

1992

Distribution List

REVOCATION OF CF SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICY  
POST-ANNOUNCEMENT ACTION

Ref:

1. With the revocation of the CF policy on sexual orientation, as announced by the reference, action needs to be taken to promote acceptance of the policy change. Several options have been considered and it has been determined that the approach most likely to be productive is for commanders, through the chain of command, to communicate the rationale for the change, encourage its acceptance, and respond to the personal concerns of CF members.

2. There is no doubt that some CF members are strongly opposed to the presence of homosexuals within the CF. In many cases, these attitudes are based on deeply-held values and beliefs which tend to be resistant to change. Our task is not to attempt to change those underlying values and beliefs but rather to promote acceptance of the policy change itself.

3. In general, members of the CF are highly motivated by a sense of duty that transcends individual differences. Research on other policy changes has demonstrated that members respond well to leadership regardless of their personal views on a subject. Consequently, it is important that members hear from their commanders, and their commanding officers, that the policy change was made after careful consideration of all the factors and that it has the support of the senior leadership of the CF.

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4. The most direct influence on how members react to the policy change will be at the unit level. In addition to advising subordinates of the change, commanding officers should be encouraged to communicate personal statements to individuals under their command. These statements could include the following:

- a. the policy change simply brings CF policy into line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a document which more than any other expresses the fundamental character of what it means to live in a free and democratic society. Members of the armed forces should recognize their duty not only to guarantee the rights and freedoms of Canadians at large, but also to honour those same rights and freedoms within the military;
- b. whether or not CF members agree with the policy change, they are professionally bound to observe and follow the new policy. As professionals, we must work together to maintain the operational effectiveness of our units; and
- c. from a practical point of view, the policy change should have little effect on day-to-day life. Life should go on much as it always has. As for possible behavioural consequences of this change, the guiding principle will be that any behaviour which interferes with or disrupts the functioning of the unit has no place in the CF. In short, sexual misconduct of any kind, heterosexual or homosexual, will not be tolerated. The soon-to-be-issued CFAO 19-36 "Sexual Misconduct" provides both career policy and procedures which will require that cases of sexual misconduct be dealt with effectively.

5. Commanders may find it useful to have some additional information so they can answer questions and speak with confidence. A number of questions and answers that were developed for use in responding to questions from the media have been expanded upon for your use. A copy is enclosed. Requests for additional information, if required, should be directed to NDHQ/DGPP.

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6. In summary, it is important that commanders at all levels exercise leadership in promoting acceptance of the policy change. There is a requirement for a clear communication of command expectations that members will place duty requirements before personal considerations and that they will judge other members on their ability rather than their sexual orientation.

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Lieutenant-General

Enclosure:

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