

# Summary & Rationale for updating CAPR 52-16, “Cadet Program Management”

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For the past few cycles, CAP has been updating the cadet regulation every three years to keep it current. The main reason for 2010’s update is that CAP has moved to an online system for achievement tests and is transitioning to the new *Learn to Lead* textbook.

This proposed regulation also includes new rules that attempt to raise our cadet retention rate by asking units to adopt certain best practices such as setting annual goals, providing newcomers with an in-depth orientation, offering special activities regularly, and monitoring cadet attendance.

There would be no specific penalty for units who are unable to adopt these best practices because punishment is not the goal. But, including these well-recognized norms in the regulation allows them to be added to the inspection checklist. When new leaders open the cadet regulation, they’d find a recipe on how to build a great program. In turn, wings would gain a better picture of a cadet unit’s overall health. Likewise, our DCPs could become even more effective at targeted mentoring for struggling units.

After all, what is measured tends to be what gets done, so why not measure what we know to be the keys to a successful program?

This “Summary & Rationale” is your quick guide to the cadet regulation’s proposed edits. Members are invited to offer their comments about this draft. Please route all remarks through the Wing DCP.

## CHANGES of INTEREST

### 1. Aerospace Excellence (AEX) 1-6c

**Rule:** Each squadron will conduct at least one AEX activity per quarter.

**Rationale:** This curriculum guideline provides greater standardization in how cadets experience the AE aspects of cadet life.

### 2. Standard of Training. 2-1c

**Rule:** Each squadron should have two seniors who are TLC graduates. If a unit is not meeting this goal, the commander must develop a plan for doing so.

**Rationale:** In reading TLC student critiques, members have repeatedly said that completing the TLC course is essential for Cadet Programs Officers. This rule follows the Boy Scouts' mantra that "every scout (cadet) deserves a trained leader."

### 3.. Prescription Medicine. 2-5b

**Rule:** States that all members are responsible for self-administering their prescription medication.

**Rationale:** This language incorporates a policy change approved by the National Board in the summer of 2009.

### 4.. High Adventure. 2-9

**Rule:** Affirms that high adventure activities like rappelling, climbing, shooting, etc., are consistent with the goals of the Cadet Program, but establishes a consistent approvals process for those activities. Also slightly modifies the guidance for rappelling, firearms training, and paint ball.

**Rationale:** This ensures wing commanders are included in the decision-making process for the activities that need a special emphasis on safety. most challenging cadet activities. Updated guidance on rappelling, firearms training, and paintball comes in response to requests from experts in the field who frequently lead those activities.

### 5. Cadet Initiation. 3-1

**Rule:** Requires units to provide prospective cadets and their parents with an in-depth orientation. Also requires units to host at least one recruiting drive each year. *Cadet Great Start* is the default mechanism for recruiting and orientation.

**Rationale:** To counter the low retention rate among first year cadets, this rule would ensure every cadet receives the instruction, mentoring, and other support needed to quickly progress from a mere prospective cadet to a well-trained cadet airman.

### 6. Unit Goals. 4-2

**Rule:** Mandates that every cadet unit establish annual goals for its Cadet Program.

**Rationale:** Every successful squadron knows that having goals is vital. This rule focuses on the squadron going through the *process* of discussing, setting, and monitoring goals. Units are not penalized for falling short on the goals they have set for themselves.

### 7. Training Content & Schedules 4-3

**Rule:** Establishes a baseline for the training content of squadron meetings. Further recommends that squadrons plan their meetings via written meeting schedules.

**Rationale:** Squadron meetings account for roughly 100 hours of contact time each year. Therefore, the success of the weekly squadron meeting is essential. These guidelines provide a basic yet flexible structure to the all-important weekly meeting.

### 8. Cadet Activities. 4-3

**Rule:** Community-based squadrons should ensure cadets have an opportunity to participate in at least one special activity per month – that is, an event that takes place outside the normal weekly meeting. Likewise, wings or groups should support their

squadrons by hosting at least one special activity per quarter.

**Rationale:** Exit surveys report that #2 reason cadets cite for leaving CAP is a lack of worthwhile activities. Rather than overwhelming local resources, this rule encourages neighboring squadrons and the group or wing to work together to host cadet activities.

**9. Attendance & Retention.** 4-4b

**Rule:** Squadrons should monitor cadet participation via an attendance roster. If a cadet is found to have not participated during the past 30 days, local leaders should have someone contact the cadet.

**Rationale:** Missed meetings are a leading indicator of a retention problem. This common sense rule can go a long way toward keeping cadets engaged in CAP and helping units be responsive to cadet morale.

**10. Cadet Flying.** 4-5

**Rule:** Wings must support squadrons by actively planning for and managing orientation flights.

**Rationale:** Surveys shows that a love of flying is the #1 reason cadets join CAP. Therefore, it's essential that we fly cadets. Because most wings treat aircraft as wing-level resources (with good reason), most squadrons are not able to fly their cadets without help. By making orientation flights a wing-level responsibility, cadet flying is more apt to become a more successful, regularly scheduled activity.

**11. Transition to Online Tests.** 5-3 ff.

**Rule:** Cadets may attempt achievement tests online. Milestone award exams remain closed-book, hard copy exams controlled by the squadron.

**Rationale:** Per National Board action, March 2009.

**12. Transition to *Learn to Lead*.** 5-3 ff.

**Rule:** Notes that cadets may begin using a new textbook effective 1 July 2010.

**Rationale:** Rather than mandate a hard phase-out date for the existing text, this rule gives current cadets the option to remain in the "old" textbook or to switch to *Learn to Lead*.

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## MINOR MODIFICATIONS

- 1. Mission Statement.** 1-1  
**Rationale:** Rephrases the mission statement to make it more precise and representative of the Cadet Program's goals and ideals.
- 2. Key Traits of Cadet Life.** 1-2  
**Rationale:** Incorporates important doctrinal statements that were introduced in the "Cadet Programs Officers' Handbook."
- 3. Program Setting.** 1-3  
**Rationale:** To reduce the likelihood of an "us" versus "them" mindset taking root, this section introduces the terms "community-based squadron" and "school-based squadron." Note that neither setting is called "normal."
- 4. "Character Development."** 1-6d  
**Rationale:** Renames "moral leadership" as "character development," per National Board action in 2008. Further, this section points leaders to a website for details about the curriculum resources, which gives NHQ CP and HC flexibility in providing squadrons with more training in a timely manner.
- 5. Cadet Super Chart.** [ hyperlinks ]  
**Rationale:** Inserts the "Cadet Super Chart," which becomes the regulation's most helpful visual aid.
- 6. Required Staff Training.** 2-2b  
**Rationale:** No substantive changes are proposed here. However, by placing the curriculum rules online, CAP gains the flexibility to tweak the curriculum in response to current needs. For example, different CAP/CCs have wanted cadets to learn about safety, suicide awareness, the wingman concept, etc., but that was difficult to do because the curriculum was set by regulation.
- 7. Cadets & CPPT.** 2-4c  
**Rationale:** At NCAC request, 17 year olds become eligible to take CPPT. This avoids unnecessarily delaying cadet promotions between the time of a cadet's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and his or her quickest opportunity to complete CPPT.
- 8. ORM Safety Training.** 2-6 & 2-7  
**Rationale:** This language incorporates a CAP/CC safety policy letter published in June 2009.
- 9. Problem Records.** 3-2d  
**Rationale:** Allows commanders some flexibility when cadets are found to have incomplete records. Provides regulatory support for current practices.
- 10. Cadet Staff Design.** 4-1a  
**Rationale:** Incorporates doctrinal guidance about designing a staff structure to fit the unit's mix of cadets, as explained in the "Cadet Staff Handbook."
- 11. Delayed Requests for Awards.** 5-2h  
**Rationale:** On occasion, NHQ receives requests for milestone awards that were purportedly earned months earlier. These unusual requests are cause for pause. This section brings the wing commander into the process, giving him or her an opportunity to double-check the validity of the request, thereby helping protect the award program's integrity.
- 12. Test Ordering.** 5-5f  
**Rationale:** Updates the process for ordering cadet tests, consistent with a 2009 change to CAPR 50-4. Signature cards have been deleted and now any senior may contact NHQ to request tests for their unit.

**13. Special Needs Cadets.** 5-6

**Rationale:** The rule allowing cadets to test orally is broadened to include other “reasonable accommodations,” mirroring the guidelines of federal education laws. No modifications to the Spaatz exam would be allowed without NHQ approval.

**14. Achievement 8 Modification** 5-10b

**Rationale:** The new “Learn to Lead” text includes a chapter (#8) on speaking and writing to prepare cadets for the speech and essay assignment. Therefore, “new” textbook cadets will complete a written test on that chapter.

**15. RCLS Curriculum.** 5-12g & 8-6

**Rationale:** Points leaders to a website for the RCLS curriculum. Also, in response to the growth of the RCLS program, the Eaker Award’s “AFIADL-13” option (which was initially a stopgap measure introduced in 1998) is removed. Just as encampment is an in-residence program without exception, so should be the Eaker’s RCLS/COS requirement.

**16. Award Presentations.** 6-1

**Rationale:** Gives local leaders flexibility in selecting dignitaries to present cadet awards. Under current rules, for example, even Astronaut Eric Boe and Thunderbird Nicole Malachowski are not authorized to present a Wright Brothers Award.

**17. Cadet of the Month / Quarter.** 6-2

**Rationale:** Recommends squadrons adopt an objective, points-based incentive program to recognize top performing in-ranks cadets.

**18. Encampment Curriculum.** 9-4

**Rationale:** Points leaders to a website for details about the encampment curriculum. This adjustment is being made to allow for greater flexibility in tweaking the curriculum. This issue is similar to #6 above, “Required Staff Training.”