

Senior Member Scenarios to assist with Cadet Programs

1. The "Underprepared Cadet"

- **Scenario:** One week before a major event (e.g., SAREX or Weekend Activity), the Cadet Project Officer (CPO) or Cadet Commander for the event (C/CC) tells you they haven't started the required logistics plan (vans, food, scheduling) because they were focused on school exams.
- **Goal:** Learn to guide rather than rescue, while maintaining safety.
- **Action for Senior:** Do not take over immediately. Sit down with the C/CC (or CPO) and help them create an urgent, accelerated action plan. Have them identify which tasks can be delegated to their team to meet the deadline.
- **Key Lesson:** If the SM doesn't step in, the cadet is set up for failure for this event, and learning to plan ahead for future events. The SM taking over completely doesn't help the cadet learn the valuable lesson of pre-planning, communication, and consequences.

2. The "Overconfident Staff"

- **Scenario:** The Cadet Staff creates a 16-hour day for a Saturday activity with no time for meals or breaks. When you suggest adding meal breaks, the Cadet Commander insists they can "power through" to stay ahead of schedule.
- **Goal:** Safety and risk management without crushing enthusiasm.
- **Action for Senior:** Use the CAP Risk Management process. Ask the cadet, "What happens if a cadet passes out from dehydration or low blood sugar? What is the plan to handle that?" Guide them to see that safety (nutrition/rest) is part of, not a hindrance to, a successful event.
- **Key Lesson:** Encourage autonomy but intervene when safety or well-being is at risk. Presenting questions and ideas versus a formal directive helps the cadet to think outside the box to meet the schedule while understanding the parameters.

3. The "Inattentive Cadet NCO"

- **Scenario:** During a training activity, a Cadet NCO is focusing more on their conversation with their cadet peers instead of supervising the cadets working on a high-risk activity (e.g. near vehicles or plane, working with tools).
- **Goal:** Immediate correction and follow-up mentoring.
- **Action for Senior:** Pull the Cadet NCO aside—do not correct them in front of subordinates. Ask, "What is your primary duty right now?" Reiterate expectations. After the event, have a feedback session using a CAPF 60-90 (Leadership Feedback) or an After Action Review with another cadet or SM to address the performance issue. Just be sure to document in some manner so that everyone is on the same page.
- **Key Lesson:** Ensure that expectations are set prior to an event and each cadet and SM know their role. Make sure the roles assigned match the level of the cadet.

4. The "Overly Aggressive Command Staff "

- **Scenario:** During flight time, the Cadet Flight Commander starts to raise their voice to their cadets, telling them that they are worthless and never going to get the drill steps correct.
- **Goal:** Redirection and Construction Criticism
- **Action for Senior:** The Senior Member is an NCO and could easily help with explaining the drill steps and take command of the flight. It would also be easy to directly tell the Flight Commander to tone it down. However, the best course of action would be to have the FC ask everyone to take a water break and work with them on the side to explain that the cadets need more step-by-step instruction and to become angry will not solve the problem, but make the cadets not respect them.
- **Key Lesson:** Maintain the partnership between TAC and Cadet while ensuring the flight also respects the FC.

5. The "Parental Intervention"

- **Scenario:** A parent approaches you during a squadron activity complaining that the cadet staff is "being too strict" and wants to complain directly to the squadron commander.
- **Goal:** Protecting cadet authority while ensuring, and verifying, safety.
- **Action for Senior:** Listen to the parent, but do not undermine the cadet staff immediately. Later, discuss the interaction with the Cadet Staff (coaching on leadership style), while ensuring no Cadet Protection Policy (CPP) rules were violated.
- **Key Lesson:** Support the cadet staff, but guide them in fair, firm leadership.

Overall Key Principles for Senior Members

- **"Step Forward, Step Back":** Every time the cadet staff takes one step forward in maturity/responsibility, the senior staff should take one step back.
- **Be Descriptive, Not Evaluative:** Instead of "Good job," say, "The cadets found your event exciting because we ran on schedule and came in under budget".