



## Allowing Greater Flexibility When Outside Activities Conflict With Civil Air Patrol

### Communication

- Help cadets and parents understand that if they step away from CAP for a few months, they will be able to return to the program and pick up where they left off; no demotions, no restrictions
- Create a space where cadets can be honest about their upcoming commitments

### Leave of Absence Culture

- Create a squadron culture where an activity Leave of Absence is an established practice
- Establish a process for a cadet to inform the squadron ahead of time
- Create an opportunity to have a conversation with the cadet
  - Find out when the season is over and when they expect to return. Make a note of it on the calendar and when that date approaches, reach out to them expressing our excitement for them to return next week.
  - Prior to leaving on the LOA, someone could have an intentional conversation with the cadet, guided by the Leadership Expectations, about what skills and values they want to practice during their time away. When they return, have a similar conversation reflecting on how that time went, helping them draw connections to how the skills they are learning in CAP apply to life outside of CAP.
- If two cadets are on LOA at the same time you could set them as Wingmen to check in with each other

### Flexibility

- Take a moment to explore ways that the cadet can still participate in CAP during this time
  - Perhaps he maintains the squadron's website or prepares curriculum for a future activity
- If a cadet in a leadership position needs to step away from the squadron for a few months, look at it as an opportunity for another cadet. With an intentional plan, another cadet could step into the role in a temporary "acting" capacity, giving that individual an opportunity to practice their skills
- Take it a step further and establish the cadet on leave as a mentor to the "acting" cadet, meeting virtually, to help keep him engaged. This gives both cadets a new opportunity

## Celebration

- Think about outside activities, not as competition with CAP, but instead as a place that cadets can practice the values and skills taught in CAP
- Prior to leaving on the LOA, have an intentional conversation with them, about what skills and values they want to practice during their time away. When they return, have a similar conversation reflecting on how that time went
- Celebrate their accomplishments outside of CAP; add their successes to your squadron's Facebook page

## Active Participation

- This phrase is mentioned several times in the 60-1, but only in relation to promotions.
  - If a cadet needs to step out for a few months, it's expected that they won't promote during that time. And that's ok.
    - It's important to note that the CAPR 60-1 does leave this open for commanders to take into consideration the specific circumstances surrounding the cadets' participation. Since the regulation intentionally uses the language "should" there is room for flexibility.
- 3.4.1.1. Attendance & Promotion Eligibility. Active participation is a promotion requirement because direct, in-person involvement in the Cadet Program is the most effective way for cadets to learn and grow as leaders. "Active participation" is not precisely defined because the reason for, frequency of, and duration of absences varies greatly. Commanders should consider cadets "active" if they participated in four meetings or activities during the previous eight weeks.*
- While active participation is required for promotion, it's not a baseline requirement for most other things.
  - If a cadet has missed several meetings recently due to play rehearsal, but is available for Saturday's day hike, why shouldn't she attend the activity? She is a cadet in good standing, she attended regularly prior to the play starting, and there is plenty of space for her.
    - While there are some activities that have limited spaces and therefore require decisions to be made, it is encouraged to include all cadets in good standing whenever possible.

## The Bottom Line

Cadets sometimes will need to prioritize another activity over CAP, and that's ok, but we want to instill a desire in them that will draw them back to CAP once that commitment is fulfilled. Maintaining open communication, finding ways to be flexible, making space for them to serve in creative ways, celebrating their accomplishments and trying our best to work with each cadet's situation will keep cadets coming back.