the customs of the service and the conduct is prejudicial to good order and discipline or will bring discredit to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
8. These prohibitions are not intended to preclude normal team building association that occur in the context of activities such as community organizations, religious activities, family gatherings, unit-based social functions, or athletic teams or events.

INVESTIGATION

9. An alleged case of fraternization may be investigated by the unit in which the accused person is/was organic at the time the said act of fraternization was committed. Such accused person must immediately be suspended during the investigation process. Such investigation may be carried out on request, by JPU or where appropriate by an investigation committee set up by the commander of the unit in which the act occurred. Where the commander of the unit is the accused, the next superior in the chain of command to the accused shall be responsible to set up the investigation committee.
10. The ACDS Gender/Equal Opportunities shall set up the rules of procedure for the investigating committee.
11. Commanders should seek to prevent inappropriate or unprofessional relationship through proper training and leadership by example. Should inappropriate relationship

occur, commanders have available a wide range of responses. Commanders must carefully consider all of the fact and circumstances in reaching a disposition that is warranted, appropriate, and fair. Any commander or superior who reasonably believes or is in information that acts of fraternization are taking place within his command or jurisdiction and fails to take the necessary steps to ensure that the act is punished shall be guilty of dereliction of duty and will be held liable for his/her inaction under this policy.

12. All military personnel share the responsibility of maintaining professional relationships. However, in any relationship between service personnel of different grade or rank, the senior member is generally in the best position to terminate or limit the extent of the relationship. Nevertheless, all members may be held accountable for relationships that violate this policy.

SANCTIONS

13. Where an act of fraternization has been proved on balance of probabilities, the sanctions available to the appropriate superior are:

- a. Reprimand
- b. Severe reprimand
- c. Reduction of rank
- d. Loss of seniority
- e. Administrative discharge

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

14. Not all contact or association between officers and soldiers is an offence. Whether the contact or association is an offence depends on the circumstances. Factors to be considered include whether the conduct has compromised the chain of command, resulted in the appearance of partiality or otherwise undermined good order, discipline, authority or morale.

15. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces personnel must place loyalty to country, ethical principles and law above private gain and other personal interests. The performance of their duties should be in keeping with the highest traditions of military and civilian service to the government of Sierra Leone.

16. The highest standard of discipline and personal comportment is expected of every service personnel and they are expected to avoid conflicts of interests between their personal, commercial or financial interest and their official duties.