

Protect the MoD Guards

They Protect You



Unite Against OMEC

OMEC

- Bad for your health
- Bad for work/life balance
- Bad for Pay
- Bad for the Service

OMEC: Bad for your health

HSE: "Poorly designed shift-working arrangements and long working hours that do not balance the demands of work with time for rest and recovery can result in fatigue, accidents, injuries and ill health."

- The OMEC rosters will increase the number of consecutive day and night shifts OMEC workers are required to be on shift for.
- There is a significant difference between the impact of working 4 consecutive 12 hour night shifts and 6 consecutive 12 hour night shifts.
- There is a growing body of evidence showing the negative long term impacts of night shift work on health.

In addition, the way the new OMEC 312 hours are currently structured will require workers to "owe" management 26 x 12 hour shifts per guard per year. This means either:

- That you will complete your rostered 4 night shifts followed by one or two OMEC Night Shifts (a run of up to 6 night shifts or 72 Hours),
- Or you could be rostered for the additional two OMEC shift in the middle of your 4 rest days.

HSE guidance states that **'longer hours are to be avoided'**. OMEC guards should also be aware that while on rest period, management will reserve a right to call you at any time during those rest days and compel you to attend for work at either your own unit or at another unit.

UNITE have repeatedly raised concerns about the laid down mandatory Health and Safety requirements relating to the OMEC shift patterns. We are firmly of the view that the impact of the OMEC rosters will damage members and workers health. Fatigue and associated long term mental and physical health complaints will rise sharply and rapidly.

Your Work, Your Voice

Unite is asking all members and workers to complete a short survey on OMEC. Whether you are already feeling the negative effects of OMEC or you are concerned about what OMEC will mean now and in the future we need to hear from you Today.

We are inviting ALL members and workers to share their views of OMEC. Please take 2 mins to complete our CONFIDENTIAL survey today

[Click Here Now to Share your Views Today](#)



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Bad for work/life balance

- Proposed shift patterns increase the number of shifts in a row to either 60 or 72 Hours per week. These additional OMEC shifts will also fall on your rostered Sat and Sun shifts.
- There will also be a requirement for workers to be available for work during rest days.
- These changes will not only increase the amount of time guards spend at work, it will also make planning any day to day events on rest days very difficult, due to the fact that they will effectively be expected to be on call during rest days. In some ways, this is very similar to the effects of a Zero-Hours contract.



UNITE are of the opinion that while this may not be a “Zero-Hours” contract, the effect of working 26 additional ad-hoc 12 hour shifts will increase the average working week to the outer limit of the Working Time Regulations. There are also no contingency plans in place to instruct guards, who have not signed the Opt out form what to do if they are required to remain on post for Operational reasons.

OMEC: Bad for Pay

- On the face of it the new OMEC rates of pay seem better than existing terms. This is a misnomer.
- All shift allowances and weekend payments are scrapped. Overtime rates of pay have been slashed by a third on OMEC contracts.
- There is a single rate of pay regardless of day or time you work. Factor in an increased working week (from minimum of 42 to a minimum of 48) and decreased paid break times and all of the above adds up to long unsociable hours at work along with a pay cut compared to legacy Ts&Cs.

UNITE is of the view that the more OMEC contracts are adopted, the more guards on legacy contracts will be squeezed out of ad hoc occasional overtime, as well as shifts that attract enhanced rates of pay. Furthermore, we believe Equal Pay for work of Equal Value should apply. To date and despite requests, we have not had sight of any Equal Pay Audit carried out in relation to OMEC.

OMEC: Bad for the Service

- Parliamentary papers detailing the history of the MGS since its formation outline why the MGS was formed. Through the 1980s MoD security was delivered by a complex of private security providers. Workers were pressurised to work long hours and standards of training and support varied widely. Poor working practices and low pay were seen as being part of several problems that led to serious security failings.
- The attack on the Royal Marine School of Music at Deal where 11 bandmen were tragically killed was cited by politicians as an example as to why the decision to form a professional and accountable security service (the MGS) was formed.

Almost since its inception the MGS has been subject to criticism and review after review. However, OMEC is the most significant threat to service quality since the service was established in the early 1990s.

Failure to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of guards will lead to increased risk of security lapses at the biggest, most high profile and most strategically significant MoD sites in the UK.

MGS:
Guarding Iconic Sites
Since 1992

Get Active, Get Organised, Get Involved:

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<https://join.uniteunion.org/>

OMEC: Know Your Rights

The Working Time Regulations

No UK employer can compel a member of staff to work an average of more than 48 hours per week. Proposed OMEC rosters breach the 48 hour limit. The MGS cannot compel you to work more than an average 48 hour week. If you are coming under pressure to opt out of the 48 hour working week or being compelled to work more than this contact Unite today.

Variation of Contract

Unite has been getting reports of guards being cajoled and threatened to accept OMEC terms. An employer cannot compel you to accept contractual changes without consultation and agreement. If this is happening to you contact Unite Today.

Trade Union Membership

Recently Unite has been getting reports that members are being threatened with reprisal should they talk to their trade union about work issues. Freedom of association is a basic right in the UK, as is the right to be a member of a trade union. Undermining these rights is unacceptable and potentially illegal. If this happens to you contact Unite today.

Spin Watch

“I’ve been told OMEC won’t really affect me”

This quote could have come from any number of the guards Unite has been speaking to recently. Many people are under the impression that OMEC contracts will only affect new starts. To be fair it seems this is the line being spun from management and people can only base their views upon available information.

OMEC will not only affect new starts. The ill-effects of a two tier workforce, with one tier involuntarily undercutting the other will reverberate into every corner of the service.

Now is the time for a change of perspective. OMEC is bad for existing and new guards alike.

A pathway to future privatisation of the MGS?

Unite is aware that well known private sector security providers have been courted on the possibility of taking over the running of the MGS. It is our understanding that these possible providers informed the MoD that the Guard Service was too expensive for them to take on.

OMEC will at once decrease the wage bill and increase the amount of shifts guards are expected to work. As legacy guards retire over the next 5 years the number of replacement guards on OMEC contracts will steadily increase. There will come a point where legacy contracts are in the minority of the overall MGS workforce.

Is this a pathway to privatisation? We can’t say for sure. However, if you consider:

**An interest in outsourcing + A reduction in the wage bill +
An increase in working hours X 5 years of retirements and
back filling with OMEC contracts,**

Does this not = A slow but steady slide toward privatisation?

It is vital that we hear from as many members and worker as possible. Take 2 mins to share your views NOW. [Click Here to Share your Views Today.](https://join.unitetheunion.org/)



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Local Organising on Health, Safety and Welfare at Faslane: Brief Update



Poll

In early 2021, Unite ran a poll gathering views from MGS members and workers on health, safety & welfare at Faslane. 102 members and workers (a response rate of 60% of the total workforce) took part in the poll and the results were unequivocal:

- 98% of respondents said they did not feel they were consulted on health, safety & welfare issues at work.
- 99% of respondents told Unite that they did not feel that health, safety & welfare arrangements are equally applied to all different sections of the workforce at Faslane
- 78% of respondents told Unite that they do not always have access to welfare facilities.

Petition

Following this poll Unite launched a petition around five key demands to start improving health, safety and welfare for MGS workers at Faslane. The five demands in a nutshell were:

- I. Proper Welfare Facilities.
- II. Suitable/sufficient and well maintained workstations
- III. A full review of ALL risk assessments in conjunction with Union Safety Reps
- IV. A full audit of ALL PPE, including the suitability of outdoor clothing & footwear
- V. Use the Unite Covid-19 Checklist to ensure that all of the above benefits from enhanced Covid-19 safety measures (Visit website for a copy of the Checklist).

107 MGS workers signed the petition, which has now been submitted to management. Early signs suggest that management are receptive to Unite demands. However, more formal dialogue is still in process. More updates to follow shortly...

Don't work at Faslane, but sound familiar? Would you like to replicate the above at your site/workplace? Get in touch with your Branch Today.

MGS National Branch

Your Branch, Your Reps

Unite is a member-led trade union. ALL your Unite Reps lace up their boots and do a shift, the same as you do. They are affected by the same issues you are affected by and spend considerable amounts of time representing, protecting and defending members, as well as working to make tangible improvements for you at work.

Interested in learning more about the role of Unite Rep within the MGS? Fill out the OMEC survey and check the relevant boxes now. Alternatively get in touch with your Branch or a Unite Organiser today.

Your Branch, Your Union in the MGS

Get Active, Get Organised, Get Involved

[Take the OMEC Survey](#) and Join Unite Online Today:

<https://join.unitetheunion.org/>

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