



**Australian Government**

**Department of Defence**

# DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS (GENERAL)

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Department of Defence  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Issued with the authority of the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence pursuant to section 9A of the *Defence Act 1903* for members of the Australian Defence Force.

Issued with the authority of the Secretary pursuant to section 20 of the *Public Service Act 1999* for Department of Defence Australian Public Service employees.

Handwritten signature of Nick Warner in black ink.

NICK WARNER  
Secretary

Handwritten signature of A.G. Houston in black ink.

A.G. HOUSTON  
Air Chief Marshal  
Chief of the Defence Force

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## LIST B—ISSUE NO ADMIN B/6/2007

### New instruction

ADMIN 67–2      [Quick Assessment](#)

### Single Service filing instructions

This instruction should be filed as:

1. NAVY ADMIN 35–31
2. ARMY ADMIN 23–6
3. AIR FORCE ADMIN 9–41



## QUICK ASSESSMENT

### AIM

1. The aim of this Instruction is to provide guidance to commanders/supervisors on the circumstances and procedures for conducting a Quick Assessment (QA).

### PURPOSE

2. A QA is not an investigation. The purpose of a QA is to quickly assess the known facts, and to identify what is not known about an occurrence, so that a decision can be made about the most appropriate course of action to be taken in response to it. A QA is not a precursor to a service or civilian police investigation.

3. A QA is made up of two parts:

- a. a short brief which identifies the facts, and if so directed, makes recommendations for a way ahead; and
- b. a commander's/supervisor's decision, in the form of written endorsement or a separate document.

4. The QA must not be used as the basis for adverse findings, or to replace the need for a separate inquiry or investigation where such action would otherwise be necessary.

5. A QA must not be used as an investigation of a [Defence Force Discipline Act 1982](#) (DFDA) offence or a Code of Conduct investigation under the [Public Service Act 1999](#).

### SCOPE

6. This Instruction is applicable to all members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) (Defence members) and constitutes a lawful order from the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). This Instruction also constitutes a lawful and reasonable direction from the Secretary for the purposes of subsection 13(5) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#) to persons employed under the [Public Service Act 1999](#), that is, Defence Australian Public Service (APS) employees.

7. This Instruction is particularly relevant to the duties of Defence APS employees who supervise ADF members. This Instruction also provides guidance to ADF members in assessing whether a matter involving a Defence APS employee should be referred to a Code of Conduct delegate. However, nothing in this Instruction prevents or delays the ability of a Defence APS employee from exercising their right of review under section 33 of the [Public Service Act 1999](#).

### WHEN TO CONDUCT A QUICK ASSESSMENT

8. Following an occurrence, which can be any significant incident, allegation or problem, which comes to the attention of the commander/supervisor, the commander/supervisor, using common sense and sound judgement, must decide whether a QA is required. Should the commander/supervisor be of the opinion that subsequent investigation or inquiry of the occurrence may be required, a QA must be conducted. A QA must be conducted prior to instigating a formal inquiry, unless the focus of the proposed formal inquiry is not on the conduct of any Defence member. Even if no formal inquiry is instigated or no further action is taken, the conduct of a QA provides a valuable record of the factors considered by a commander/supervisor and the decision taken and the reasons for that decision. The conduct of a QA must not prevent or interfere with the immediate requirement for notification to the relevant ADF Investigative Service (ADFIS) or Code of Conduct delegate, or investigation by ADFIS or civilian authorities. Liaison between the Quick Assessment Officer (QAO) and ADFIS will be necessary to ensure this. (See [Defence Instruction \(General\) \(DI\(G\)\) ADMIN 45-2—Reporting and Management of Notifiable Incidents in Defence](#)).

### Directing a Quick Assessment Officer

9. The commander/supervisor may direct any ADF member or a Defence APS employee to conduct a QA. A formal direction for the QAO is not required. A direction can be given in writing and/or verbally. Telephone instruction, a Minute, email or note may be sufficient. Notwithstanding the form, it is important for the QAO to keep a record of being directed to conduct a QA, for example, in the background section of the brief, stating the direction received, when direction was received and how long the QA took to complete.

10. QAOs must be free, to the maximum extent feasible, from any suggestion of bias or conflict of interest involving any issue or witness surrounding the occurrence. A member of a unit or workplace in the direct chain of command or line management of the commander/supervisor instigating the QA may be selected as a QAO provided that they have no involvement or personal interest in the matters or people involved in the QA, which is likely to compromise their objectivity or impartiality.

### Timeline for completion

11. Speed is essential in the conduct of a QA. The QA must be delivered to the commander/supervisor who initiated the QA within 24 hours of directing the QAO. Should this timeline be unachievable, the QAO must seek further guidance from the commander/supervisor who directed the QAO. [Annex A](#) provides a flow diagram of the Quick Assessment process with suggested time frames.

### Recording and tracking

12. Recording and tracking of QAs is to be maintained at unit level or in the relevant workplace. These records may be required for subsequent investigation or inquiry.

## QUICK ASSESSMENT AND OTHER INQUIRIES OR INVESTIGATIONS

13. In response to an occurrence other administrative inquiries and/or police investigations may be initiated, for example, Coronial inquiries, police or Comcare investigations. A QA can be conducted while other inquiries or investigations are underway. However, the QAO must ensure that their QA does not interfere with any other inquiries or investigative processes. It may be necessary, for the purpose of providing a brief on the status of the situation, for the QAO to liaise with other inquiry or investigative bodies. However, nothing prevents a QAO from making a recommendation to address immediate concerns such as those relating to safety, welfare, morale or to assist further fact-finding efforts.

14. Prohibited substance testing under [DI\(G\) PERS 15–5—Testing for prohibited substances in the Australian Defence Force under Part VIIIA of the Defence Act 1903](#) refers to [Form AD 404—Quick Assessment Guide and Member Acknowledgement Record](#). While the term ‘Quick Assessment’ is used in [Form AD 404](#), this is a different form of reporting to that outlined in this Instruction. [Form AD 404](#) is not related to QAs in this Instruction and must not be used when completing a QA.

15. Non-fatal suicide behaviour is discussed in [DI\(G\) PERS 16–26—Management of a suicidal episode in the Australian Defence Force](#). There are specific QA requirements, in relation to content and form, following a non-fatal suicide episode.

## QUICK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

16. The QAO should collect sufficient, relevant information to enable the commander/supervisor to make a decision on what further action should be taken. In doing so, the QAO should:

- a. report basic facts, such as the time, date and place of the occurrence, who was involved and witnesses;
- b. not take formal statements. However, brief notes of interviews are to be retained such as a record of conversation, telephone interviews and email;
- c. determine who else is aware of the occurrence, such as media, Service or civilian police, the public or Comcare;

- d. if possible, indicate the outcome(s) sought by a complainant or affected member(s), if any;
- e. ensure all notes and other records are given an appropriate handling instruction (eg STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE, RESTRICTED, etc); and
- f. make recommendations on the options for further action for dealing with the occurrence, if so directed.

### NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS

17. For Defence members, Notifiable Incidents are defined in [DI\(G\) ADMIN 45-2](#). If, during or before the conduct of a QA, it becomes evident that a Notifiable Incident may have occurred, the QAO must immediately notify the commander/supervisor who directed the QA. The commander/supervisor must take immediate action in accordance with the DI(G). The QA must, however, be completed and briefed, notwithstanding any Notifiable Incident action. The QAO is required to liaise with ADFIS to ensure that QA action does not prevent or interfere with the investigation by ADFIS or civilian authorities.

#### Death of Defence members

18. In addition to a QA, when there is a death of a Defence member, the following must occur:
  - a. In accordance with [DI\(G\) ADMIN 45-2](#), immediately notify ADFIS, who is responsible for notifying the appropriate civilian authorities. Deaths of Defence members must also be reported immediately through the chain of command to the relevant Service Chief and CDF.
  - b. Procedures are followed in accordance with [DI\(G\) PERS 20-6—Deaths within and outside Australia of Australian Defence personnel](#).
  - c. Take action in accordance with [DI\(G\) PERS 11-2—Notification of Service and Non-Australian Defence Force casualties](#).

### UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

19. For Defence members and APS employees, Unacceptable Behaviour is defined in [DI\(G\) PERS 35-3—Management and Reporting of Unacceptable Behaviour](#). Any Unacceptable Behaviour must be dealt with in accordance with the DI(G). A QA may still be completed and briefed. [DI\(G\) PERS 35-3](#) may have an impact on the recommendations in the QA.

### QUICK ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

20. Public affairs activity must neither pre-empt nor impede a QA. Hot issues briefs and media statement preparation will normally occur in parallel with a QA. However, it is the QA which will provide information to the commander/supervisor to make a decision on the proper course of action to be taken in response to an occurrence.

### QUICK ASSESSMENT BRIEF

21. When a QA has been completed, a documented brief must be given to the commander/supervisor who directed the QA. Unless specifically directed to use a particular format, the QAO conducting the assessment may use the pro forma in [Annex B](#), a dot point brief or their own style. Whatever the format used, the brief must provide sufficient detail to substantiate the assessment of the occurrence and the recommendations made. [Paragraph 23.](#), below, provides guidance on the type of recommendations that must be considered for inclusion in a QA.

22. All notes taken, documents obtained and all records of telephone conversations and email must be attached to the QA and maintained on unit or departmental files as described in [paragraphs 12.](#) and [16.](#)

## DECISIONS UPON RECEIPT OF QUICK ASSESSMENT

23. Upon receipt of the QA, the commander/supervisor must make a decision on the way ahead, which may include a decision that no further action is required. Specialist staff and support agencies should be called upon to give detail as to possible options for further action if and when required. While the list below is not exhaustive, one or more of the following may be relevant in respect of the issues arising out of a QA:

- a. referral of the matter immediately to ADFIS (and then possibly the civilian police) if this has not already happened;
- b. referral of the matter to other authorities;
- c. referral to a superior authority for consideration and/or specific action;
- d. no further action is required (include the reasons);
- e. resolution of the matter by the commander/supervisor;
- f. referral of the matter for resolution by alternative dispute resolution techniques (see [DI\(G\) PERS 34-4—Use and Management of Alternative Dispute Resolution in Defence](#));
- g. appointment of an ADF member to conduct a Routine Inquiry;
- h. appointment of an Inquiry Officer under the Defence (Inquiry) Regulations 1985;
- i. referral to a superior authority with a recommendation that a Court of Inquiry be appointed under the Defence (Inquiry) Regulations 1985;
- j. for matters related to Defence APS employees' actions, referral to the Code of Conduct delegate; and
- k. for matters involving a Defence APS employee's actions, action pursuant to [chapter 11, part 2](#) of the *Defence Workplace Relations Manual 2006—2009* which provides policy guidance for the management and investigation of potential breaches of the APS Code of Conduct.

24. For Defence members, if it becomes apparent to a QAO that an occurrence warrants an inquiry, [annex C](#) provides guidance on selecting the most appropriate type of administrative inquiry for a recommendation in a QA and to assist the commander/supervisor in making a decision on the issue.

25. The commander/supervisor must record on the QA or in a separate document, the decision(s) taken with respect to the occurrence including a short summary of the reasons. In the case of Army, a copy of the QA and Commander's decision document must be forwarded to the next superior Headquarters.

## RETENTION OF QUICK ASSESSMENT BRIEFS

26. QAs must be retained on an appropriate unit or departmental file as they may be required in any later internal or external review, inquiry or investigation. All notes and other records relating to a QA must be given a minimum handling instruction of STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE.

## PRIVACY

27. The QAO and personnel responsible for handling QAs must comply with the Information Privacy Principles (IPP) contained in the [Privacy Act 1988](#).

28. When interviewing a person in relation to the occurrence (by whatever means), the QAO must inform the person of the purpose of the QA (to establish the known facts in relation to the occurrence). The QAO should also tell the person being interviewed that the record of the interview will be provided to the commander/supervisor as part of the QAO brief and that the record or substance of the record may be provided to others if natural justice requires this or if further formal action is taken.

29. Any documents raised in the process of the QA that contain personal information are to be marked as STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE and handled accordingly.

30. Personal information collected for the purpose of the QA is not to be used for another purpose, or disclosed to an agency or organisation external to Defence unless the provisions of IPP 9 (purpose to which the information is relevant), and either IPP 10 (limits on use for other purposes) or IPP 11 (limits on disclosure) are satisfied.

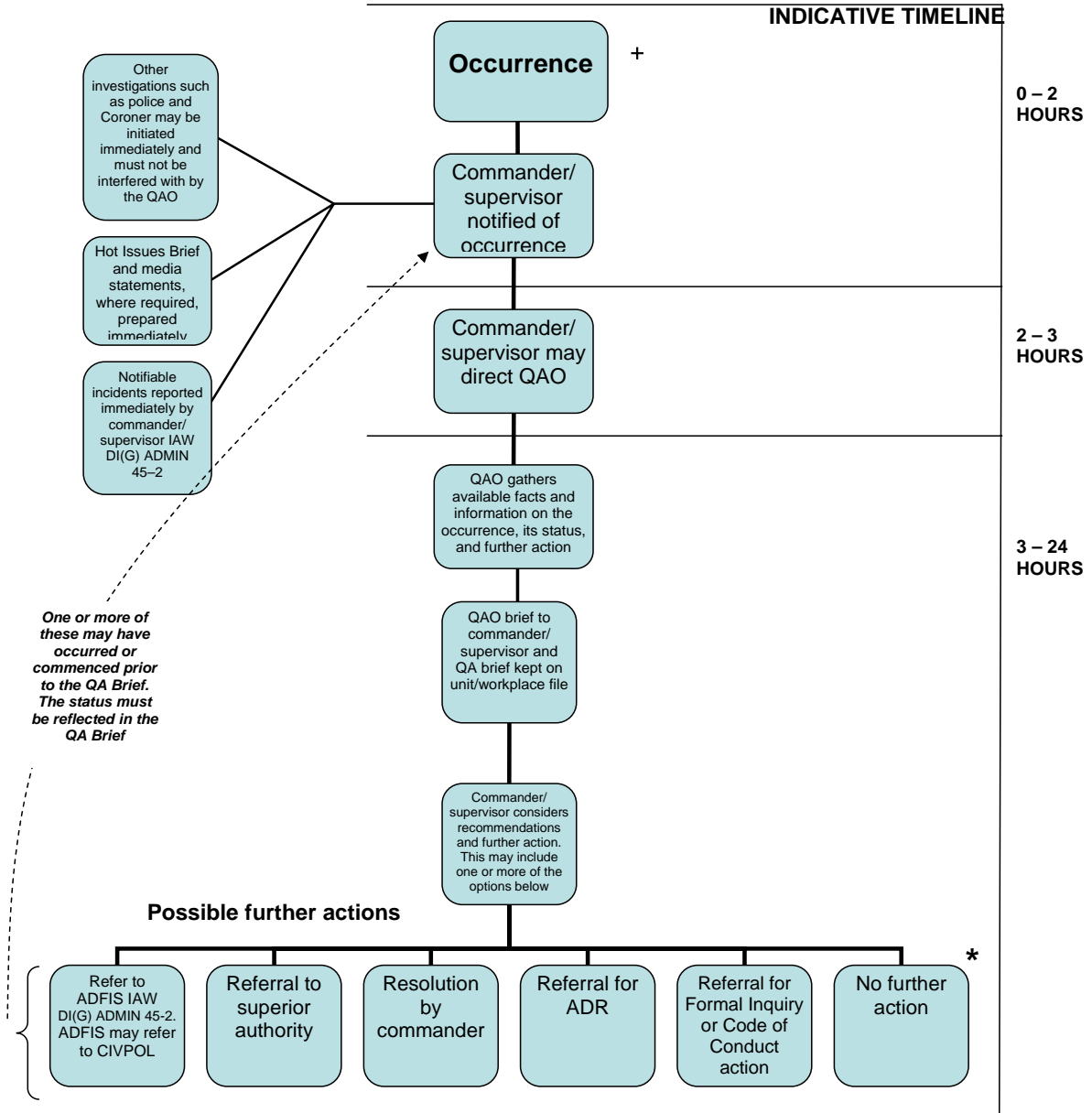
### Annexes:

- A. [Quick Assessment flow diagram](#)
- B. [Example of a Quick Assessment brief](#)
- C. [Guidance on selecting the most appropriate type of administrative inquiry](#)

**Sponsor:** DGADFLS



## QUICK ASSESSMENT FLOW DIAGRAM



\* These options are not a comprehensive list. See [paragraph 23](#).

+ The requirement to report notifiable incidents applies to all Australian Defence Force members and Defence Australian Public Service employees in accordance with [Defence Instruction \(General\) \(DI\(G\) ADMIN 45-2—Reporting and Management of Notifiable Incidents in Defence](#).



## EXAMPLE OF A QUICK ASSESSMENT BRIEF

### STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE

QUICK ASSESMENT BRIEF FOR (name of commander/supervisor)

SUBJECT OF THE QUICK ASSESSMENT

DATE OF OCCURRENCE (xxx/xx/xxxx)

#### DIRECTION

1. Details of Quick Assessment (QA) direction, *for example, commander/supervisor X tasked or appointed me to do a QA following this occurrence on (date).*

#### OCCURRENCE

2. Nature of the occurrence. *This should include facts such as:*
  - a. *name of parties involved;*
  - b. *date, time and place of occurrence;*
  - c. *what took place during the occurrence, including whether it involved a notifiable incident, unacceptable behaviour or Redress of Grievance;*
  - d. *unit(s) or workplaces involved;*
  - e. *any other parties involved or aware of the occurrence, such as media, the public, civilian police;*
  - f. *any other parties involved or aware of the occurrence, such as media, the public, civilian police; and*
  - g. *any other information which may be helpful to the commander/supervisor such as injuries or equipment loss.*

#### PARTIES INTERVIEWED

3. *This should include brief details of what was said by the parties involved, if any. It is not envisaged that there would be more than two or three interviewees for a QA and, in fact, there may be none. The interviewees can be contacted by telephone, email or in a face to face discussion.*
4. Complainant's wishes regarding the resolution of the matter—*if this information is known or relevant.*

#### ACTION TAKEN TO DATE

5. What has occurred, *for example, emergency medical services being called or counselling referral made.*
6. Have the complainant and respondent(s), if there are any, been informed of allegations against them?

7. Have you sought any expert advice? *If so, give a brief summary of this.*
8. Details of any other inquiries or investigations which are also occurring into the occurrence. *This could include police, coroners or Comcare investigations.*
9. Whether a hot issues brief or media statement has been prepared and released. *This does not need to be included.*

#### **ASSESSMENT OF THE OCCURRENCE**

10. Assessment of what actually occurred.
11. Other related issues. *This may include issues such as safety, welfare, morale, et.c*
12. Have any possible systemic issues been identified? *This may include problems such as failure in communication within a unit or safety procedures. If yes, give details.*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

13. Recommendations and the reasons for these recommendations, to allow the commander/supervisor to agree/disagree.  
  
*There may be more than one recommendation as a number of issues may have been identified. Recommendations may include one or more of the following:*
  - a. *the matter be referred to the relevant Defence Investigative Authority;*
  - b. *the matter be referred to superior authority for certain action;*
  - c. *the commander/supervisor resolve the matter;*
  - d. *the matter be resolved by Alternative Dispute Resolution;*
  - e. *referral for inquiry or Code of Conduct action; and*
  - f. *the matter needs no further action.*
14. If a further inquiry is recommended, say why and what form is recommended.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

15. State which annexes, notes or advice received are attached (*number of pages*).

#### **OTHER COMMENTS**

16. Any other comments which may be relevant to the commander's/supervisor's decision.

#### **SIGNATURE BLOCK**

#### **DATE**

## GUIDANCE ON SELECTING THE MOST APPROPRIATE TYPE OF ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY

### General

1. The following only applies to the Australian Defence Force (ADF). An inquiry into the actions of an Australian Public Service (APS) employee must not occur by way of any of the inquiry processes mentioned in this annex. For options relating to APS employees refer to *Defence Workplace Relations Manual 2006—2009*, chapter 11, [part 2](#).
2. When an occurrence is reported, irrespective of the seriousness of it, a commander/supervisor must initiate a Quick Assessment (QA) to obtain sufficient information to enable a decision to be made about the way ahead and to establish an auditable record of the decision-making process from the time the occurrence was first notified.
3. A serious occurrence including the death of ADF members involved in ADF activities must be dealt with in accordance with [Defence Instruction \(General\) \(DI\(G\)\) PERS 11-2—Notification of Service and Non-Australian Defence Force casualties](#).
4. Once the QA has been completed the following tables offer assistance on the selection of the most appropriate type of administrative inquiry, should this form of inquiry be selected as the most appropriate course of action.

	Routine Inquiry	Inquiry Officer	CDF Commission/ Board of Inquiry	General Court of Inquiry
<b>Physical Factors</b>				
Number of witnesses	Small numbers	Best suited to small numbers	Any number	Any number
Commence inquiry	Very speedy	Speedy	Slower	Slow
Length of Inquiry	Short	Relatively short	May be lengthy	May be lengthy
Complexity	Simple issues	Moderately complex	Complex issues	Complex issues
Ease of logistics	Easy	Relatively easy	More difficult	More difficult
Appointed by	Commander	Commander or higher	Delegated Appointing Authority	Minister
<b>Gravity Factors</b>				
Multiple Deaths or serious injury of personnel	Not to be used	Generally not to be used alone <sup>(a)</sup>	Appropriate	Appropriate
Death or serious injury of a person	Not to be used	Generally not to be used alone <sup>(a)</sup>	Appropriate	Appropriate
Sexual Offences	No.  See <a href="#">DI(G) PERS 35-4</a>	No.  See <a href="#">DI(G) PERS 35-4</a>	No.  See <a href="#">DI(G) PERS 35-4</a>	No.  See <a href="#">DI(G) PERS 35-4</a>
Offences against the DFDA or civil criminal law	No, refer to Service police or civil police	No, refer to Service police or civil police	No, refer to Service police or civil police	No, refer to Service police or civil police

	<b>Routine Inquiry</b>	<b>Inquiry Officer</b>	<b>CDF Commission/ Board of Inquiry</b>	<b>General Court of Inquiry</b>
Serious or systemic breakdown of service discipline or morale	Not appropriate	Not appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate if very senior officers involved
Damage, loss or malfunction of major Defence asset	Not Appropriate	May be used when facts are not complex	Appropriate	May be appropriate
Where a damages claim against the Commonwealth is likely	Yes, if very minor and matter is simple	Yes	Major loss or damage only	Major loss or damage only
Loss or damage to Defence property	Yes, if matter is simple	Yes	Major loss or damage only	Major loss or damage only
Motor vehicle accident not involving death or serious injury	Yes	Yes	Exceptional complexity only	Not appropriate
Redress of Grievance	Yes	Only where matter is serious and complex	Yes, where matter is very serious and extremely complex	No
Complaint of harassment or discrimination	Yes	Yes, if matter is serious and complex	Yes, if matter is very serious and extremely complex	No
Where there are international ramifications	Not appropriate	Not appropriate	Yes, but it may have to be a Combined Board of Inquiry	No
Potential for media scrutiny	Yes, but only in unusual circumstances	Yes, but only in unusual circumstances	Yes	Yes
<b>Legal and Other Factors</b>				
Can ADF witnesses be compelled to attend and give evidence?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can civilian witnesses be compelled to attend and give evidence?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Is evidence taken on oath or affirmation?	No	No	No, but may be if any person is likely to be affected by inquiry	Yes

	Routine Inquiry	Inquiry Officer	CDF Commission/ Board of Inquiry	General Court of Inquiry
Can witnesses claim the privilege against self-incrimination	Yes	No (except if charged but charge not dealt with)	No (except if charged but charge not dealt with)	No (except if charged but charge not dealt with)
Can witnesses refuse to answer a question if they have a reasonable excuse?	Yes	Yes, but not on grounds of self-incrimination	Yes, but not on grounds of self-incrimination	Yes, but not on grounds of self-incrimination
Penalties specified in the Defence (Inquiry) Regulations can be applied to witnesses who refuse to appear or answer questions?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
May affected persons be legally represented?	No (but they may seek legal advice prior to being interviewed)	No (Note: this is at the discretion of the Inquiry Officer but is not usual)	Yes	Yes
Will a transcript be required?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Is the inquiry to be held in public?	No	No	Yes, as a matter of policy, unless otherwise directed by the Appointing Authority (inquiries involving major accidents normally should be open)	Yes
Is a report of the inquiry required?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Note**

- (a) Generally only to be used in conjunction with a Chief of the Defence Force Commission of Inquiry or a Board of Inquiry.