NCSA Activity Director General Guidance

Program Administration

Cadet Career Exploration Group
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Volunteers: NCSA Coordinator Team

Cadet Special Activities are managed by National Cadet Programs Cadet Career Exploration (CAP/CPA) and supported by a team of CAP volunteer NCSA Coordinators. National Flight Academies receive additional support from the National Cadet Programs Cadet Aviation Group. Each Activity Director will be assigned at least one NCSA Coordinator who will be your primary mentor and guide. Each of these CAP volunteers have experience leading large scale CAP activities and are eager to support you.

Activity Definitions:

National Cadet Special Activities (NCSAs)
- ✓ Hosted by National Cadet Programs
- ✓ Managed by National Cadet Programs
- ✓ Civilian and/or Military Career Exploration Focus
- ✓ Participants are eligible to apply for Lift/Top financial assistance
- ✓ Graduates are eligible to earn the CSA ribbon

Cadet Special Activities (CSAs)
- ✓ Hosted by Wings or Regions
- ✓ Managed by National Cadet Programs
- ✓ Civilian and/or Military Career Exploration Focus
- ✓ Must have operated at least two years prior to applying to be a nationally accredited CSA
- ✓ Requires annual accreditation
- ✓ Accredited CSAs agree to follow all National Cadet Activity policies
- ✓ Accredited CSAs are marketed with NCSAs
- ✓ Participants are eligible to apply for Lift/Top financial assistance
- ✓ Graduates are eligible to earn the CSA ribbon
- ✓ After first year as a CSA, may apply to become a NCSA

National Flight Academies (NFAs)
- ✓ Hosted by wings or regions
- ✓ Managed by National Cadet Programs
- ✓ Requires annual accreditation
- ✓ Primary flight instruction focus
- ✓ Participants are eligible to apply for Lift/Top financial assistance
- ✓ Graduates are eligible to earn the CSA ribbon

For the purposes of this guidance, the term NCSA will refer to all activity types unless otherwise stated.

Cadet Special Activity (CSA) Accreditation Process

Please refer to CAPR 60-1, 8.5.3. dated 8 August 2025 for the most recent guidance.

Activity Director Selection and Expectations

Activity Director Selection

Activity Directors are nominated by CAP/CPA for approval by the National Commander each activity season. As a best practice, an Activity Director typically serves three to four years before transitioning leadership to other trained staff members.

Activity Director Expectations

Activities are expected to continuously improve and evolve in order for CAP to deliver exceptional, quality, safe experiences for our cadets.

Once appointed, Activity Directors are responsible for selecting senior staff members who are qualified and interested in serving at the activity. ADs are required to fill the following positions:

Deputy Activity Director
The Deputy Activity Director provides major support to the Activity Director and completes tasks as assigned. They may help with planning, execution, and implementation of their activity, as well as the selection of staff. Deputy ADs may communicate regularly with the host Wing, Region, and NHQ Staff before, during and after the activity.

Deputy Activity Directors must be prepared to assume the role of Activity Director in the event the Activity Director is unable to serve in their role. In the removal/absence of the AD, needs to be capable to run it.

Finance Officer
The Finance Officer is responsible for the overall financial management of the activity. They ensure the budget is developed and line-item costs are representative of what real costs will be, ensure all reporting requirements and financial deadlines are met, among other tasks. This position may serve in-person or in a hybrid/remote capacity at the approval of the Activity Director.

For NFAs: CAP FASC qualification is preferred.

Safety Officer
The Safety Officer (SE) assists and advises the Activity Director in administering CAP's Safety Management System in accordance with CAP directive and non-directive guidance. The activity SE will ensure compliance with the Full Deliberate RM requirements outlined in CAPR 160-1 as well as any supplemental guidance issued through CAP NHQ Directorates.

For NFAs: The SE must be a CAP aircrew member and hold no other duties at the flight academy. CAP MSO qualification is preferred.

Health Services Officer
Responsible for advising the Activity Director on the health, sanitation and hygiene of CAP members relevant to CAP activities.

Cadet Project Officer (NFA-only requirement)
The Cadet Project Officer is an experienced Cadet Programs Officer who is responsible for cadet activities while cadets are not flying or in ground school. They help maintain cadet safety, develop activities during non-flying time, address behavioral concerns, and advocate for cadets at the event, among other tasks. This position is not required for distributed NFAs.

Flight Release Officer (NFA-only requirement)
The Flight Release Officer (FRO) acts as the conscience for the PIC. FROs are not considered "flight dispatchers." They provide an independent look at the risk versus necessity of each flight. No sortie takes off without approval from an FRO. The activity will have 1 primary FRO who releases flights, although other members may be qualified and authorized to release flights as required. This position is remote eligible at the approval of the AD.

Certificated Flight Instructor (NFA-only requirement)
The Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) must be a current member of the Civil Air Patrol in good standing. CFIs must complete Basic and Advanced ORM in Absorb, complete and be current with TSA Security Awareness Training and have uploaded documentation supporting their training to Ops Quals. Their most recent annual Form 5 must be completed within 90 days of the activity or have completed a Profile 17 with a CAP IP within 90 days of the activity.

Summer Activity Directors should have these roles appointed no later than 15 Jan.
Winter Activity Directors should have these roles appointed no later than 8 Oct.

Where needed, staff members will be assigned permissions in the Registration Zone event, allowing them access to relevant reports to support the activity.

Some activities may need other specific roles filled such as:

- Support
- Logistics
- Administration
- Instructor

The Activity Director determines which staff positions should be filled based on the needs of the individual activity.

Activity Directors must have enough Cadet Protection-trained senior staff to meet minimum ratios for the duration of their activity as outlined in CAPR 60-2. All staff must complete the Required Staff Training module in Absorb each year prior to the activity start date.

Plan for your activity's future. Intentionally develop a broad staff member base so you can identify high potential future Activity Directors. This cycle of developing leaders is essential to the continued success of our activities.

Activity Staff Selection Best Practices

Start recruiting for your staff positions early. While application windows for senior staff open at the same time as participant applications, you are encouraged to secure key staff members as soon as possible.

Once applications open in Registration Zone, all staff members must submit an application for the activity, paying special attention to toggle on the Staff Member setting. This ensures they are able to be slotted as a Staff Member. See the Using Registration Zone section for Slotting Instructions.

Note: Remind your staff members that they must have updated CAP Health within 30 days prior to their application date for the Register button to appear.

As soon as reasonable, start hosting monthly virtual staff meetings. This will help your staff get to know each other and provide an accountability mechanism to complete activity preparatory milestones.

Consider including the following action items:

- ✓ **Staff Introductions**. Make sure there's time for each member to get to know each other and their roles so you can work well as a team
- ✓ **Schedule Updates**. At each meeting, ensure all staff have the latest schedule updates
- ✓ **Department Updates**. At each meeting, allot time for key departments to share updates and ask for help
- ✓ **Key Activity Deadlines**. Help the staff help each other meet key activity deadlines. Examples: Risk Assessment forms, Financial Contracts, etc.
- ✓ **Cadet Protection and Required Staff Training**. Remind the staff to complete the online Required Staff Training course in Absorb in advance of the activity and that their Cadet Protection Training must be current.
- ✓ **Share Activity Training Webinar Schedule with the staff.** While Activity Directors will receive the invitations, they are encouraged to share the webinar links and schedule with their staff members.