

Using Your Staff Effectively

Lesson Objective: This lesson seeks to explore the staffing of the group.

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):

1. Understand how staffing the group depends on wing commander vision and purpose for the group.
2. Understand considerations one should make when staffing a group.

Reading: Student Guide

Scheduled Lesson Time: 20 minutes

Introduction

Groups are formed by wing commanders and serve as an intermediate command that supports squadrons and wing. The use and structure of groups varies in Civil Air Patrol. The vision for the group and its structure will determine staffing. Understanding the vision of the wing commander is critical for all groups.

1. Understand the varied roles of the group in Civil Air Patrol.

The group exists to help the wing achieve mission effectiveness. Wing commanders are given the authority to outline the purpose and structure of the groups in their wings. Wing commanders define the purpose of the group when it is implemented. Wing commanders also determine staffing when groups are authorized. Therefore, a group might be a functional intermediate command, or it might be an administrative entity depending on the size of the wing, population, etc.

Because groups are implemented in different ways and with different staffing, it is important for group commanders and staff to understand the vision of the wing commander. You are in the pivotal place to make or break the vision. Groups form a bridge between wing and the squadrons they support.

The group is the first line of indirect leadership. Many groups have fully staffed organizations, others have a minimum number of duties shared with squadrons, and some have only a commander that relies on support from other staff elements. The group commander and group staff if there are some, are enablers not “bosses. In CAP, the Group can be a helper or a hinderance, it is a balance that must be struck. The staff’s preferences might not work for everyone, and everyone must know this. If the Admin section of a unit wants to be all digital, the group Admin Officer should not say they are wrong, because they do not like it. Group staff should be providing education people to help members do better or answering their questions. There will be times that instruction has to be given but the focus is on the enabling part not the “thou shalt” directives.

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2. Understand considerations one should make when staffing a group.

When appointing group staff, be sure to look at the impact on the squadrons. The natural tendency is to tap the people one has worked with and pull them with you to this next level. This can lead to a leadership vacuum in the losing units and a challenge to mission accomplishment. Group leaders must consider, "What will be the impact on your unit with you taking this position?". Good candidates will be able to answer this right

away. Those that cannot, may need to focus on unit level continuity before they move anywhere. "Additional Staff Assignment" works in some organizations better than others. For smaller wings there may not be much of a choice as expertise needs to be shared. We all have a certain amount of time we can give to CAP, so it is important to discuss with the member their preference.

When there is an opening to be filled, the group commander may be successful expanding their marketing to a wide variety of contacts. Perspectives of others about young talent to be developed is crucial to growing organizational skills over time. Marketing the duties and asking for interested parties to explore options with you before deciding can help eliminate some fear of the unknown. Encouraging members to take an assistant position gives them chance to build confidence and get to know other team members. You may need to offer the position for one year then a discussion on how the duties are fitting at that time.

You want to recruit people who understand the units need to want the help. So, the best approach is not "Hi, I am from the group, and I am here to help. Even if they know you, in this new position you still need to build trust that understand and can assist without dictating. Visit your units, talk to your commanders, share your vision, be ready to listen more than talk. Watching squadron members during operational exercises, inspections, conferences, and other activities gives you a great window to evaluate potential staff members.

Lesson Summary and Closure

EXERCISE:

How many groups are in your wing? How are they staffed? What is the wing commander's vision for the groups in his or her command? Why were groups established?