

## Taking Command

**Lesson Objective:** Comprehend the role and requirements of unit command.

**Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):**

1. Explain unit commander roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
2. Explain the Cadet Protection Policy and how to implement it.
3. Explain how to develop/share a vision.
4. Explain the importance of succession planning.

**Scheduled Lesson Time:** 50 Minutes

### Introduction

Command can be the most rewarding experience in a professional or volunteer career. How steep the learning curve is depends on how well you are prepared for the role. Understanding the responsibilities of command and the programs you'll be responsible for are the keys to a successful tenure.

### 1. Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability

#### *Members and the Chain of Command*

Commanders are ultimately responsible for two things: Mission and People. Successful leaders maintain a balance between the two.

Missions aren't done without people. Commanders have a fiduciary responsibility to protect the physical and mental well-being of the membership. Having enough trained, competent and dedicated people to effectively do the job safely contributes to overall mission success.

No one is perfect. However, as a commander, you need to know what you are personally responsible for - in practice and spirit.

#### *Equipment*

Who owns the equipment we operate? The CAP Corporation owns all our equipment and, while it is assigned to the unit, and may be issued to individual members, the commanders are still ultimately responsible. The best way to avoid problems is to follow proper procedures for acquiring and issuing equipment.

Things to think about:

1. Conduct a fresh joint inventory every time supply officers change.
2. Donations are encouraged, but can only be accepted by the WG/CC or higher.
3. Annual inventories must be done using the checklist provided in ORMS.
4. All disposed of property is documented in accordance with CAPR 174-1, *Property Management and Accountability*.

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5. Lost, stolen, or damaged property must be immediately reported to the WG/CC who will appoint an investigator. This is done through the Report of Survey function in ORMS.
6. When in doubt, consult CAPR 174-1.

### ***Transportation***

Generally, members must be at least 21 years old, licensed in their state for the vehicle type, and have a valid CAP Form 75, CAP Operator's Permit.

### ***Aircraft Maintenance:***

Keep aircraft operationally ready, while still accomplishing training.

### ***Financial Management***

Appropriated funds are taxpayer dollars funneled to CAP by the Air Force through our cooperative agreement, which is an annual grant. Appropriated funds can only be spent on certain items and activities as specified in the Agreement.

Corporate funds are monies generated by CAP through membership dues, fundraising, contributions etc., and belong to the CAP Corporation. In other words, it is money we raise on our own outside of our grant from the Air Force.

Commanders must ensure unit solvency, prompt payment of debts, and proper budgeting.

Keys to proper financial procedures:

1. Prompt appointment of a finance officer and committee.
2. The finance officer and committee will track financial status regularly.
3. A thorough knowledge of the unit's financial status is key.

Tips to ensure proper procedures are being followed.

1. The commander cannot also be assigned as the finance officer.
2. Unit Finance Officers may not be paid employees, a member of the commander's immediate family or a member of the commander's immediate household.
3. The financial plan is mandatory.
4. All units must have a Wing Banking account.
  - The unit may not have any bank accounts outside of the Wing Banking Program.
5. Establish a finance committee, wings send quarterly financial statements for units to review.
6. Read CAPR 173-1, *Financial Procedures and Accounting*, to know your responsibilities, and call the wing finance officer for a briefing.
7. Once in command: review the financials, and cut the Personnel Authorizations under your signature. The sooner, the better.

### ***Core Values and Ethics***

Core values are the ethical foundation upon which you build your command.

Core values are the tenets of CAP service and should be emphasized routinely and incorporated into all operations. They should not be debated, nor sacrificed for expediency. Commanders must lead by example; if you don't follow core values, don't expect your people to.

Bottom line:

**Core Values = fair treatment + respect (defined and institutionalized).**

CAP's Core Values Form the Foundation for its Ethical Standards. CAP's ethical standards are provided in CAPR 1-1, *Ethics Policy*, and are outlined below:

1. Responsible stewardship of CAP's resources and assets.
2. Avoid any conflicts of interest.
3. Ensure working relationships are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness.
4. Fair dealings in all external business relationships.
5. Confidentiality.

Resolving Complaints of Unethical Conduct. Promoting, maintaining, and enforcing high standards of ethical conduct in Civil Air Patrol is a command responsibility

### ***Sexual harassment, discrimination, equal opportunity, and hazing***

Definitions

1. **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwanted sexual advances or sexually oriented behavior by one person inflicted on another. It can be as simple as an unwanted stare or off-color joke up to actual sexual assault.
2. **Sexual Discrimination:** Proffering of special treatment or withholding of fair treatment or consideration based on an individual's gender. It is also the preferential treatment in return for sexual favors, or the denial of consideration or rights of an individual because of their rejection of a sexual advance.
3. **Discrimination:** Denial of consideration or rights because of an individual's race, gender, color, religion, disability, or national origin.
4. **Equal Opportunity:** Absence of discrimination, as in the workplace, based on race, color, age, gender, national origin, religion, or mental or physical disability
5. **Hazing:** The act of subjecting members to abusive or humiliating tricks and ridicule.

CAP will not tolerate discrimination or harassment and is guided by applicable laws and sound moral judgment. Commanders are the point people for ensuring fair and just treatment. Those members who come forward with an allegation in any of these categories should be treated with dignity, respect, and in the strictest confidence.

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Those members who are harassing or discriminating against other members or their families should be reported immediately. CAPR 36-1 prescribes CAP's policies.

CAPR 52-10, *CAP Cadet Protection Policy*, provides guidance on sexual abuse, physical abuse, and hazing. Cadet Protection is discussed in the next section. If you should run into a situation like this, immediately contact your commander for advice and assistance!

### **2. Cadet Protection**

The best way to carry out the Cadet Protection Policy is to enforce its provisions before something happens!

YOU must know the Cadet Protection Policy & reporting procedures.

#### ***Cadet protection policies.***

1. CAPR 52-10.
2. Hold recurring orientation sessions for parents, as well as members.
3. Make sure your members receive this training.
4. Work with the Professional Development Officer to schedule refresher training as prescribed in CAPR 52-10.
5. Don't let seniors work with cadets until they've been checked, cleared and completed the required training.
6. Exercise care when selecting seniors to work with cadets.
  - a. Not all senior members are suited to work with cadets.
  - b. Err on the side of caution and safety.
7. Remember "Two-deep leadership":
  - a. Every cadet activity must be supervised by at least two adult leaders who are in "approved" status. There are three exceptions:
    - i. Cadet flying as explained in CAPR 52-10.
    - ii. Real-world operational missions (not training) conducted under CAPR 60-3, *CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions*, and
    - iii. Chance encounters, prior relationships, professional relationships, membership in other organizations, and children's friends, as explained in CAPR 52-10.
8. Remember that if an adult member is transporting cadets (exceptions outlined in CAPR 52-10), at least three total members must be in the vehicle including the driver.
9. Keep parents informed about CAP activities.

If an incident is alleged...

1. Report it to the WG/CC IMMEDIATELY. He/she will contact NHQ's General Counsel (GC).

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2. If your wing commander isn't available, call GC yourself and brief your WG/CC as soon as possible.

It's not your place to pass judgment; it's your place to report allegations!

**DO NOT** take any action yourself unless or until directed to do so by the GC or wing commander **UNLESS** the action is necessary to ensure the **IMMEDIATE PROTECTION** of the cadet (i.e. -attack in progress).

A word about physical abuse:

1. It is not tolerated by CAP.
2. Report suspected incidents to the next higher echelon.

### 3. One Vision

If you don't know where you're going, how can you be in a hurry to get there? Leadership is about being innovative, pursuing excellence, making the impossible possible for you members – in short, having vision. Commanders need to have a strategic vision for their squadron to succeed. What does "strategic vision" mean for commanders? It is more than just knowledge of how a task should be completed or an activity conducted. Your vision will focus the diverse talents of your members and provide a way to measure your success over time. This is expressed through Commander's Intent (see lesson).

#### ***Planning***

Some aspects of your vision will be informed by your personal experiences prior to taking command. Reflect on the aspects of successful units that you've participated in as well as the challenges and how they were addressed, either successful or unsuccessfully.

Seek out a mentor. Ask questions and seek feedback for your plans.

Use SMART goals to measure your progress.

**S** - Specific

**M** - Measurable

**A** - Attainable

**R** - Realistic

**T** - Time-based or Trackable

#### ***Communicating***

Technology gets better every day and our world is increasingly interconnected. Email lists, newsletters, websites, text messaging systems, social media, and staff meetings can all be used to share your vision, but may not increase any understanding of it. Do not lose sight of the value of direct and personal communication.

### ***Leading through a staff***

Commanders have a staff, even if it's a small one, and you'll have to get used to leading by directing others. To do this, the staff needs to believe in your leadership and your vision for the unit. Sometimes your staff will have great ideas, sometimes they will need guidance; you may want things done in a certain way, but don't want to micromanage. How do you lead when using the staff as your instrument?

**Tip:** Remember, if you assign a task, you must also give that staff member the authority to carry out the task. Let them do it their way; either they will learn something new in the process or you will.

## **4. Preparing For Succession**

### Definition

Succession Planning: Identification and development of potential successors for key positions in an organization, through a systematic evaluation process and training. Unlike replacement planning (which grades an individual solely on the basis of his or her past performance), succession planning is largely predictive in judging an individual for a position he or she might never have been in. -businessdictionary.com

Part of every leader's job is to identify high-performing members and help them build their skills and experiences so they can move up the ranks. This includes identifying members who will be potential future commanders and replacements for your position.

It is never too early to plan for succession.

How to ensure effective succession planning:

1. Establish measurable goals to guide the succession planning program.
2. Prepare current job descriptions so that the work to be performed is clear.
3. Identify potential successors to recommend
4. Ensure continuity files are available for the person who is ultimately selected.
5. Consider what *you* are going to do after you relinquish command.

## **Lesson Summary and Closure**

Command is a continuous combination of task/mission completion and staff development. Actively engaging your members in SMART goals and communicating regularly up and down the chain of command gives your staff ownership of projects that move the unit forward while ensuring group/wing is aware of problems as they arise.

Knowing what you're responsible for when you sign on as commander does not guarantee an easy pathway to accomplishing those things, but it is essential in forming and communicating plans. And working closely with your staff and the wing positions everyone for success.