

## Command Responsibility and Accountability

### Lesson Objective:

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**Lesson Objective:** Comprehend key command issues and the commanders accountability in the Civil Air Patrol.

### Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify the special issues pertaining to accounting and procurement of CAP equipment.
2. Identify obligations of financial management to include tracking and identifying signs of trouble.
3. Describe CAP policies concerning sexual harassment and discrimination, equal opportunity, hazing, and cadet protection, as well as their importance and enforcement responsibilities.
4. Discuss CAP's Core Values and the commander's role in upholding these values.
5. Explain CAP's Ethics Policy.
6. Explain your command responsibilities to the members under your command as well as to the chain of command above and parallel to your position.
7. Explain the commander's responsibility regarding the CAP Safety Program.
8. Discuss the reality that commanders are ultimately responsible for all that occurs in their unit.
9. Discuss how to inspire unit members to follow your lead and the concept of "leading by example" in terms of legal, moral, and ethical practice.

### Lesson:

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#### Overview:

You've taken on the most important, challenging, and rewarding role in Civil Air Patrol--that of commander.

Command responsibility and accountability has been in the news recently. This includes issues from sexual harassment and discrimination, to misuse of funds, to the loss and theft of government equipment in the military world, to false advertising issues and class action law suits charging intentional harm to consumers. These incidents remind all of us of the obligations and responsibilities of command.

This segment does two things, first it alerts you to the issues and jobs that can leave you and CAP the most vulnerable: financial issues, logistical issues, discrimination, and cadet protection. Lack of attention to these issues has led to various kinds of administrative action by the Air Force, criminal prosecution, and civil liability for its members, including its commanders. As commander, you are primary in dealing with these key issues. You need to know where to look for help.

Second it also reminds you of the moral and ethical obligations you have as commander to do the best job you can for the right reasons. It introduces Core Values, the basic social mores we expect members to uphold in Civil Air Patrol. But more importantly, it shows you the basic expectations of command at the conceptual level: the end points - mission and people.

You are not expected to be perfect. What is expected is situational awareness and sound judgment. Ignorance is not considered a valid excuse when dealing with these particular issues.

## Special Issues Pertaining to Accounting and Procurement of Equipment:

Over Civil Air Patrol's long history, it has received a great deal of corporate equipment and assets. These range from uniform items, office furniture, hand-held radios and manual typewriters to current computer technology, vehicles, and aircraft. Much of these supplies and equipment have been issued to units like the one you serve in now.

Until now, your primary concern about supplies and equipment has been whether you have immediate access to it when you need it. Now as commander, your concerns must expand to include allocation of that equipment - deciding who should have access to it - and accounting for the equipment - effectively assuming custody of it. If something breaks, is lost or stolen, it's your primary responsibility to rectify the situation.

### Who really owns it?

The first thing to remember is that all CAP equipment belongs to the CAP corporation and that its primary assignment is to the CAP wing in which you belong. That equipment is then issued or "assigned" to individual units. The squadron commander, as the head of the unit, and is responsible for its issue, use and care until it is returned to the wing, or the wing allows for its disposal at the unit level. The commander can then ensure equipment is issued to members within the unit. For specifics, refer to **CAPR 174-1, Property Management and Accountability**. What does this mean? It means that the wing has loaned the equipment to your unit and has made you the primary custodian. It's up to you, therefore to develop a program for the care, maintenance, and effective use of CAP equipment and supplies.

#### Who really owns it?

- All equipment belongs to the \_\_\_\_\_
- Equipment is \_\_\_\_\_ to the unit, and you have \_\_\_\_\_

## CAP Unit Commanders Course: Student Guide

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- A. CAPR 174-1, Property Management and Accountability, paragraph 1-2, makes this very clear: “In accordance with the CAP Constitution and Bylaws, all property acquired by Civil Air Patrol in any manner and from whatever sources shall be received in the name of Civil Air Patrol and shall become the property of the Corporation. Commanders and all those responsible for management of CAP property will correctly obtain, control, maintain and dispose of property to ensure accountability and the property’s availability and readiness for missions and training..”
- B. CAPR 174-1, Property Management and Accountability, paragraph 2-2, clearly states, “Commanders are responsible for proper assignment, issuance, control, care, use, and protection of all property assigned to their units.”

These two paragraphs make it clear that the commander is ultimately responsible for everything regarding the property assigned to their unit. They must actively and properly manage, assign, issue, control, care for, use, and protect of all property assigned to their units.

The wing commander has final authority for control of CAP property within the wing. It’s important to note that wing commanders can recover (pull) and redistribute property based on the needs of the wing. They may also recover (pull) property whose condition has deteriorated as a result of neglect or abuse.

The best ways to avoid problems is to follow proper procedures from the beginning, assign people you trust, get help if you need it, and stay on top of the game. Fortunately, CAP has developed procedures for commanders to use to ensure the proper care and use of CAP equipment and supplies. What follows is a very general checklist to assist you with your responsibilities pertaining to property. It is by no means a complete list, but it does give you a place to start when designing your program.

- A. **Any time supply officers change, the new appointee and the outgoing supply officer will conduct a joint inventory of all equipment items charged to their account and under their direct control.** The outgoing supply officer will take action to clear the account of missing or misidentified items (report of survey) before the new supply officer takes control.
- B. **Donations are encouraged.** Please note though that only a corporate official (the wing or region commander) can accept a donation, because the property is in fact donated to the CAP corporation and not to the unit directly. While donations are encouraged, it is essential that all actions pertaining to donations are done in compliance with the guidance provided in CAPR 173-4, Fund Raising/Donations, regarding the details of receiving donations.
- C. **Perform annual inventories to ensure property is safeguarded and managed effectively using the checklist provided in Operational Resource Management System (ORMS).**

- D. **Disposal of property must be done in accordance with guidance provided in CAPR 174-1.**
- E. **Lost, stolen, or damaged property should immediately be reported to the wing commander.** The wing commander will appoint an investigating officer or board to determine the facts surrounding the matter. The investigating officer or board will make recommendations to the wing commander who takes appropriate action. The most important items to include in the report of survey are inputs as to how the incident happened and what procedures have been implemented to prevent reoccurrence (local comment here).
- F. **When in doubt, consult CAPR 174-1 and your wing logistics and supply officer.**

### Transportation

- A. Many squadrons are issued corporate vehicles (vehicles obtained by and registered through the Civil Air Patrol corporation). Issues surrounding corporate-owned vehicles, such as who can drive them, who pays for minor maintenance, and how major maintenance is reimbursed, can be confusing.
- B. Generally, members must be at least 21 years old, be licensed in their state for the vehicle type, and have a valid CAP Form 75, CAP Operator's Permit. Wing commanders may authorize members 18 through 20 years of age to operate CAP sedans, station wagons, 7-passenger vans, and pick-up trucks, though they are not permitted to tow trailers or carry passengers.
- C. Routine maintenance, such as fueling the vehicle, maintaining proper tire pressure, maintaining fluid levels, and cleaning the vehicle, is the responsibility of the vehicle operator and the unit operating the vehicle. The cost of routine maintenance is the responsibility of the unit and is not normally reimbursable.
- D. Major maintenance of vehicles includes the replacement of parts (e.g.: transmission, battery, brakes, tires, etc.), as well as repainting the vehicle. Your wing transportation officer has published specific guidance concerning major repairs, such as how specific authorization for repairs is granted, how it is documented, and reimbursement procedures. Typically, you must receive authorization **prior** to making major repairs. Any questions concerning the repair of vehicles should be directed to your wing transportation officer.

## Aircraft Maintenance

- A. The Civil Air Patrol has an active fleet of approximately 550 powered aircraft; the largest fleet of single-engined aircraft in the world. These aircraft are the property of Civil Air Patrol. Compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) and Civil Air Patrol directives is mandatory for operation and maintenance of corporate aircraft. CAPR 66-1, Civil Air Patrol Aircraft Maintenance Management, covers the standard aircraft maintenance management for all corporate aircraft and applies to all personnel operating and/or maintaining CAP corporate aircraft. CAP corporate aircraft shall conform to the requirements issued by NHQ/LGM at all times.
- B. All maintenance that will be paid by National Headquarters, whether direct to the vendor or reimbursed to the wing, requires a control number prior to the start of any work. This work shall be coordinated through the wing maintenance officer. If you have any questions about corporate aircraft maintenance or provisions made for privately-owned aircraft contact your wing maintenance officer.

## Obligations of Financial Management, Tracking it, & Signs of Trouble:

The ground rules are pretty much the same for financial issues. **Corporate funds you receive or accumulate belong to the CAP Corporation** and have been given to your unit to conduct its activities and programs. CAP units maintain funds ranging from a few hundred dollars to thousands of dollars.

Whatever the amount, the responsibility for you as commander remains the same: *to ensure the solvency of the unit, prompt payment of debts and expenditures, and proper budgeting practices.* Prompt appointment of a unit finance officer and committee and a thorough knowledge of the unit's financial status are keys to a sound program.

### Finance Keys

- Prompt appointment of a finance \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- A thorough knowledge of the unit's \_\_\_\_\_ yourself

## Appropriated and Corporate Funds:

There are two types of income in CAP: appropriated income and corporate income.

*Appropriated funds* come from the Air Force through our cooperative agreement. Appropriated funds are taxpayer dollars funneled to CAP through the Air Force.

*Corporate funds* are monies generated by CAP through membership dues, fund raising, contributions etc. In other words, it is money we raise on our own outside of our appropriations from the Air Force.

### **Wing, Group and Squadron Dues:**

In addition to NHQ dues, wings, groups, squadrons and flights may have their own dues to fund anticipated expenditures and they establish the amount of those dues with wing approval. Wing dues are paid directly to NHQ by adding the wing dues amount to the annual NHQ renewal amount. NHQ refunds the wing portion to the wing monthly as renewals are received at NHQ. Dues for groups, squadrons and flights are paid directly to the unit.

### **Sources of CAP income other than AF appropriations:**

In addition to the sources of corporate funds mentioned above, about two thirds of our wings receive financial assistance from their respective state government. This is a dwindling resource lately as states work to tighten their budgets. CAP also conducts missions for various federal, state and local government agencies. This varies greatly by wing, but it is another source of revenue for CAP. Other sources of non-appropriated funding include donations, investments, grants, fundraisers, etc. All income generated must be in compliance with CAP directives. See CAPR 173-1, *Financial Procedures and Accounting*, for information on financial procedures.

Here are a few more tips from CAPR 173-1, *Financial Procedures and Accounting*. This list is not inclusive, but it does give you an idea of what direction to head in.

- A. **The financial plan is of primary importance to you. It is also mandatory.**  
The main point here is to be realistic. Plan for growth when possible. Be sure of the wing's reimbursement procedures. For example, some wings reimburse squadrons for orientation flights while others put the money in a general maintenance fund.
- B. **Some units charge unit dues.** Remember however that this must be approved by the wing.
- C. **All squadrons must have an account with the wing-banking system.**  
Payments are made by the wing finance officer in the name of the squadron, as authorized by the unit commander and/or finance officer. Wing banking & payment procedures change periodically, as the program evolves and adapts, and it is the responsibility of the commander and finance officer to stay educated on these procedures.
- D. **Establish a unit finance committee and use it!** (Ref: CAPR 173-1)
- E. **The unit finance officer** maintains the records mandated by higher headquarters. They receive and review quarterly statements sent by the wing.

- F. **The unit may not have any bank accounts outside of the Wing Banking System.**
- G. **Read CAPR 173-1, Financial Procedures and Accounting.** The procedures listed are straightforward and simple. Call your wing finance officer just before or just after you assume command to find out what they want, how they want it, and if there's anything you should be aware of about your unit.
- H. **Once you take command, review financials, and issue a new Personnel Authorization (PA) establishing your new finance committee.**

Pay attention - fiscal mismanagement can be grounds for relief of command and membership termination. Intentional or fraudulent actions may result in civil or criminal prosecution.

### Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, Equal Opportunity, Hazing, and Cadet Protection:

As a unit commander you are responsible for the fair and equal treatment of each and every member. To treat everyone fairly, you must separate your own personal attitudes and biases toward or against individual members. Much has been written in recent years about these issues, in part because America has become more educated about and less tolerant of harassment and discrimination. Along with increased education on these subjects, people are more comfortable about coming forward with their experiences and demanding fair treatment.

Let's begin with some definitions:

- A. **Sexual harassment** is 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 an actual sexual assault.
- B. **Sexual discrimination** is the 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.

C. **Discrimination** in a general sense is the denial of consideration or rights because of an individual's race, gender, color, religion, disability, or national origin.

Civil Air Patrol practices fair and equal treatment of all its members and will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any type. **No Civil Air Patrol member will be discriminated against, regardless of race, gender, color, religion, disability, or national origin.** CAPR 36-1, *Civil Air Patrol Nondiscrimination Program* and associated policies are very clear on this point. As members with special trust, CAP commanders are responsible for ensuring the fair and just treatment of all its members and are the point people for enforcing CAP's policies.

Those members who come forward with an allegation are to be treated with respect and dignity, and their allegations are to be held in the strictest confidence. Those members who are guilty of harassing or discriminating against members must be dealt with quickly and fairly. Should you encounter such a situation, contact *your* commander for advice, assistance, and instructions on what to do next.

If you should experience a problem, the worst thing you can do is to down play it or ignore it. Not only is it morally wrong but it could expose yourself and the corporation to liability. Play it straight and smart. When in doubt, call your commander.

Senior members, cadets, and parents/guardians should **immediately report incidents of observed or suspected abuse** to the unit commander or commander at the next higher level of command.

**Hazing** is any conduct whereby someone causes another to suffer or to be exposed to any activity that is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful. Actual or implied consent to acts of hazing does not eliminate the culpability of the perpetrator. Examples of hazing include using exercise as punishment or assigning remedial training that does not fit the deficiency (such as making a cadet run laps for having poorly shined shoes). Hazing, as defined in this policy, is considered a form of physical abuse and the reporting procedures for physical abuse must be followed.

- CAPR 52-10, CAP Cadet Protection Policy provides guidance on sexual abuse, physical abuse, and hazing.

**There is no tolerance for abuse of any kind, sexual harassment, discrimination, or hazing in CAP!**

**Equal Opportunity** is the absence of discrimination in an organization, based on race, color, age, gender, national origin, religion, or mental or physical disability.

- CAPR 36-1, Civil Air Patrol Nondiscrimination Program provides guidance on nondiscrimination policy and Equal Opportunity.

### **Cadet Protection Policy**

All of you received Cadet Protection Policy training when you received Level I or shortly thereafter. But now you need to understand its significance to you as a commander and your responsibilities in carrying out the policy. It is important to remember these four important points:

- A. The best way to carry out the policy is to enforce its preventive provisions before something happens.
- B. It's more than just a fingerprint check and initial training; it's a system of checks and balances.
- C. Know membership review, escort, fraternization, and allegation reporting procedures cold. These are found in CAPP 50-3, Cadet Protection Program Training Student Guide, and CAPR 52-10 Cadet Protection Policy.
- D. This is equal to the safety program in terms of direct member welfare.

Make sure your members receive this training during Level I. Work with your Professional Development Officer to schedule periodic refresher training throughout the year. This is a very simple program to administer and keep pro-active.

Don't let senior members work with cadets until they have passed their screening and taken CPPT. You may want to make arrangements with the local police department to arrange for fingerprinting. Many departments like to know in advance, and this is a good way to keep control of your part of the process. Make sure you use CAP fingerprint cards; the FBI will return any other type.

You must exercise care when selecting senior members to work with cadets. Don't be afraid to exercise your discretion and authority as a commander in these matters. This is especially important when holding an overnight activity. **Always remember the two senior member rule: recommended always - mandatory for an overnight activity. If there is a female cadet in the activity, then one of the seniors should be a female, if possible.**

Keep the cadet's parents involved and informed of all CAP activities and of CAP's Cadet Protection policies. Hold a recurring Cadet Protection Policy briefing in which you explain the provisions of the policy with them. While assuring them that CAP has taken very extensive and proactive steps to protect their children, let them know that you are open to discuss any potential problem with them should an event occur.

If you receive a report of possible sexual abuse, report it to the wing commander immediately, who will call NHQ's General Counsel. If the wing commander cannot be reached, call GC yourself in accordance with the provisions outlined in CAPR 52-10. If you must do it yourself, back brief the wing commander as soon as possible.

Let's make this clear. It is not your place to judge an allegation. It is your place to report it. **Do not** take any action yourself until or unless directed to do so by CAP's General Legal Counsel or the Wing Commander, **unless** the action is necessary to ensure the **immediate protection** of the cadet. It is vitally important that you conduct yourself calmly, reasonably, and professionally.

When you get back to your unit, re-read the CPPT training guide to understand the expanded role you now play in implementing the Cadet Protection Policy.

Finally, a word about physical abuse: CAP does not permit any hazing or physical abuse of any kind. This includes using forced strenuous exercise as punishment. Commanders should oversee all training and disciplinary activities to ensure all members are being treated properly. If you know of or suspect hazing or physical abuse, notify your commander and take proper action (local discussion).

A common sense approach to cadet protection issues will protect not only you but the cadets and senior members you work with from potentially serious problems.

CAPR 52-10, *CAP Cadet Protection Policy* & CAPR 52-16, *Cadet Program Management* provides guidance on Cadet Protection.

### If something happens...

- Report it to the WG/CC *immediately!*
- If he/she isn't available, call NHQ/GC yourself, then back brief the WG/CC
- *Do not* take corrective action yourself until directed by GC, or the wing commander *unless* the action is necessary to insure the *immediate protection* of the cadet

## CAP's Core Values & the Commander's Role:

CAP has laid the ethical foundation on which you build your command and by which members conduct themselves. They have also made this foundation very straightforward. The Core Values are the standards of conduct we expect of all our members, and for you most of all...set the example!

### Core Values

- Integrity
- Volunteer Service
- Excellence
- Respect

The USAF and CAP share the core values of **integrity** and **excellence (in all we do)**. CAP has also developed other values: **volunteer service, and respect**. Let's take a brief look at each of these values.

A. **Integrity:** The cornerstone for all that's moral and just in a society. It means to be incorruptible; its synonym is simply - honesty. It is neither situational nor conditional. Integrity implies total commitment to honest and above board thought and action.

- B. **Volunteer Service:** The Air Force has a similar value called “**Service Before Self**”. The spirit of volunteerism is the willingness and ability to give of oneself, sometimes at personal sacrifice. But it goes beyond simply giving time. It extends to the willingness to obey the rules and regulations of CAP, to have respect for fellow members and organizations, to practice self discipline so you may give your all, and finally to have faith; faith in your ability as commander, in your people, in CAP. Rolled together, it means to treat your volunteer service in CAP with the utmost respect and attention to detail.
- C. **Excellence (in all we do):** We constantly strive to be the best. We may not always end up number one, but we must always reach for it.
- D. **Respect:** Trust cannot be achieved without respect. Respect for bosses, peers, and subordinates is essential. Respect for the dangerous and increasingly high-tech equipment we work with as well as the important missions we perform is equally important. Finally, respect for ourselves - our ability to do the job well and quickly. The people we work with will not respect us if we don't respect ourselves.

These core values are tenets of CAP service and should not be either debated or sacrificed for expediency. The discussions here will center on your obligations as a commander to uphold these values for yourself and the members you lead.

Adherence to core values is critical because you set the example. You instill these core values in those around you every day through your own adherence. An organization rises or falls to the expectations and conduct of its leadership. You'll find that your people will mirror your own conduct. While members may follow core values despite a bad example, a leader that sets a poor example will lose the respect of the followers. Don't be afraid to lead and expect corresponding conduct from your members, even if that means setting a tone and expectations that haven't been set before. You're the Commander; don't be afraid to act like it.

Let's look at this from a different perspective. We understand that when you are given command of a CAP unit most of the people you now command are your friends. Sometimes you will find yourself in a very uncomfortable situation as a commander, because you will see a friend do something wrong, or not do as you wish because it comes from, a friend, and not “the commander”.

There will be a very strong urge to look the other way - to avoid confrontation or criticism because of your friendship, and it's natural. However, your first duty and primary one is to accomplish the mission. You must do what is best for the unit. This will mean sometimes taking corrective action - fair but decisive action - with members who were and are your friends. It may mean that you have to remove a friend from a position because he/she is not effective.

It will be difficult, but you must realize - and make your friends realize - that the actions you take as commander are not personal. You take action - good and bad - for the overall benefit of the unit. True friends may squirm some at first but will understand.

Why? Because your professional relationship with your squadron changed the moment you took command. Your friends in the unit will more likely respect you more because you are able to separate your personal and professional lives. And, sometimes there is just nothing you can do about the people who will fail to understand, except go on with the job. All you can do is your best, remembering what's best for all members of the unit. That's a practical application of Core Values.

Core values really define and institutionalize fair treatment and common sense. Is it really that simple? As you already know, nothing's as simple as it sounds. The point is that as commander, you must make a choice and you are the example, be it good or bad.

### CAP's Ethics Policy:

**CAP's Core Values Form the Foundation for its Ethical Standards.** Ethical standards in CAP serve as a moral guide for members to follow in the performance of their duties. These standards are derived from what CAP "values" most about its service to the nation—its Core Values. These values represent a cultural commitment within Civil Air Patrol to practice basic honesty, to give of one's self for the betterment of humanity, to deliver top quality services, and to treat others fairly.

**CAP's ethical standards** are provided in CAPR 35-10, *Ethics Policy*; they are outlined below:

- A. **Responsible Stewardship of CAP's Resources and Assets.** Strive for effective accounting/reporting systems, internal controls, and take measures to ensure subordinate staff members are competent to perform their duties. Use fair and impartial policies and practices to fill all volunteer and CAP corporate positions. All CAP members, especially commanders at all levels, will act in a fiduciary capacity toward the organization and its members.
- B. **Avoid any Conflicts of Interest.** No CAP member may use corporate property, information, or their position for improper personal gain or benefit.
- C. **Ensure Working Relationships are based on Mutual Respect, Fairness and Openness.** CAP members will behave honestly and ethically at all times and with all people. Individuals will not take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, intimidation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair practice.

- D. **Fair Dealings in all External Business Relationships.** Preserve and promote CAP's public image as an ethical organization by acting in good faith, with due care, and engage only in fair and open competition. Ensure ethical treatment of all competitors, suppliers, customers, and colleagues. Consult with supervisory personnel before accepting any gift or entertainment. The specific standards of conduct associated with contracting and acquisitions are beyond the scope of this regulation. For more information, consult CAPR 70-1, *Civil Air Patrol Acquisition Regulation*.
- E. **Confidentiality.** CAP members must protect all sensitive and confidential information entrusted to them. Failure to do so can compromise the confidentiality of the information and cause undue harm to individuals or organizations.
- F. **Resolving Complaints of Unethical Conduct.** Promoting, maintaining, and enforcing high standards of ethical conduct in Civil Air Patrol is a **command responsibility**. Accordingly, any CAP member who has reason to believe CAP's ethical standards have been violated should report it through his or her respective chain of command.

### Command responsibilities to the members and to the chain of command:

As commander you have two overriding responsibilities: first and foremost to the mission (the missions of CAP, the objectives of the wing, and the task at hand), the second is to your people - both as a unit and also as individuals. However, if you take care of your people, set the example, provide them with the training and encouragement to strive for excellence, you will find they will step up and accomplish the mission for you. Four things to remember:

- A. **The mission of Civil Air Patrol is why we're here. Your unit must provide necessary *emergency services*, inform the public and the membership about *aerospace*, and conduct and support the *cadet program*.** Every other activity, obligation, or event revolves around those three basic tasks. Being a commander means you are entrusted with leading your unit to fulfill the tasks which constitute CAP's mission.
- B. As you've learned throughout this course, the mission is the primary objective, and it is done through the coordinated efforts of all levels. Responsibility to the mission also means providing support and constructive feedback to your group and wing. Your efforts should be designed from the beginning to complement theirs.
- C. Responsibility also rests in the execution of the mission - the task at hand. Always be mindful of the fact that it is many tasks, stacked one upon another which accomplishes the mission. You can't control every detail of every task, but you provide the overall direction.

D. People are at the core. Not only do you have a statutory responsibility to protect the welfare of your members; that responsibility is also moral. It goes beyond keeping members out of harm's way; it's having enough people to effectively do the job, and creating an environment that all members want to be a part of.

The best commanders get the best results because they take care of their people, not just because they know they have to, but because they know it's the right thing to do.

Good commanders also know that the responsibility to the people goes beyond physical welfare. They support members in their decisions, ensure morale is healthy, and show their members just how important they are - at every opportunity. This doesn't mean you can't be tough. To the contrary, the nature of what we do necessitates a high level of discipline. But criticism and discipline, while sometimes forceful, should always be constructive and not demeaning.

In the end, the commander must remember that people are the most important and often most challenging resource the unit has. Planes don't quit; think, feel - or operate on their own, but people can and do.

Never lose sight of these issues, even when some of your peers and members may. Personal feelings and preferences are a constant temptation to overcome. They can also be beneficial because they inject humanity into the enterprise. Don't allow it however, to cloud your two fixed points as commander: the mission and the welfare of all the people in the unit.

### Commander's Responsibility to the Safety Program:

The commander is ultimately responsible for everything that happens in his unit. This is especially true of safety issues and therefore warrants separate mention.

Safety is a major concern in the Civil Air Patrol. It is not only the potential loss of equipment, but the risk of life that makes this so important. The Commander is directly responsible for the unit's safety program. The Commander must appoint a Safety Officer in writing, who reports directly to the commander.

- A. The Commander **delegates authority**, but **NEVER responsibility for safety**. The commander sets the example and the organization rises or falls to meet that example. The commander must exhibit an attitude of compliance and safety consciousness in order to establish a "culture of safety" in the unit.
- B. Safety becomes a natural consequence of rigorous training and strict adherence to standards and compliance. You can't afford to allow sloppy attitudes towards compliance, training and standards. This means no "pencil whipping" of pilot checkrides, emergency services qualifications, professional development training, etc. This ties right back into the CAP Core Values of Integrity and Excellence.

C. Corrective action must be taken immediately toward members who show disregard toward the CAP safety program regardless of whether or not such disregard is intentional. Unit leaders and others in positions of responsibility must uphold the highest standards. It can be difficult to exercise your commander's authority against those who are otherwise your friends, but it is necessary to ensure safe, effective operations. Remember that you are not only protecting CAP assets, but also lives of CAP members.

Specific aspects of the CAP Safety program and its requirements are covered in greater detail in CAP regulations. Read and understand CAPR 62-1, ***Civil Air Patrol Safety Responsibilities and Procedures***, and CAPR 62-2 ***Mishap Reporting and Investigation***.

### Final Responsibility:

You have heard this so many times throughout this course and you will many more. You'll hear it after you leave, and you'll find yourself saying it to the budding leaders of your own units - simply because this fundamental principle is so important.

#### **AS COMMANDER YOU BEAR THE FINAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Final responsibility is a necessary by-product of command. You have final authority for your unit. You should expect your members to be obedient and responsive to your lawful orders, but with the final authority for your unit comes final responsibility.

Does this mean that you are directly responsible if one of your drivers, say, backs a van into a fence post? The driver is responsible for the action: he didn't watch where he was going. But, was he taught the proper backing procedure? Did he know that he was supposed to have a spotter outside the vehicle? Was the backup signal working? Did the safety officer properly teach these procedures? Did you make it known that accidents like this were preventable? What did you do about the last one?

If he wasn't taught properly, or he was, but didn't feel it was important because he'd seen others do it improperly and get away with it, then there was a break-down of the system itself. That is your responsibility. Accept that responsibility. Don't make excuses for it, but rather face it head-on. Learn from it and correct mistakes, and not only will you earn the respect of those above and below you in the chain of command but the overall performance of your unit will improve.

A commander's responsibility cannot be delegated. You delegate the authority to carry out the task, but you are still responsible - if something happens and you ignore it, the next time it happens it is your fault, just as if you backed the van up yourself.

While you cannot control everything that happens, cannot do it all yourself, and shouldn't try; it's up to you to put the proper environment in place. It's up to you to ensure that you've done "the right thing", to ensure your squadron runs smoothly, according to the rules, and that the job gets done. And if your unit is not up to the task, it's your responsibility to be up front about it.

Your boss will let you know what is expected of you - sometimes you'll feel like you've been left without many choices. Sometimes you'll feel that your boss has made the choice for you, and that may very likely be the case. Your responsibility will then be to carry out the order to the best of your ability.

There is no set way to practice final responsibility; no concrete point at which you're sure you've succeeded. But here are some hints. You do the best you can and you don't blame subordinates when something goes wrong. Do your best to fix the problem - even if it means relieving someone or non-renewing them. Don't ignore problems - ignorance is not an acceptable explanation for a commander. Finally, **don't keep your boss in the dark!** Just as you don't like surprises, neither does your boss. Remember, your boss bears final responsibility for all they command too.

### Leading By Example:

All this leads up to the final point; you must lead by example.

You must practice what you preach. People are much more attuned to what you do as commander rather than what you say. If those messages conflict, you must look to yourself for the answer. A moment of unprofessional behavior or decision making can have a profound impact on the unit.

This is why self-discipline is so vitally important. It is much better not to make the mistakes in the first place than to fix them once they have occurred.

However, set the example by accepting the fact that you will make mistakes on occasion, own up to them and learn from them. This applies to every policy you make as commander. If you preach a strong training program - you must train with them. When you espouse safe practices, you should also follow safety procedures. If you talk up the cadet program, you should also support it by flying some of the orientation flights yourself or camping with them in the rain.

Remember, as commander you are in the fishbowl and your actions are visible to everyone. Use it as an opportunity to show what you want and to lead!