



Communications Officer

Specialty Track Study Guide



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama
6 APRIL 2016

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Preface

This pamphlet will prepare members for the responsibilities of a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Communications Officer. The contents of this pamphlet apply to all levels, including the Squadron Communications Officer, the Wing Director of Communications and the Region Deputy Chief Of Staff for Communications.

This specialty track study guide has three sections. The first section applies to achievement of the Technician rating, the second section is related to attaining the Senior rating, and the third section deals with the skills required for the Master rating. This progression should prepare members for positions of increasing responsibility as a communications officer.

Study each section and apply the information to actual situations on the job. If possible, the unit will assign an on-the-job training (OJT) supervisor to assist members through the process. If the unit cannot assign an OJT supervisor, the member must learn the job through self-study and performance. The Region DCS/Communications should be actively involved in the training of Wing Directors of Communications whenever possible, either as the OJT supervisor or as a mentor during self-study. The wing Director of Communications should assist in the training of group and unit Communications Officers.

The member and OJT supervisor will determine the level of competence of the member at each level. When the member reaches the desired level of competency for the completion of a level, the unit commander will then certify proficiency in the member's personnel records and with National Headquarters through eServices. After the unit commander's certification of a Technician, Senior, or Master rating, the member may wear the Leadership Ribbon (Technician rating) with bronze (Senior rating) or silver (Master rating) star or the appropriate level of the Communicator's Badge (ref: CAPR 100-1 Chapter 4-3). Completion of each rating is a requirement for promotion. Complete promotion criteria is listed in CAPR 35-5, *CAP Officer and Noncommissioned Officer Appointments and Promotions*, and CAPR 50-17, *CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program*.

This specialty track is governed by CAPR 100-1. Feedback on the contents of this study guide should be directed to CAP Headquarters

Training Objectives

Each level contains Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements as well as Service Requirements that must be completed in order to attain each successive rating.

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements

These requirements are derived from self-study, on-the-job training (OJT) experiences, and agreement on competency with the assigned OJT supervisor.

Service Requirements

These requirements are objectives describing what each student is expected to complete through active participation as a communications officer.

Guidance for OJT Supervisors and Unit Commanders

The OJT supervisor plays an important role in the success of the Comm Officer in training. These senior member officers, in partnership with the unit's commander, guide the student through the knowledge, training, performance, and service requirements for the rating the student is pursuing.

Once the OJT supervisor is satisfied that the student has met all the requirements for the rating, s/he and the student notify the unit commander.

When the commander is satisfied that a senior member can perform to the level applied for and has met the service requirements, s/he records award of the rating in the member's master record and online in the specialty track administration module in eServices. Award of cadet ratings may be documented with a CAPF 2A.

Achieving the Technician Rating

Position Description

The Communications Officer at the Technician level is expected to:

- Familiarize Civil Air Patrol communications trainees with the basic concept of communications operation in Civil Air Patrol. .
- Establish programs to maintain and operate unit radio equipment IAW CAPR 100-1 and other directives.
- Monitor unit communications.
- Implement communications plans and programs from higher headquarters.
- Maintain accountability of equipment issued from higher headquarters and equipment issued or acquired at the unit level.

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements

Key Information for Attaining the Technician Level

To be successful as a Communications Officer at the Technician level, the member must be familiar with a variety of terms, publications, and procedures.

CAP has three types of publications:

- CAP Regulations (CAPR): CAP regulations provide directives that establish programs and procedures. They tell the “what.” Following the abbreviation CAPR, the directives have a hyphenated number, e.g., CAPR 100-1. The number before the hyphen represents the series from which it comes. Different series have different numbers. For example, training directives have the series number 50 and are numbered 50 through 59. Personnel directives have the series number 30 and are numbered 30-39. Following these hyphenated numbers, these directives have a title. Most directives (regulations and manuals) become known by their number, as it’s convenient shorthand.
- CAP Manuals (CAPM): CAP manuals usually go into more detail on the “how” of a particular subject but may also contain directive content.
- CAP Pamphlets (CAPP): CAP pamphlets are not directive in nature. CAP uses pamphlets for information or training purposes.

Specialty Qualification Training Records (SQTR) list the requirements for obtaining Emergency Services qualifications. These documents can be found on eServices under My Operations Qualifications.

Publications You Should Read

Certain publications should be read by all CAP members. Others apply directly to the Communications Officer. Comm Officers should be familiar with those publications that have high relevance for all CAP members, and should know those publications that are critical to the Communications program. For this reason, Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters (NHQ CAP) provides this list of publications and directives for the new Communications Officer to study and learn. Those items in bold print are critical in your role as a Communications Officer.

Number	Title	Notes
CAPR 100-1	<i>Communications</i>	Primary communications publication
CAPR 100-3	<i>Radiotelephone Operations</i>	Primary publication regarding communications operations
CAPR 20-1	<i>Organization of Civil Air Patrol</i>	Publication with organization charts and job descriptions
CAPR 60-1	<i>CAP Flight Management</i>	Primary publication for flying operations
CAPR 60-3	<i>CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions</i>	Primary publication for operational mission management
CAPR 174-1	<i>Property Management and Accountability</i>	Primary publication regarding property management
Specialty Qualification Training Records	<i>Mission Radio Operator</i> <i>Communications Unit Leader</i>	Requirements to become mission qualified in communications

Other Publications

There are documents on the CAP Communications website that you will have to read. These documents, the National Communications Plan, Geographical and Altitude Restrictions, HF and VHF Frequency Designators, CAP-ARRL Memorandum of Agreement, Wing and Region Communications Plans, and Alert Action Guide provide additional information on communications positions, operational requirements, and management requirements.

Individual wings often supplement national directives with local regulations and policy letters pertaining to communications training. The new Comm Officer should read through these local directives before progressing through this level of the specialty track.

Forms

Communications Officers should be thoroughly familiar with and be able to correctly complete and submit forms pertinent to the communications program. The Comm Officer should be able to:

- Identify how each form is used.
- Correctly complete forms and process in a timely manner.
- Maintain an adequate stock of applicable forms or have the ability to download the forms on-line from the forms and publications page on CAP's website.
- Assist other members in preparation or use of these forms.

The unit expects the Comm Officer to have expert knowledge of pertinent forms concerning the communications program. Answers to most questions concerning the use and completion of forms are contained in the directive overseeing the form. If the Comm Officer cannot find the answer by consulting the prescribing directive, s/he should ask the OJT supervisor or higher headquarters.

The following are the most common forms used within the communications program.

Number	Title and Use	Reference
CAPF 105	<i>CAP Radio Message Form</i>	CAPR 100-3
CAPF 110	<i>Communications Log</i>	CAPR 100-1
ICS 205	<i>Incident Radio Communications Plan</i>	CAPR 60-3
ICS 213	<i>General Message</i>	CAPR 60-3
ICS 214	<i>Unit Log</i>	CAPR 60-3

Training and Performance Requirements

To complete the Technician rating in the Communications Officer specialty track, the member must:

- Complete the Technician Level Communications Officer test.
- Complete Level I, Senior Member Professional Development Program.
- Complete Introductory Communications User Training (ICUT)
- Understand application requirements and procedures for individual radio stations.
- Radio station operation:

- (1) Be able to reference pertinent CAP regulations.
 - (2) Be able to reference geographic and altitude restrictions applicable to CAP.
 - (3) Ensure that CAP radio stations logs will comply with CAPR 100-1 Paragraph 7.
 - (4) Understand the types of nets and net operations (CAPR 100-3 Paragraph 1.9)
 - (5) Understand international urgency signals and procedures for handling distress communications from other stations. (CAPR 100-3 Paragraph 1.10)
 - (6) Understand communications procedures to include radio telephone procedures, prohibited operating practices, precedence designators, net procedures, break-in procedures, and message types and handling to include transmitting, receiving and forwarding of messages. (CAPR 100-3 Chapter 2.)
- Be familiar with CAPR 100-1, CAPR 100-3, CAPR 20-1, CAPR 60-1, CAPR 60-3, and CAPR 174-1, wing, region and national communications plans; and any applicable Interim Change Letters.
 - Communications Safety:
 - (1) All stations should be properly grounded to avoid electrical shock.
 - (2) Insure compliance with CAPR 100-1, Paragraph 7-1 and 7-2
 - Be familiar with ORMS (Log in at <https://www.caphq.gov/CAP.eServices.Web/Default.aspx>).

Service Requirements

Complete National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses IS 100, 200, 700, and 800.

Attend at a minimum of one group, wing or region sanctioned communications meeting, conducted IAW CAPR 100-1.

- Participate in one mission in any communications capacity or participate in one communication exercise sanctioned by the Wing Director of Communications.
- Perform assigned duties as unit Communications Officer or Assistant for at least 6 months.

Technician Level Training Checklist

To complete the Technician level of this specialty track, the member must:

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
Pass the Technician level Communications Officer test.	
Complete ICUT	
Demonstrate radiotelephone procedures, message format, distress and emergency communications, and communications safety.	
Demonstrate knowledge of radio station types, call signs, functional designators, and authorization procedures to OJT Supervisor	
Be familiar with the publications listed on page 6	
Attend a minimum of one group, wing or region sanctioned communications meeting, Conducted IAW CAPR 100-1. Meeting Date _____	
Participate in one mission (8 hours minimum) in any communications capacity or participate in one communication exercise sanctioned by the Wing Director of Communications. Mission Number _____ Exercise Date _____	
Complete NIMS courses IS 100, 200, 700, and 800.	
Serve with 6 months experience as a unit/assistant unit communications officer. Dates of Service _____ to _____	

OJT Supervisor

Date

Unit Commander

Date

Achieving the Senior Rating

Position Description

The Communications Officer (Comm Officer) at the Senior level is expected to:

- Manage and direct communications activities to include development and implementation of communications plans, programs, and directives.
- Coordinate communications plans and programs with other staff agencies and with subordinate and higher headquarters.
- Develop detailed operating procedures based on National standards for communications operations and guidance to subordinate units and personnel.
- Collect and report data to determine the effectiveness of communications operations.
- Process applications for CAP radio stations.
- Plan and conduct communications conferences, meetings, and workshops.
- Manage preventative maintenance and operations of radio equipment.
- Demonstrate the principles for the management of communications property.

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements

Training and Performance Requirements

To complete the Senior rating in the communications officer specialty track, the member must:

- Pass the Senior Level Communications Officer Test.
- Complete Level II of the Senior Member Professional Development Program.
- Successfully complete the Communications Officer Technician level.
- Compose a Communications plan IAW CAPR 100-1, OR an ICS 205 with at least 8 line entries that is acceptable to your on-the-job training supervisor.
- Demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in the following areas:
 - (1) Principles and functions of CAP communications.
 - (2) Communications management principles.
 - (3) Channel use and net schedules.
 - (4) Communications plans and preparations for operational missions.
 - (5) CAP radio station licenses, authorizations, functional designators, and call signs.
 - (6) Aeronautical Search and Rescue Station operation.

- (7) ELT/ EPIRB operation.
- (8) Corporate aircraft radio station authorization procedures and operations.
- (9) Search and Rescue.
- (10) Back-up power operation.
- (11) Basic antenna installation adjustment.
- (12) Participate in communications meetings, exercises, and classes.
- (13) Search, transfer, assign, issue/return, add, and retire communications equipment in ORMS.

Service Requirements

- Attend a minimum of two group, wing, or region sanctioned communications meetings, conducted IAW CAPR 100-1. The meeting required for the Communications Officer Technician level may count towards one of those meetings.
- Participate in at least three communications exercises sanctioned by the wing or higher headquarters, or any combination thereof. The exercise required in the Technician level counts towards the requirement.
- Participate in at least three operational or training missions (8 hours minimum per mission) in a communications capacity with at least one as CUL/trainee. The mission required in the Technician level counts towards the requirement.
- Serve as a net control for a minimum of two nets.
- After achieving the Technician level, serve 12 months as a unit or assistant unit communications officer OR serve as a Communications Unit Leader for 18 months.

Senior Level Training Checklist

To complete the Senior level of this specialty track, the member must:

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
Plan and execute a Communications conference or exercise.	
Explain each of the thirteen knowledge and proficiency items above to the OJT Supervisor.	
Demonstrate the ability to search, transfer, assign, issue / return, add, and retire communications equipment in ORMS.	
Pass the Senior Level Communications Officer Test.	
Attend a minimum of two group, wing or region sanctioned communications meetings, conducted IAW CAPR 100-1. The meeting required for the Communications Officer Technician level may count as one of the meetings. Meeting Dates _____	
Participate in at least three communications exercises sanctioned by wing or higher headquarters, or any combination thereof. Exercise Dates _____	
Participate in at least three operational or training missions (8 hours minimum per mission) in a communications capacity with at least one as CUL/trainee. Mission numbers _____	
Complete Level II, Senior Member Professional Development Program.	
Serve as a net control for a minimum of two nets. Show OJT Supervisor net logs for verification.	
Complete ICS 300. Date completed _____	
Compose a Communications plan IAW CAPR 100-1, or an ICS 205 with at least 8 line entries that is acceptable to the OJT Supervisor.	
After achieving the Technician level , serve 12 months as a unit or assistant unit communications officer OR serve as a Communications Unit Leader for 18 months. Dates of Service _____ to _____	

OJT Supervisor

Date

Unit Commander

Date

Achieving the Master Rating

Position Description

The Communications Officer (Comm Officer) at the Master level is expected to:

- Promote and develop a thorough understanding of all management and operational aspects of the CAP communications program as it pertains to all levels of the organizations.
- Recognize and cope with communications problems and matters unique to CAP networks and support requirements for the CAP mission.
- Develop and maintain a high degree of competence pertaining to CAP network operations, training, and maintenance.
- Serve as a communications advisor to various staff personnel providing guidance concerning communications matters.
- Monitor and assist subordinate unit communications officers
- Assist any inspector on inspections of communications functions

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements

Training and Performance Requirements

To complete the Master rating in the communications officer specialty track, the member must:

- Pass the Master Level Communications Officer test.
- Be rated as a Communications Unit Leader, either currently or former.
- Demonstrate proficiency in all Communications modules within ORMS.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Repeater Application and Review System.
- Explain the basic operation of HF-ALE in various mission scenarios.
- Explain the comm permissions process and the items that fall under it.
- Explain the elements of Communications Safety.
- Participate in, plan and conduct communications meetings and training exercises.
- Complete Level III of the Senior Member Professional Development Program.

Service Requirements

- Serve as an OJT supervisor for a communications officer at the Technician or Senior rating of the specialty track.
- Participate in at least five missions in a communications capacity and two as a CUL at a group or higher level activity. The missions required in the Technician and Senior levels count towards the requirement.
- Plan and conduct one communications training class at any level.
- Conduct one communications meeting at any level.
- Participate in at least five communications exercises sanctioned by a group or higher headquarters AND plan and conduct at least one of the five exercises. The exercises completed for the Technician and Senior levels count towards this requirement.
- After achieving the Senior level, serve 12 months as a unit/assistant unit communications officer.

Master Level Training Checklist

To complete the Master level of this specialty track, the member must:

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
CUL rating date _____	
Pass the Master Level Communications Officer test.	
Completion of Level III, Senior Member Professional Development Program.	
Serve as an OJT supervisor for a communications officer at the Technician or Senior rating of the specialty track.	
Participate in at least five missions in a communications capacity and two as CUL at a group or higher level activity. Provide OJT Supervisor with documentation (copy of sign-in roster, log sheets properly annotated, ICS 205, etc.; be careful to consider OPSEC concerns) for proof of participation as CUL. Mission numbers _____ _____	
Plan and instruct one communications training class at any level. Provide OJT Supervisor with the class plan and roster of students attending.	
Conduct one communications meeting at any level. Provide OJT Supervisor with the meeting plan and roster of members attending.	
Participate in at least five communications exercises sanctioned by group or higher headquarters AND plan and conduct at least one of the five exercises. (The exercises in the Technician and Senior levels count towards the requirement)	
After achieving the Senior level, serve 12 months as a unit / assistant unit communications officer. Dates of Service _____ to _____	

OJT Supervisor

Date

Unit Commander

Date