

## Meeting Planning

**Lesson Objective:** Comprehend the importance of meeting planning.

Your meetings should be professional and have quality activities in order to attract and retain your members. The only way to achieve a professional look and feel to your meetings is to carefully plan your meetings out ahead of time. Some squadrons plan their meetings six, eight, even twelve weeks in advance. They do this at staff meetings and try to involve all staff members.

**Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):**

1. Understand the Civil Air Patrol's Strategic Plan and how it should influence your unit's planning.
2. Discuss the importance of planning meetings.
3. Develop a plan to address senior member and cadet meeting requirements.

**Scheduled Lesson Time:** 1 hour and 15 minutes

### Introduction

"Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination." — Fitzhugh Dodson

Have you ever arrived at a meeting not knowing what is scheduled for that evening? What is expected of you? In the end do you wonder why you even came to the meeting? This lesson should help you to not be the commander who has failed to provide guidance, direction and structure to your organization. During this lesson you will review what is expected from a unit, how to develop a plan and schedule.

### 1. Review Civil Air Patrol's Strategic Plan

It's important to understand planning from the Corporate Strategic Plan down to the local unit. By reviewing the areas of the strategic plan below you will develop a better understanding of where CAP as an organization is "going" and how it measures success. The three areas for you to read are:

- 1) The Forward by the National Commander on page 4 (Attachment 1)
- 2) Our Priorities on page 9 (Attachment 2)
- 3) Our Indicators of Success on page 23 (Attachment 3)

These three areas should help you focus your efforts and shape your plan. Of course, you should read as much of the CAP's Strategic Plan as interests you and keep it as a reference during your time in command.

## CAP Unit Commanders Course Meeting Planning

Link to CAP's Strategic Plan:

[https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/20162020\\_CAP\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Approve\\_55EB9C8FE4FA7.pdf](https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/20162020_CAP_Strategic_Plan_Approve_55EB9C8FE4FA7.pdf)

### 2. It's important to plan your meetings!

Why plan your meetings in the first place? It is only two and a half hours long, surely you can fill in the time, right? Wrong. To begin with, if you come up with activities at the last minute, they will look like you just dreamed them up. It simply won't be professional.

Secondly, you'll cheat yourself and your members out of some wonderful activities using outside sources, because you won't have the time to coordinate with them. Third, you'll run out of ideas because chances are, you'll be planning the activities by yourself.

When you plan meetings in advance, you can plan all sorts of activities inside or outside of the building. You can involve people from other agencies and you can involve your staff. Planning meetings means you can design the training time to meet your squadron's needs. It means you can put some fun into the process and it means that the time you spend during the meetings will more likely be professional and efficient.

#### ***Cadet Programs and contact hours***

CAPR 52-16, *Cadet Program Management* is a critical document for all cadet and composite squadrons. The regulation provides members of senior squadrons a better understanding of what is required of a unit to support one of CAP's three primary missions, cadet programs.

To effectively conduct a meeting, you need to review the contact hours required each month for cadets. CAPR 60-1 para 4.3.1. *Weekly Squadron Meetings* and its subparagraph detail what is required. These paragraphs outline sequencing and scheduling in addition to the requirements.

The required hours break down into four basic areas.

- **Leadership** - 1.5 hours per month.
- **Aerospace education** - 1.5 hours, this covers everything from AEX to tours.
- **Fitness** - 1 hour, this is more than just the CPFT; it can include games and other activities.
- **Character Development** - 1 hour.

The specific requirements above consume 5 hours of meeting time per month. This still leave 3 to 5 hours per month for a unit to develop their own training. This training can be additional time spent on the areas listed above or other training such as Emergency Services. But don't forget the monthly safety briefing which is needed for all members of your unit.

Additionally, each squadron will offer a weekend opportunity event once per month(see para 4.3.2 of CAPR 60-1). An event offered by a neighboring unit or higher headquarters can satisfy this requirement.

Understanding what is expected will assist in a better development of schedules and ensure that cadets are being provided the training they need to advance in the program.

### ***Planning senior member meetings***

Senior meetings do not have a prescribed format and a great deal of flexibility is provided to accomplish the meeting objectives. However, many elements of the cadet meeting format may be adapted for seniors. They can participate in the ceremonies and activity periods. They may also enjoy training periods and should be included in the monthly safety briefing. You may elect to hold a separate briefing for flight crews.

It is the senior portion of the meeting which is easily forgotten when planning. You will find it when you forget to plan for them and meetings will begin to drift. Training and interest in the meeting will suffer.

It makes sense to plan both portions of the meeting at the same time. You may find many instances where cadets and seniors can share activities.

Planning meetings is an opportunity for you to put your skills to work. You can problem solve, integrate missions, and plan unit training using all of the leadership and management skills you have acquired throughout your CAP and professional career. You should be thinking about these things when you go through the next exercise and later when you begin to plan meetings for your unit back home.

Think about how to integrate CAP missions into the meeting, how to conduct unit training, how to motivate and inspire your members, how to use meetings and the planning process itself as a tool to help you sustain a successful unit.

Don't think about meeting planning as a necessary evil. Think about it instead as a chance to really give your members a worthwhile experience and investment of their time.

### **Annual requirements**

As part of your planning process you need to account for those items that are required during the year. Knowing what is expected during the year will prevent future scheduling conflicts by allowing you to integrate these into your schedule.

Many of these requirements will be addressed in other lessons, but some of the more common events are:

- Nondiscrimination Policy briefing, which is an inspectable item during your subordinate unit inspection. (see CAPR 36-1 para 4.d or SUI Tab E-1 Item 2)
- Safety Day (see CAPR 62-1 para 4.k)
- Annual inventories of supply, communication, aircraft and facilities as they apply to your unit. (See CAPR 174-1 para 2-16.b)

There are other reports or documents that need to be completed during the year but these do not necessarily need to be placed on the schedule. As an example, completing your annual finance paperwork or DDR reports are some of the items. These items generally do not require the attention of entire unit.

So look at the regulations, talk with your peers and fellow students to decide what other events should be on your plan or listed in the schedule.

CAP Unit Commanders Course  
Meeting Planning

**3. Developing a plan and a schedule**

Senior squadrons do not have a set of standard curriculum that must be met on a monthly basis other than the safety training. This allows them a much greater degree of flexibility when designing their schedule.

For cadet and composite squadrons there are a couple of tools that can assist with the planning process

- CAPF 60-83, Squadron Meeting Planner
- CAPP 52-09, Cadet Great Start. There are several examples you could use to develop schedules. One is a generic weekly schedule, another is for a field day and a weekend event.
- CAPP 60-31 provides suggestions on how to create "SMART Goals".

Every type of unit should develop a plan to meet their goals. Failing to do so will leave the unit feeling adrift.

**Exercise:**

**EXERCISE OBJECTIVE:** To enable you to apply what you have learned from the Meeting Planning segment and reach a workable solution to the case presented.

The following exercise provides you the opportunity to perform the strategic planning required to plan six weeks' worth of meetings for your unit. By going through the exercise, you will be better prepared when you are required to do it for real.

The instructor will break you into groups to develop a plan that you will present to the class as a whole.

(See Exercise on next page)

## **Exercise:**

In this exercise you will plan a six week schedule of meetings. You are to develop a schedule for a composite squadron to address both senior and cadet issues.

Include a day long or weekend activity in your schedule. Be sure to include the destination, type of activity, and a rough schedule within the day. List each activity you choose, their times within the schedule, the type of uniform (for seniors and cadets) for the meeting, and a general description. You may use a calendar for the schedule or fill in the blanks. Whichever you choose, ensure that it can be easily understood.

### **Some of the things you must have in your schedule include:**

- One safety briefing per month
- One character development discussion every fourth meeting
- An aerospace education activity every meeting
- A testing schedule
- Senior training activities
- Joint activities
- Leadership activity (for cadets)

In addition to these activities there are many optional activities you may choose from. Among these include:

- Emergency services activities
- Model Rocketry
- An open house
- Awards and promotions presentations
- Squadron Commander's Call
- Communications training
- Ground school training
- First aid
- One on one tutoring or counseling
- Promotion boards
- Guest speakers
- Short (or day long) field trips
- Drill and Ceremonies
- Color Guard training
- Staff Duty analysis orientation between cadet officers and staff seniors
- Etc.

CAP Unit Commanders Course  
Meeting Planning

Attachment 1 (Page 4 from 2016 – 2020 Strat Plan)



Fellow Civil Air Patrol Members:

In my time with CAP – 40 years and counting – I've had the distinct privilege of witnessing our members doing amazing things for America. From my start as a cadet anxious to get that first orientation flight to today, your National Commander, I can honestly say I've never been more proud of the Civil Air Patrol. In December of 2014, I was honored to take part in the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to members who, as CAP volunteers, heroically served this Nation during World War II. Today, we are more than just partners with the United States Air Force; we're now recognized as part of the Total Force. Where will tomorrow take us? We've been highly praised for our contributions of the past. We're a valued "Resource of Choice" in today's Total Force. It is now time to shape our future and define how we want tomorrow's Civil Air Patrol to operate...how we want to equip and train our force to meet America's needs...how we want to develop our leaders of all ages and levels...and to seek out new opportunities and missions.

-- Welcome to YOUR plan --

CAP has produced a number of strategic plans in the past and, like previous versions, we considered our partners' strategic guidance when crafting this plan. However, unlike our earlier strategies, for the first time members provided ideas in this plan's development. This is indeed your plan! As a strategic plan, it serves as our guide for setting priorities for investing resources, such as our funding, effort and time. In addition to our three primary missions, this plan helps address my personal priorities for Civil Air Patrol: expand our portfolio to incorporate new missions for which we are ideally suited and enhance the effectiveness of CAP members.

This plan charts our course to a better skilled and more responsive Civil Air Patrol, while being a more fulfilling CAP for our members. This is the start of a new adventure and I look forward to serving by your side as we shape tomorrow's Civil Air Patrol.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Joseph R. Vazquez'.

JOSEPH R. VAZQUEZ  
Major General, CAP National Commander

## **Our Priorities**

1. Be a vigorous part of the Total Force – enhance the relationship with our USAF and contribute to their mission accomplishment as a cost effective force multiplier.
2. Build Partnerships – increase our presence in national and local communities to better serve America and expand our portfolio to incorporate new missions for which we are ideally suited.
3. Inspire ingenuity – increase efficiencies in time and effort to enhance the effectiveness of CAP members.
4. Be America's STEM leader – promote CAP's recognition as a leader in Aerospace Education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education to meet America's needs of tomorrow.
5. Make being a CAP member even more special – recognize the value and talent of each CAP member; increase the fun and enhance fulfillment of the CAP experience to make members want to stay and others to want to join.
6. Build the future – develop CAP's organizational as well as functional leaders, from cadet to CEO.
7. Set the example – sustain institutional excellence.

## Our Indicators of Success



We measure our success on the accomplishments of our members. Present day accomplishments manifest themselves in a variety of ways. After mission completion, did we meet the customer's expectations? Did we get the imagery to the decision maker in a timely fashion? For the young lives that we touch daily, did they get accepted into college or perhaps start a successful career? Did they stay in CAP or return at a later date?

Looking to the future for indicators of success is more challenging. We will measure the success of our strategic vision by successfully completing the accompanying goals and objectives on time and with the intended outcome. As we take this journey, our litmus test will be to ask these questions: will we recognize goal attainment when we get there? Will we properly identify the need for new goals in the face of a changing world? And will we eliminate goals that no longer improve our Civil Air Patrol?

### Indicators of Success:

1. CAP delivers on our promises by successfully accomplishing our three primary missions.
2. Surveys indicate that CAP offers a more fun and rewarding experience.
3. Retention and recruitment efforts increased our membership and our diversity.
4. We have added local, state and federal partners to our family.
5. We have eliminated hindrances to success.
6. Our auditors proudly recognize us with A+ audit results.
7. Members' commitment to the Safety Management System will be reflected in their dedication to the use of Risk Management, taking every available opportunity to mitigate risk to the lowest level reasonably possible.
8. We've increased members' confidence that we have the right people with the right skills occupying leadership positions at all levels.
9. We meet our customers' and our members' expectations.
10. Our Cadet Programs and Aerospace Education remain progressive in their approach to developing citizens of character and STEM inspired minds.
11. At the end of the day, our members are proud to say they make up One CAP.

### What could hold us back? What's beyond our control?

There is no limit to what we can accomplish. Even in the face of adversity, such as limited funding or aging resources, our brilliant members will continue to find a way to serve America, make our Civil Air Patrol better, and achieve success. Building tomorrow's CAP will require solid leadership from top to bottom and the courage of each member to break down longstanding barriers to success and effectively manage the changes necessary to achieve this vision. Together we will all take this journey...

**...it's OUR strategic plan!**