THE DISPATCH

Safety | Health Services | Chaplain Corps

CIVIL AIR PATROL

September 2026

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The Dispatch is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers and Health Service Officers are encouraged to use the articles in The Dispatch as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go to **eServices - Learning Management System**, click "Absorb," search for this month's Safety Dispatch, complete the quiz, and earn safety education credit.

The Dispatch features articles focused on this month's theme, "Fatigue and Rest," with contributions from Safety, Health Services, and the Chaplain Corps. Managing fatigue and prioritizing rest are essential to mission readiness and safety in Civil Air Patrol. The October edition will focus on "Review and Renew."

Primary Articles – Fatigue and Rest

Patience in Waiting: Fatigue, Rest, and Renewal

By: Ch, Lt Col Gary Eno, CISM Officer, GLR-001

Patience, at its core, is about waiting, and waiting is not something most of us do naturally, myself included. Fatigue often challenges our ability to wait well, while rest restores the strength needed to endure. As C.S. Lewis wisely observed, "I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless he sees that it is good for him to wait."

In life's difficult seasons, rest becomes essential. True rest, both physical and spiritual, restores our strength and renews our ability to wait. As Isaiah 40:31 reminds us: "*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

I have often heard, and come to know for myself, that asking God for patience can invite seasons that require even more waiting. During these times, fatigue can set in, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

When we are weary, patience becomes harder to sustain, and frustration can take hold. Yet it is often in these moments that the deepest lessons are learned.

Henri Nouwen encourages us that *"Patience asks us to live the moment fully."* Leo Tolstoy emphasizes that patience is not passive waiting but perseverance through slow, difficult seasons, while St. Augustine describes patience as the companion of wisdom.

Scripture often points us to Job, who endured immense loss, his health, family, and livelihood, yet he continued to praise God. Job's endurance shows that patience is not the absence of struggle, but faith in the midst of it.

Waiting requires discipline, faith, and a willingness to let go of control. True rest reminds us that we do not have to carry every burden on our own. Patience is sustained not only through endurance, but through trusting God enough to pause.

Let go and let God. Patience is a virtue, and virtues endure forever.

Reducing Fatigue at Civil Air Patrol Activities

By: 1st Lt Kristie McNealy, SE, UT-048

Fatigue is one of the most common safety risks during Civil Air Patrol activities. Whether members are flying, participating in an emergency services exercise, or traveling to a week-long activity, a lack of proper rest can affect judgment, reaction time, mood, and overall performance.



Photo Credit: 2025 NH/ME Summer Basic Encampment & Advanced Training

Activity leaders and cadet staff can help reduce fatigue by planning realistic schedules that include adequate breaks, reasonable lights-out times, and systems to ensure events stay on schedule. When activities run late throughout the day, the impact can be especially significant for staff members who often spend several additional hours completing administrative tasks and preparing for the next training period after students are dismissed. This can quickly reduce a member's ability to perform safely and effectively, so everyone should feel comfortable speaking up if they are overly tired, unwell, or unable to concentrate.

One of the most effective ways to reduce fatigue is to encourage healthy sleep habits and reduce excessive caffeine intake before an activity. Members should avoid staying up late packing, finishing work or school responsibilities, or socializing online the night before departure. Careful consideration should also be given to the safety of attending back-to-back overnight events, as a consistent sleep schedule before an event and sufficient time to rest and recharge afterward can significantly improve energy levels, focus, and overall readiness.

Hydration and nutrition also play a vital role in managing fatigue during an activity. Drinking enough water and eating balanced meals and snacks throughout the day helps maintain alertness and well-being. While caffeine may provide a temporary boost, it should never replace proper sleep and can sometimes contribute to dehydration or disrupted rest later.

Safety in Civil Air Patrol depends on teamwork, preparation, and good decision-making. Prioritizing rest is an important part of being ready to serve effectively and safely at every activity.

Fatigue and Stress in Civil Air Patrol Operations

By: Lt Col Segundo Graniela, Commander, Añasco Senior Squadron, PR-129

Civil Air Patrol (CAP) members, both cadets and adult members, play important roles in the organization's three primary missions: Emergency Services, Aerospace Education, and Cadet Programs. These missions often require long hours of preparation, training, and operational activity. As a result, fatigue and stress can become significant factors affecting performance, decision-making, and safety.



Photo Credit: 2026 Civil Air Patrol's Texas National Flight Academy

Fatigue is a physical and mental condition that results from lack of rest, extended activity, or demanding tasks. Stress is the body's response to pressure or challenging situations. In CAP operations, these conditions may occur during search-and-rescue missions, disaster relief activities, extended training exercises, or while managing multiple responsibilities within a unit. If fatigue and stress are not properly managed, they can lead to poor judgment, slower reaction times, communication errors, and reduced situational awareness.

Both cadets and adult members must learn to recognize early signs of fatigue and stress. These signs may include difficulty concentrating, irritability, headaches, slower thinking, and reduced motivation. Recognizing these indicators is the first step in preventing them from affecting mission effectiveness and personal safety.

Several important skills can help CAP members manage and avoid fatigue and stress:

- **Time management:** Balance CAP duties with school and work, and daily responsibilities.
- **Situational awareness:** Helps members recognize fatigue in themselves or others.
- **Effective communication:** Help team members report when they need rest or assistance.
- **Physical fitness:** Improves endurance and resilience during demanding operations.

Additionally, members should practice proper rest and recovery habits, including adequate sleep before missions, staying hydrated, eating balanced meals, and taking scheduled breaks during extended activities. Leaders should foster a culture that prioritizes safety and well-being over pushing beyond safe limits.

By developing skills and maintaining awareness of fatigue and stress, Civil Air Patrol members can protect their health, support teammates, and ensure missions are safe and effective.

Information of Special Interest



Photo Credit: 2025 Shirley Martin Cadet Powered Flight Academy

Fatigue and Rest: A Critical Element of CAP Aviation Safety

By: Lt Col Rafael Salort, National Safety Team Member, FL-001

Fatigue is one of the most overlooked hazards in aviation because it often develops gradually and may not be obvious until performance is already degraded. In Civil Air Patrol (CAP) aviation, where members frequently balance CAP duties with civilian careers, school, family responsibilities, and long travel days, fatigue management becomes a critical part of operational risk management.

Research has consistently shown that fatigue reduces situational awareness, slows reaction time, impairs judgment, and increases the likelihood of procedural errors. In aviation, these effects can be as dangerous as alcohol impairment. Even highly experienced pilots and aircrew are not immune. Fatigue affects communication, checklist discipline, navigation accuracy, and decision-making—especially during high-workload phases of flight such as takeoff, low-level operations, search patterns, and landing.

CAP missions often involve more than just time spent in the air. Long operational days can include travel, aircraft servicing, briefings, paperwork, mission coordination, and post-flight duties that quietly extend the duty day and reduce meaningful rest opportunities. Long duty days and competing personal commitments can make cumulative fatigue difficult to recognize. Effective fatigue management requires honest self-assessment and disciplined aeronautical decision-making. Aircrew members must recognize when they are not

adequately rested, avoid the temptation to “push through” exhaustion, and understand that speaking up about fatigue is a sign of professionalism, not weakness.

Managing fatigue starts long before stepping onto the aircraft. Members should honestly evaluate their physical and mental condition, consider outside work schedules and other stressors, and avoid “press-on” attitudes that can compromise safety. Mission accomplishment is important. However, no sortie is worth accepting unnecessary risk. Professionalism in Civil Air Patrol aviation includes recognizing personal limits and making sound decisions before fatigue becomes a flight hazard.

Fall Operations: Fatigue, Rest, and Safety Leadership

By: Lt Col Todd Meyer, SE, HSO, CDI, National Safety Team Member, WI-203



Photo Credit: 2025 Civil Air Patrol, National Emergency Services Academy

Fall operations are one of Civil Air Patrol’s (CAP) most impactful training periods. As units resume regular meetings, training events, and flight operations, the tempo quickly increases. With busy schedules, school commitments, and returning activity levels, the margin for error can narrow if safety is not intentionally managed. Fatigue and the need for proper rest are constant factors that must be proactively addressed as part of overall risk management.

Safety in CAP is not achieved through a single briefing or checklist; it is built into every decision, every evolution, and every level of leadership. From weekly squadron meetings to orientation flights and emergency services training, risk is always present. The key is recognizing it early and managing it continuously.

Fatigue is one of the most significant risks. Balancing school, work, CAP activities, and personal obligations can erode judgment and awareness. Leaders must actively monitor cadets and staff to ensure adequate hydration, rest, and recovery. Overexertion and stress are predictable risks and must be treated as such, not as afterthoughts.

Equally important is supervision. Cadets are learning, often in a fast-paced environment. Clear expectations, consistent oversight, and engaged leadership prevent small issues from becoming larger problems. Safety is not separate from training; it is part of it.

This period is also where culture is reinforced. When commanders and staff take safety seriously, members recognize it as a priority. When leaders demonstrate care, discipline, and attention to detail, others follow that example.

Civil Air Patrol activities during the fall are designed to build proficiency and readiness. When safety is fully integrated into these experiences, it ensures that every member continues to grow as a leader while operating in an environment where risk is understood, managed, and controlled.





**** CAP's Safety, Health Services, and Chaplain Corps Communications ****

Temporary NSOC Waiver Now Available for Safety Master Rating Candidates

Members actively pursuing their **Master Rating in Safety** who still need the **National Safety Officers College (NSOC)** to complete the rating may now request a temporary NSOC waiver. This waiver is intended only for those who have met all other requirements for the Master Rating but are awaiting the next available NSOC class.

The waiver allows qualified members to continue progressing without delay; however, **it does not remove the requirement to attend NSOC.** All members who receive the waiver will still be required to complete NSOC once a class becomes available.

Read the memorandum to learn more about the waiver process: **NSOC Waiver 2026**.

Thank you for your continued leadership in maintaining a strong safety program.

REMINDERS:

Take the Safety Dispatch – September 2026 course in Absorb to receive your monthly safety education credit. Please encourage your fellow team members to participate by enrolling in the Safety Dispatch course each month.

CAP Reinforces Safety Culture with Reporting of Safety Significant Occurrences

Civil Air Patrol promotes a strong safety reporting culture where every member plays an essential role. All Safety Significant Occurrences (SSOs), including accidents, injuries or illnesses, vehicle accidents, aircraft damage, and any other events listed in **CAPR 160-2**, must be reported through CAPSIS. SSOs are defined as any observed outcome during a CAP mission or activity that results in, or could have resulted in, damage to equipment or facilities, injury to a member, or a member's illness.

Timely reporting in CAPSIS ensures compliance with CAPR 160-2, improves our ability to identify hazards and causal factors, and helps safeguard our missions, our resources, and our members.

Request for The Dispatch Articles

We welcome article submissions for the upcoming 2026 editions of The Dispatch.

Articles should be **250–300 words** and submitted to **Safety, Health Services, or Chaplain Corps** communities for consideration.

Aviation-focused articles are also encouraged for future issues.

Please submit articles to the appropriate functional area:

- Safety: **safety@capnhq.gov**
- Health Services: **sleighton@capnhq.gov**
- Chaplain Corps: **mmorison@hc.cap.gov**
