

Student Introduction

Welcome to the Unit Commanders Course (UCC)!

Thank you for your interest in serving as a squadron commander in Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Serving as a squadron commander is one of the most rewarding and challenging positions in our organization. As generations of members will tell you, it is also one of the most important. The success of the Civil Air Patrol is based on the weekly experiences of thousands of volunteers that occur across the nation in the squadrons.

There is much for squadron commanders to learn and do. The Unit Commanders Course will provide the foundational knowledge you need to know to get started as a commander. It will provide you with several tools that can help you to be a successful squadron commander. It will show you how to help ensure your unit is in compliance. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it will expose you to some of the concepts around the fundamentals of leadership. By mastering these four areas over your tenure, you will come a long way towards ensuring a successful squadron that is robust and built to last.

This course is designed to introduce you to many topics and provide general information that applies in most squadrons. For each topic, there is much more you can learn based on individual needs and interests. Consider this course a jumping-off point for your long-term study of leadership. We ask that you take your study of leadership seriously and wisely apply the principles you learn. While you and those you serve are volunteers, research shows that knowledge and skills of the commander are among the most important factors in member satisfaction and retention.

Using the Unit Commanders Course materials

However you complete the Unit Commanders Course: 100% online, or a blended format of online and in-residence; you will have access to the same basic materials. You will need to have access to the Internet and eServices to really get the most out of some of the lessons.

Each lesson is carefully designed to make the most of your time. Each of the 21 lessons contains a student reading, and you will be required to complete 4 online quizzes about the readings. In addition, there are writing assignments and exercises for some lessons. Several assignments for the blended course must be brought to the in-residence class, so please read the instructions for each lesson carefully. All lessons will contain a discussion to encourage further learning and growth.

Consider writing down some questions while studying so that you can gain insight and get answers from your peers and from the expert instructors about the facets of unit command that most affect you. This will make your experience richer and more relevant.

Rising to the challenge

Embrace the challenges and enjoy the successes you will experience as commander. Remember, your attitude will have an impact on your squadron. The future of the organization you care passionately about rests with the commanders and the members they serve and develop. Completing the Unit Commanders Course is a big step in your success. Again, Congratulations and Good Luck!