



WING DCP SMARTBOOK

Civil Air Patrol's Guide for New Directors of Cadet Programs



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PREFACE

This guide, originally developed by the respected, longtime Cadet Programs leader **Lt Col Ned Lee** of Pacific Region, is a great reference for wing directors of cadet programs. With his permission, the NHQ Cadet Team has edited it slightly and is sharing it with new DCPs like you. We hope this brief guide helps you lead the cadets of your wing.

As a wing DCP, you are one of the NHQ Cadet Team's most important customers. If you have a question or concern, please call or email us anytime. We want to help you succeed.

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YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR CADET INFORMATION

cap.gov/cadets

1. INTRODUCTION

All too often dedicated Cadet Programs (CP) officers are appointed to the Wing Director of Cadet Programs (DCP) position to fill an unexpected vacancy. The DCP position is unlike any other CP job in the wing and is likely to be unfamiliar territory. This guide is a modest attempt to offer new DCPs advice on how to succeed in their new position and hit the ground running.

2. WORK WITH THE REGION

The first rule of being a DCP is to find and speak with the Region CP. The Region CP is really your friend. (This is probably unlike any previous relationship you might have had as a group or squadron CP professional.) The Region CP shop is charged with supporting you and your wing. We all have differing amounts of experience in CP, and Region is there to answer all your questions. Do not be afraid to ask “stupid” questions. Remember, Region and NHQ is not your “boss.” Visit your region’s website to learn who the Region CP director is, or if that fails, email cadets@cap.gov.

3. KNOW & MEET DEADLINES

The second rule of being a DCP is to figure out how to keep higher HQs happy and out of your hair. Part of the joy of the DCP is keeping track of the various requirements for paperwork and other actions that are periodically due to Region and NHQ. Some of the most important requirements are:

31 Jan	Last postmark for CAP College Scholarship applications to NHQ
15 Feb	Wing Cadet of the Year nominee due to Region
15 Feb	Sorensen Award nominee due to Region
15 Feb	Wing “rank order” of NCSA applications due to NHQ
01 Mar	Flight scholarship applications due to NHQ
01 Jul	Deadline for appointing cadets to Wing & Region CACs
15 Oct	Deadline for Civic Leadership Academy applications
31 Dec	Last postmark for cadets to send NCSA applications to NHQ (except CLA)

The dates above may vary slightly from year to year, and each of these items is explained more fully below.

4. ADVISE THE BOSS

WHAT IT IS: The DCP is the principal staff officer for cadet issues; accordingly it is your responsibility to be *the* “subject matter expert” for CP in your echelon.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT: By necessity commanders can devote only limited attention to CP issues. However, commanders must make informed decisions that affect CP, including voting on proposed regulations and policies at National Board meetings. It is critical that the DCP provide the commander with information and advice in his/her area of staff expertise.

REFERENCE: CAPR 52-16 (Cadet Program Management); CAPR 52-10 (Cadet Protection Policy); CAPP 52-18 (Cadet Physical Fitness Program); CAPM 39-1 (CAP Uniforms); and others.

PROCEDURE: Talk with the boss often. Make sure the CAC chair also has significant access. Go to the wing staff meetings. (Yes, they are often dull and usually 100 miles away on a night you’re scheduled to work, but the cadets absolutely have to be represented.) Speak directly to your supported commanders (squadrons/groups) regularly about their CP concerns.

Once a month, download your wing CAPWATCH database from e-services (www.capnhq.gov). Check for trends in the cadet population, including strength and retention.

Four months out from NB meetings, check the “Regulations for Ratification” on the NHQ website for CP-related items of interest. Download and advise the boss appropriately. 30 days out from a NB meeting, download and check the agenda for CP issues.

Sign up for the free “RSS” service on the national cadet programs web page (www.cap.gov/cadets). This way, you will quickly be notified of any updates made to the cadet home page so you can stay abreast of CP policies, programs, and other management issues.

5. WING ACTIVITIES

The wing DCP is expected to host a handful of cadet activities each year. DCPs are encouraged to appoint an activities officer or special projects officers to assist them with wing activities.

Wing Encampment

WHAT IT IS: Each wing is expected to conduct an annual encampment using the curriculum contained in Chapter 5 of CAPR 52-16. Typically encampments are approximately one week in length and are often conducted on military facilities during the summer. In the unusual event that a wing cannot host an encampment, every effort should be made to coordinate with neighboring wings for a joint encampment and to assist in transporting cadets as needed to the host wing.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Cadets cannot earn the Mitchell award or attend most NCSAs without credit for encampment attendance. Encampment attendance is one of the most important factors in cadet retention, and allows cadet leaders to work at extremely challenging tasks outside the squadron environment. Also, encampment programs are evaluated as part of the compliance inspection (CI) program.

REFERENCE: CAPR 52-16, Chapter 5; cap.gov/encampment

PROCEDURE: Ensure that the wing commander appoints the encampment commander as early as possible, ideally at least 9-10 months prior to the activity. Work closely with the encampment commander and coordinate publicity and other support from the CP shop at wing.

NOTES: Ensure that the encampment curriculum meets the requirements of CAPR 52-16. Retain copies of the schedule, curricula, and RST attendance in your records for use in the CI process. When you schedule your encampment, email cadets@cap.gov so NHQ can update the national encampment calendar at www.cap.gov/encampment.

Wing Cadet Competition

WHAT IT IS: The National Cadet Competition (NCC) is an annual event that provides opportunities for cadets to model traits of the highest standards of leadership and personal responsibility through drill, aerospace knowledge and

physical fitness. The winning team from each region cadet competition advances to compete at NCC, normally held in July. Each wing is expected to field a color guard and a drill team for the Region competition, which is usually held in April or May.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Although the wing commander can simply designate the teams that will represent the wing at the region competition, each wing is strongly encouraged to host a wing cadet competition to ensure that the most qualified teams can be rewarded for their skills and efforts. More importantly, cadet competition is an excellent activity for squadrons because it involves all aspects of the Cadet Program. Units that maintain a drill team or color guard are healthy units. Wings genuinely support the squadrons by emphasizing and supporting the importance of drill and ceremonies, aerospace education, physical fitness, and leadership training – all of which are necessary for a team's success.

REFERENCE: CAPM 52-4; cap.gov/ncc

PROCEDURE: Strongly encourage all units to maintain drill teams and color guards. Host a wing cadet competition in the February/March timeframe.

NOTES: Remember that many units take the competition very seriously, so ensure that an experienced senior member serves as the project officer for the wing competition. When feasible, use “outside” judges for the subjective events, such as local base Honor Guard members, ROTC drill team members, etc. to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Ensure that teams understand the potential expense for the region and national competitions.

Cadet Advisory Council

WHAT IT IS: Each wing is required by regulation to establish a Cadet Advisory Council (“CAC”), to aid the commander in monitoring and implementing the cadet program, make recommendations for running and improving the program, and to provide an organization where cadets gain leadership experience at higher organization levels. The wing CAC consists of representatives (and assistant representatives) appointed by subordinate commanders (squadrons or groups). The wing commander may appoint the CAC chair, vice-chair, and recorder or allow the council to elect their own officers. The wing commander must also appoint the wing representative (and assistant) to the region CAC.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: The CAC is the only mechanism to allow direct cadet input to senior commanders concerning the cadet program. Vital and engaged CACs at each echelon are critical to our success. Also, wings are inspected on their CAC activity during the CI/SAV process. Perhaps the most important reason for supporting the CAC program is that CAC is the only venue where cadets learn committee leadership. Cadets are unlikely to command drill teams, lead ground teams, or marshall aircraft in adult life, but they are likely to serve on committees at work, school, church, in the community, etc.

REFERENCES: CAPR 52-16, Ch. 3; CAPP 52-19 (CAC Guide); cap.gov/cac

PROCEDURE: Publicize the CAC representatives' appointment deadline to subordinate units well ahead of the 1 July deadline. Track and follow-up with subordinate units to ensure that they are properly represented at CAC meetings. Appoint a CAC advisor from your staff to work directly with the CAC. The advisor must be physically present at all CAC meetings and should work closely with the CAC officers to ensure that agendas are published, and that the meetings are meaningful. The CAC's input to the commander should be professionally produced. Ensure that the CAC chair has access to the wing commander. CAC meetings should be in-person whenever possible, however large wings may use the NHQ teleconference system when available (dial 1.877.227.9142 to schedule telecons). Most wing CACs meet approximately quarterly.

NOTES: Ensure that the wing commander seeks appropriate input from the CAC, and that the CAC responds in a timely manner. Typical examples might include cadet perspectives on CP-related NB agenda items or proposed regulations posted for public comments. Avoid tasking the CAC with activity implementation or similar duties. The CAC organization is poorly suited to matters beyond advice and input. See CAPP 52-19 for further details.

Inspection Programs

WHAT IT IS: The Wing's Compliance Inspection ("CI") is conducted by a NHQ Inspector General ("IG") team roughly every four years. In preparation for the CI, the Liaison Region will conduct an ungraded Staff Assistance Visit ("SAV") 9-13 months before the CI. CAP wings, in turn, are required to conduct Subordinate Unit Inspections ("SUI") on their squadrons/groups roughly every 2 years.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: The CI is your boss's major report card. It is very important to your boss.

REFERENCE: CAPR 123-3 (Compliance Inspection Program); CAP Wing Compliance Inspection Guide; Subordinate Unit Inspection Guide

PROCEDURE: CI/SAV: Obtain the CI/SAV schedule for your wing, available on the NHQ website. Also obtain a copy of the CP portions of the assessments (inspector's reports) from the last CI and SAV. Note the strength and weaknesses of the CP section as reflected in the reports. Download a copy of the CAP Wing Compliance Inspection Guide from the IG page on the NHQ website. You can then see exactly what you will be inspected on. To use a school analogy, you now have the "questions that will be on the final exam."

SUI: Get the SUI schedule from your wing IG or chief of staff. Although not required, it is very helpful to have CP personnel inspecting the CP items at cadet and composite units.

NOTES: In addition to the SUIs, it is very important for you to get out and visit ALL of your subordinate units for staff assistance visits. Create a unit visitation program to try to get someone from wing CP to every cadet / composite unit once or twice a year. In wings with groups, require the group CP officer to visit all of the units within the group. Avoid letting distant/rural units go without visitations between SUIs. Visitation programs should be helpful, worthwhile experiences that enable local leaders to ask questions and work with the DCP to improve the local unit. Units might want to complete the "Cadet Unit Self-Assessment," which is included in the Training Leaders of Cadets course materials (www.cap.gov/tlc). Ensure that you request and justify adequate funds for travel as necessary.

Professional Development (Yours and your subordinates')

WHAT IT IS: Training in the Cadet Programs Specialty Track (CAPP 216) may begin as soon as Level One is completed. Specialty training incorporates self-study, on-the-job training, and performance-oriented training which is evaluated by both objective tests and performance evaluation. Formal training culminates with the award of the master rating and corresponding Leadership Award. DCPs should possess a master rating in Cadet Programs.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Let's face it, sometimes while working the CP arena, it is easy to be overtaken by crises and mountains of work and let our own PD slide. But we need to continue our training and education to improve our job performance while setting a good example to our subordinates. Also, you are evaluated on your PD level during the CI/SAV process.

REFERENCE: CAPR 50-17 (Professional Development); CAPR 35-5 (Promotions); CAPP 216 (CP Specialty Track); cap.gov/tlc

PROCEDURE: Log into e-services and double check your CP PD level. If it is not a master rating, set up a meeting with your immediate supervisor (wing commander, chief of staff, etc.). Take along a copy of CAPP 216 and, working with your boss, commit to a realistic schedule for progression. Note that you can't do this by yourself; you need a trainer to certify your accomplishments.

NOTES: Regardless of your personal PD level, you should encourage and mentor the CP professionals working at your subordinate units (squadrons or groups). Go to e-services and check on their CP PD levels. Contact each of them personally, and encourage them to continue to progress. Try to arrange challenging training and staff assignments for them that will allow them contact with areas within CP beyond their immediate duties. For example, squadron level officers should be encouraged to work as encampment tactical officers or to serve on selection boards for NCSA or scholarship applications.

Training Leaders of Cadets is the main professional development course for adults who support cadets. TLC may be hosted at the group or wing level. On average, wings should host TLC annually, depending on their size. For details, see www.cap.gov/tlc.

6. IMPORTANT APPLICATION & NOMINATION PROCESSES

Cadet of the Year

WHAT IT IS: Cadet of the Year (“COY”) is national-level award given each year to recognize the outstanding cadet in CAP. It is selected from cadets nominated by each wing.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: This is a high-profile award and commanders at each level are anxious to have full participation. In other words, this is important to your boss. Plus, you get inspected on it during the CI and SAV process.

REFERENCE: CAPR 39-3, para 24.

PROCEDURE: Remind units during the fall of the application process and deadlines. Emails, website, and unit letters are a start. Remind them also of the qualifications (Earhart, high school junior, good grades, etc.) required. The application packet (CAPF 58 plus attachments) requires copies of transcripts as well as letters of recommendation, so the units really do need to

get started on this early to do a good job. The units should be underway by 1 January, and their applications are due to wing by 15 January.

The regulation specifies the size (7 personnel) and composition of the review board. The deadline for submission of the wing selection to region is 15 February. Region will select the best nominee for submission to NHQ. The COY is normally recognized at the August National Board meeting.

NOTES: “Negative responses” are not acceptable for COY. If you do not have an acceptable Earhart cadet, submit the best Mitchell cadet you have. Encourage squadrons to recognize a cadet of the year within their unit. Some wings allow the COY to name an adult mentor, who also receives an award for supporting the cadet.

John V. “Jack: Sorensen Cadet Programs Office of the Year Award

WHAT IT IS: The Jack Sorensen Award is a national-level award given each year to recognize the outstanding senior member working in Cadet Programs. The awardee is selected from nominees submitted by each wing.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: This is a relatively new award and commanders at each level are anxious to have full participation. Plus, it is always important in a volunteer organization like CAP to recognize members’ hard work.

REFERENCE: CAPR 52-16, chapter 2.

PROCEDURE: Only senior members who directly support cadets (ie: unit commanders, leadership officers, DCPs, etc.) are eligible. Unit nominations are due to wing by 15 January; wing nominations are due to region NLT by 15 February. The region will select the best nominee for submission to NHQ. The Sorensen Award recipient is normally recognized at the August National Board meeting.

CAP Scholarship Applications

WHAT IT IS: Each year CAP has over \$200,000 in college and flight scholarships available. Cadets apply to NHQ through wing headquarters.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Free money for college and flying. This is a good thing. Sadly, each year some of the scholarships go unused. Note that some scholarships are restricted to specific schools (e.g. Texas A&M or the USAFA

Prep School). Also, wings are inspected on their participation in the scholarship application process during the CI/SAV process.

REFERENCE: CAPR 52-16. Full information is published annually in the October edition of *Volunteer* magazine, and is published on the NHQ website (www.cap.gov/scholarships).

PROCEDURE: Detailed instructions about the application process are found at www.cap.gov/scholarships, and vary depending on which scholarship the cadet is applying for.

CAP FLYING SCHOLARSHIPS: In some years, NHQ has made available money for flight training scholarships. If money is available, applications for flying scholarships must be submitted by 1 March.

NOTES: Additional flight and technical scholarships for CAP cadets are offered by organizations such as The Spaatz Association, the Order of Daedalians, etc. See the NHQ website for additional details.

National Cadet Special Activities Applications

WHAT THEY ARE: National Cadet Special Activities (“NCSAs”) offer cadets outstanding opportunities to spend a week or more exploring aerospace careers, developing leadership skills, and furthering their love of aviation. Over 30 activities are typically offered across the nation each summer.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: NHQ receives well over 2,000 applications for the limited number of NCSA slots every year. The only practical way to select cadets is based on an “order of merit” provided by each wing. The DCP’s timely participation in managing the “rank-ordering” of the applicants from his/her wing is crucial to the application process. It is also important for wing commanders to be aware of which cadets from the wing will be traveling outside the state for these outstanding activities. Finally, the wing’s participation in the NCSA slotting process is evaluated during the CI/SAV process.

REFERENCE: CAPR 52-16. See also the NHQ website (www.cap.gov/ncsa) and the October edition of *Volunteer* Magazine.

PROCEDURE: Cadets apply on-line using an electronic CAPF 31 (Application for Encampment or Special Activity). However, they must print out a copy for the parent and unit commander to sign. The unit should then send the copy to Wing.

Wing should assemble the applications and is responsible for rank-ordering the cadets. Wings must notify NHQ of the rank order of their cadets in February (typically around the 15th, but NHQ will send out a notice on the specifics). (Region is not part of the rank-ordering process.) Wings may use any method to accomplish the rank-order, including review boards. Review boards may simply review the submitted packet, or may require cadets to appear in person or by audio or video teleconference.

NOTES: The NCSA selection process is constantly “evolving”, so watch for changes in the procedure. Also, note that some NCSAs – most notably the Civic Leadership Academy (“CLA”)—have special “off-cycle” application schedules. Watch for these.

7. TIPS & TRICKS

Don't be the Lone Ranger. The wing is a big place with a lot of folks. You cannot do this job alone. (Repeat: You *cannot* do this job alone.) Delegate effectively and manage the staff. If you cannot find qualified CP staff assistants for your shop, you're going to have to find and train some unqualified CP staffers. But you cannot do this job successfully alone.

Network, Network, Network. You should be well acquainted with your neighboring DCPs so that you can coordinate on items of mutual concern. Don't re-invent the wheel when you can simply steal from your neighbor.

Be Organized. Make a continuity binder or CD that contains all of the necessary information to pass along to your successor. Just imagine what you would have liked to receive when you got the job. The binder should contain contact info for your staff, your boss, and the region CP shop. Also listed should be contact info for your supported units. The most recent CI/SAV reports, along with the CI/SAV schedule for the wing. There should be a tab for the SUI reports and schedule. The CAC should have its own tab with minutes and contact information. Encampment commander contact information, encampment schedules, budget, and supporting information. and this SmartBook should also be included.

Get Out of the Office. Spend as much time as possible in the field with cadet and composite units. Talk to your fellow CP volunteers and the cadets about their concerns and upcoming activities and events. Spend time mentoring your supported leaders. Do what you need to do, but don't get stuck in the office compiling statistics or PowerPoint slides. That's no fun, anyway. You took

this job to benefit cadets, so get out there and watch it happen. It'll help make this job fun and rewarding.

8. GENERAL ADVICE FOR CAP STAFF OFFICERS

From CAP Squadron Leadership School

1. **READ THE REGULATION.** This should be your starting point. The regulation will outline the policies and procedures that should guide your efforts as a staff officer.
2. **CONTINUITY BOOK.** If you're lucky, your predecessor will have prepared a continuity book that includes basic information about local programs, points of contact, previous budgets, etc.
3. **STUDY GUIDE.** Your specialty track study guide is a plan for on-the-job training that you can do on your own, or under a mentor's wing.
4. **INSPECTION GUIDE.** NHQ inspects wings every few years. Even if your wing is not due for an inspection, reviewing the inspection guide is a good way to learn which areas of your job are considered most important.
5. **MENTOR.** A mentor is an invaluable teacher, coach, sounding board, you name it. If your commander hasn't appointed one for you, ask.
6. **WING STAFF.** Your counterpart on the region staff can serve in a mentoring capacity. Getting together may not be practical, but you are a customer of the region and NHQ – you're always welcome to ask for help with questions or concerns.
7. **NEIGHBORING WINGS.** Try working with a neighboring wing. Maybe your counterpart in that unit can give you some pointers about your job.
8. **CAP-USAF RESERVISTS.** Our Air Force partners want you to succeed. You are welcome to solicit their advice.
9. **KNOWLEDGEBASE.** The Knowledgebase is an online interactive "FAQ." If you're new to a staff job, try browsing its entries on your staff area.
10. **WEBPAGES.** Of course, you'll want to browse your section's pages on the national website.