

Executive Summary
Royal Canadian Navy

Internal Review of Personal Conduct

December 2014 // Commodore Craig Baines

Ready Aye Ready





BACKGROUND

1. The Internal Review of Personal Conduct within the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) was stood up in July 2014 in response to a small number of RCN personnel failing to meet the Navy's expectations for personal conduct. Given that the actions of officers and sailors reflect not just upon the individual and the unit, but upon the RCN and the nation as a whole, the Internal Review of Personal Conduct was initiated to review the policies and procedures that underpin the deck-plate leadership of the RCN to ensure that the right level of effort and focus was being directed in this area.

INTENT

2. The review was tasked by Commander RCN, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, to assess whether the RCN has the appropriate mechanisms in place, and to the right level, to ensure that clear expectations and direction regarding personal conduct ashore and alongside while away from home port are understood and enforced. The review was not responsible for investigating individual cases of misconduct or for establishing statistical trends with regard to conduct-related offences. Instead, it was designed to assist the RCN in moving forward to a future state where personal conduct expectations are more clearly communicated, understood and acted upon so that personal conduct-related issues are reduced.

METHODOLOGY

3. To achieve the stated intent, an Internal Review Team (IRT) of senior officers and non-commissioned members was established, supported by assisting agencies, to define the *Current State* of affairs and make recommendations that would reduce conduct-related issues in the future.

4. The ability to identify the *Current State* (or status quo) required the review team to answer three fundamental questions as posed in the terms of reference (ToR):

- a. Does the current relevant suite of policies and procedures provide the appropriate framework to govern personal conduct within the RCN?

- b. Does clear and unambiguous guidance exist that promotes and communicates RCN expectations for personal conduct?

- c. Does the current naval education and training regimen, which spans the naval training continuum, adequately support and reinforce the existing policies, procedures and guidance that frame RCN expectations for personal conduct?

5. The IRT extended the study outside the RCN to seek best practices from the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and partner nations (the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy). In doing so, like-minded concepts were discovered that complemented, and in some cases supplemented, the recommendations of the IRT.

FINDINGS

6. The IRT reviewed Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and RCN policies and directives, conducted interviews with sea-going and training system Command Teams within the Navy, and collated and analyzed training system educational data in order to understand the existing mechanisms for governing personal conduct within the RCN. This allowed the team to understand the *Current State*. The analysis of this information and these activities resulted in recommendations to enhance the RCN's existing tools and material in order to better direct, influence and shape the conduct of officers and sailors. In addition to specific recommendations in answer to the ToR, observations and recommendations have also been included on pertinent areas of discussion such as the management of alcohol. These observations and recommendations were drawn from the input of Command Team professionals and senior leaders, and are an important corollary to the recommendations that stemmed from answering the ToR.

7. Overall, the IRT concluded that the RCN is well-supported by CAF policies and procedures that require CAF members to conduct themselves in a manner that meets the requirements of the larger CAF institution. However, certain areas for improvement within RCN lines were identified that would facilitate an effective transition to a more acceptable *Future State* (or preferred state). The preferred state is one that improves personal judgment and reduces conduct-related issues. The areas for improvement are as follows:

- a. The RCN needs to provide clearer, more exacting guidance to promote and communicate its expectations regarding personal conduct to its officers and sailors;
 - b. This guidance needs to be reinforced through a systemic leadership, training and communications effort; and
 - c. The RCN education and training regimen, which spans the naval training continuum and deals with all ranks, needs to improve upon the manner it supports and reinforces the existing policies, procedures and guidance that frame RCN expectations for personal conduct.
8. The full IRT report provides recommendations with regards to alcohol management, which while not part of the specific ToR, were nonetheless deemed appropriate for inclusion by the IRT Lead after seeking convening authority permission. These recommendations were based upon professional judgement and a careful weighing of all the evidence gathered through Command Team leadership interviews, consultations with the other services and allied navies, discussions with other senior RCN leaders, and the advice of the IRT itself.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The key recommendations of the IRT are as follows:
- a. Establish an *RCN Code of Conduct* that is enshrined in a Naval Order (NAVORD), which will form the basis for a sustained focus on expectations for RCN personal conduct and become part of RCN doctrine;
 - b. Execute a Communications Strategy that reinforces the *RCN Code of Conduct* through a deliberate and ongoing awareness campaign;
 - c. Develop *Personal Conduct* modules for the Naval Training System;
 - d. Institutionalize the teaching of the Divisional System (embedded within the *RCN Code of Conduct*) at the Naval Officer Training Centre (NOTC) and in the other RCN schools;
 - e. Institutionalize reinforcement of RCN personal conduct expectations through ship and school in-routine processes;
 - f. Develop a *First Night Protocol* for ships/submarines; and
 - g. Include a *Personal Conduct* module in Command Team training.
10. In addition, the IRT Lead recommends the following regarding alcohol management:
- a. That consideration be given to banning the consumption of alcohol while ships are at sea, (except in special circumstances that would be authorized through specific Navy policies, such as when the ship is at anchor or for special/ ceremonial occasions);
 - b. The practice of allowing individuals to access alcohol while alongside or at sea without a “server” being in the loop be discontinued; and
 - c. Alcohol prices onboard ship be raised to more closely reflect the amounts charged in messes in Navy shore establishments in Halifax and Esquimalt, and that a pan-Navy pricing system be adopted.

THE WAY AHEAD

11. The IRT concluded that the preferred state can be achieved through a “principles-based” systemic approach that acts along five interconnected lines of operation: expectations, leadership, training, education and communications. When all five work together, the institution will be better situated to reduce conduct-related issues and to ensure continued operational success. Achieving the preferred state will rely on each theme being appropriately developed. A summary of the key recommendations in Figure 1 demonstrates how each is interconnected.

12. A recommendation for the manner in which the transition could occur is laid out below:

- a. **Initial Surge:** Communicate a summary of the findings and recommendations via CAF and RCN communications media;
- b. **Short Term (6 - 12 months):** Release of new RCN policies that will form the basis of all subsequent directives; and
- c. **Medium Term (12 - 18 months):** Implementation of remaining recommendations, primarily education and training programs, and a targeted internal communications plan that promotes the new RCN policies.

SUMMARY

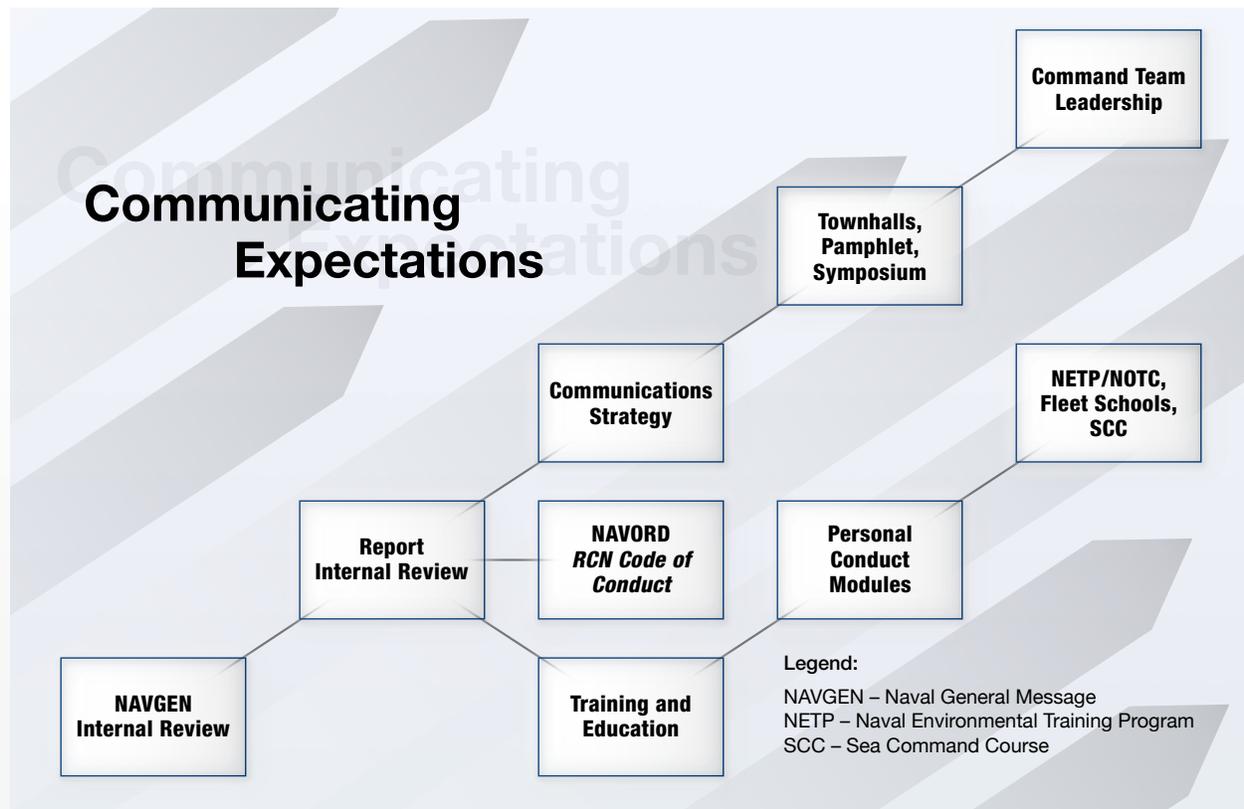


Figure 1: Communicating Conduct Expectations – Summary

CONCLUSION

13. The transition to a preferred state, whereby incidents of misconduct are reduced, will still rely on the sound leadership of senior officers and non-commissioned members. Deck-plate leadership throughout the RCN must continue to actively communicate, educate, mentor and serve as models of proper conduct. This is the first and most important step to show sailors what “right looks like”.

14. The recommendations put forth by this review will ensure that officers and sailors are better equipped to

represent themselves and their country at the highest standard, at all times, at home and around the world. The RCN has a tremendous reputation for excellence at sea and it is clear that the vast majority of its officers and sailors know and understand how to represent their country, service and ships. However, more must be done to ensure that all members of the RCN understand their obligations and duty in light of their significant roles as ambassadors for their nation as they successfully execute operations around the world in support of Government of Canada interests.