

PREPARING FOR CAP ENCAMPMENT

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF STUDENT CADETS

This guide provides parents of cadets with basic information about Colorado Wing CAP Cadet Encampment. Additionally, the guide explains eligibility requirements, provides guidance for encampment preparation and the importance of encampment attendance.

WHAT IS A CADET ENCAMPMENT?

Encampment is a basic introduction to the military way of life and is an opportunity to experience leadership from both a follower's and leader's point of view. Encampment is a unique training opportunity because of the weeklong "total immersion" concept that introduces cadets to a military environment at an active military installation. Although encampment is not a military boot camp, it is intense training! It is an excellent way for cadets to meet new cadets from throughout the Wing and aids in establishing an "esprit de corps" among the "next generation" of cadet leaders.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND AN ENCAMPMENT?

Most cadets who are *current* members of CAP and who *have not* previously attended an encampment should attend encampment at their first available opportunity. This is essential training and is especially important for most new cadets. Although Colorado Wing has had great success with the youngest cadets at encampment, it is possible that some of the youngest and newest CAP cadets will be best served if they attend encampment during their second cycle of eligibility. Parents of very new cadets or cadets under age 14 should discuss the encampment environment with squadron commanders and make the attendance decision based on the maturity level of the individual cadet as compared to other cadets of similar age and experience. The attendance decision should also factor in that encampment attendance is a big success factor in membership renewal after the first year of membership.

WHY SHOULD A CADET ATTEND AN ENCAMPMENT?

- It is a requirement to achieve the Billy Mitchell Award and the promotion to cadet officer.
- It is required prior to participation in many National and Wing-sponsored special activities.
- It provides an outstanding leadership and training forum for new cadets and cadet staff members. It provides an opportunity to meet cadets from other squadrons and begin lasting friendships.
- It provides an opportunity for cadets to learn about the military and to live in a military environment.
- Studies show that encampment attendance during the first year of membership increases retention in CAP. Cadets attending encampment are much more likely to renew membership after the first year.
- Encampment completion provides an opportunity for cadets to become staff members at subsequent encampments and many other activities!

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ENCAMPMENT?

- Current CAP Membership valid throughout encampment.
- CAP ID card.
- Cadets must complete the Curry Achievement *before applying* for encampment. The Curry Achievement completion must be documented in eServices. Contact your squadron commander if you have questions about this requirement. Coordinate with the squadron to develop a plan to complete this achievement!
- Cadets must meet weight and grooming standards at the beginning of and throughout encampment.
- Safety current at the beginning of and throughout encampment.
- Must have complete blues *and* BDU uniform.

HOW DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?

Encampment staff will announce the opening of the application submission window well in advance. This will likely be in March. Encampment staff will send announcements to all squadrons and additional

announcements will be made using the COWG Email Announcements List. Your squadron should set up communications channels to provide notifications to you.

A limited number of encampment slots (reservations) are available. Colorado Wing Encampment usually has more applicants than available slots. Encampment slot assignments (reservations) will be made on a first-come, first-served basis following submission and acceptance of a complete, error-free application packet including full payment of encampment fees. Incomplete applications or applications submitted without payment ***will not be accepted***. Applications with errors or without full payment will only be accepted after all corrections are submitted and full payment is received.

Slot assignments will be based on slot availability at the time the application is ***accepted***. Once all available slots are filled, additional applicants will be placed on a Wait List. In past years, a significant number of applicants on the Wait List have been awarded confirmed slots as other applicants cancel prior to encampment. Checks for encampment fees will not be cashed until a confirmed slot is awarded.

Do not send the application packet and payment by any method that requires a recipient signature! There is no full time staff at the Encampment Administration Office and there may be no one present to accept delivery! This will likely delay receipt of the application! Despite repeated announcements about this each year, it still happens. US Postal Service First Class mail is the suggested method for paperwork submission.

WHO SUPERVISES THE CADETS AT ENCAMPMENT?

Safety is of paramount importance throughout encampment! Adult CAP senior staff members, both male and female, supervise cadets at all times. Approximately twenty-five adult CAP members serve on senior staff. Both male and female senior members are housed in each barracks building so that cadets are supervised twenty-four hours daily.

ARE THERE ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT ENCAMPMENTS?

Yes. CAP Regulation 52-16, Chapter 9, governs CAP Encampments. A copy of this regulation is available at the CAP National Headquarters website at: <http://gocivilairpatrol.com> Click on "Members", then "Forms and Publications", then "Index, Regulations and Manuals". Scroll down the page until you find the underlined link to R52-16 - Cadet Program Management. Cadets and seniors who have attended previous encampments are a great source of information as well. Your cadet's squadron commander is also an excellent resource for encampment information. The Cadet Encampment page of the Colorado Wing website also has the Encampment Training Guide available for review or download.

WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING AND DINING FACILITIES ARE USED?

Cadets will be living in military dormitories during encampment. The barracks are set up for two cadets per room in stacked bunk beds. The upper bunk is accessed by a ladder with one side of the bed placed against a wall. There is no safety rail on the accessible side of the upper or lower bunk. Upper and lower bunks are pre-assigned randomly. If there is a legitimate reason that your cadet son or daughter should not be assigned an upper bunk, notify encampment staff during the application process or by email. An early request will increase the chance that the request can be honored. ***Request lower bunk assignments for legitimate reasons only – not for convenience!*** Roommates are pre-assigned by similar age. Cadets ***do not*** select their own roommates. Male and female cadets are housed on separate floors and have separate bath/toilet facilities.

Dining facilities are located in a nearby high school cafeteria. Meals are prepared by food service professionals in a professional kitchen. Food is normally served cafeteria style. ***Legitimate*** food allergies and ***medical*** dietary restrictions should be addressed during the application process. There are usually acceptable alternatives available at each meal. It is likely that the food service provider will not be able to accommodate all allergies or food restrictions. It will be up to the individual cadet to inquire about specific allergens at each meal.

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate diets that are “life-style” or “life-choice” decisions. Vegan, vegetarian, special weight loss diets and similar diets fall into this category and will not be accommodated.

MY SON/DAUGHTER HAS NEVER BEEN AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE. IS THIS A PROBLEM?

Normally, this is not a problem. Cadets away from home for the first time get homesick; this is quite normal. Discuss the concept with them and let them know that if they get homesick, they can discuss it with other cadets in their flight, their flight sergeant, or flight commander. If they are not comfortable discussing homesickness with another cadet, each flight has an assigned senior member Tactical Officer (called a TAC Officer) who will be happy to talk with them. There is also a full time Chaplain available to talk with cadets about any issue.

Encampment is *not* a typical summer camp. The staff conducts encampment in a military manner; it is fast-paced with little free time. Encampments operate at a higher level of intensity in respect to the military aspects of cadet life than virtually any other cadet activity, short of some of the premiere National Cadet Special Activities. The strictness, rigor, sense of urgency, and overall expectations of military bearing will be markedly more challenging at encampment, yet still age-appropriate, compared with a weekly squadron meeting or a Saturday field trip. This may be a bit overwhelming for the first few days. Some cadets will respond to this better than others. However, most adjust to the routine by the third day. During past encampments, less than one percent of cadets have gone home for other than medical reasons. In some years, no cadets have gone home.

Very Important! Please ***do not*** set up any regular communication plan with your cadet son or daughter! Cadets ***will not*** have cell phones with them (cell phones are on the prohibited items list) and parental contact can disrupt the schedule for the cadet and staff. For the same reason, please ***do not*** telephone your cadet at encampment for routine matters or to “see how they are doing”. If there are problems at encampment, encampment staff will contact you. ***If you need to contact your cadet due to an emergency, encampment staff will cooperate fully.*** Contact numbers for encampment will be provided when you receive the arrival and in-processing instructions a few weeks before encampment.

Do not be surprised if you do not get a phone call from your cadet son or daughter during encampment. ***Please DO NOT ask them to promise to call home.*** They simply do not have time ***and*** they usually want to maintain appearances with their peers. However, any cadet who has a need to contact parents may do so by coordinating with the Chaplain or their TAC Officer.

Extremely Important: While cadets are attending encampment, parents ***should not*** leave home for any extended period, such as a vacation, unless they designate a family member or friend who will pick up their cadet in case that they need to leave encampment early due illness or for any other reason. This alternate emergency contact information ***must*** be included with encampment application paperwork.

HOW SHOULD A CADET PREPARE FOR ENCAMPMENT?

Encampment is not a military boot camp; however, the training is intense. Although the focus is on basic cadet training, some training is required at the cadet's home squadron to ensure that the cadet understands the basic concepts of CAP customs and courtesies, the basic concepts of CAP drill, and the basic concepts of proper uniform wear. Encampment should not be a cadet's first exposure to these subjects. The cadet's home squadron commander has responsibility for ensuring that this training is accomplished.

At Encampment, physical conditioning is very important. Each day begins early, with opening formation and calisthenics. All cadets participate in team sports throughout the encampment week. Although a cadet does not have to be in peak physical condition to attend encampment, a regular exercise program, to include running, will help them to prepare. They ***will*** be running almost every day.

Parents should provide basic instructions on doing laundry and ironing to cadets. Although there is washer and dryer availability in the barracks, time for doing laundry is extremely limited. Cadets should plan to wash only *uniform items* when necessary, not undergarments or socks. If participants bring all of the required items on the Packing List, there should be no need to do any laundry except for BDUs and possibly blues shirts. Irons and ironing boards *are not available* in the barracks and are included on the Packing List. Detergent may be provided. Check the Packing List to determine if cadets need to bring it.

Compliance with uniform regulations is extremely important. The US Air Force prescribes the policy for uniform wear for cadet blues uniforms and Battle Dress Uniforms (BDU). Regulations require *exact* placement of all insignia, patches, and accessories. If there are questions about this, contact your home squadron personnel. If cadets arrive at encampment with patches improperly sewn, *they* are responsible for correcting the error. This is not encampment staff's job. Please ensure that uniform are correct *prior* to arrival *or* be certain that your cadet knows how to sew. They *will* have to fix any problems.

Uniform shoes and combat boots must fit properly and must be broken-in before encampment! Each year, blisters are the most common injury at encampment. Most are preventable by wearing properly fitted boots and shoes that are “broken-in”.

HOW ARE MEDICATIONS AND MEDICAL ISSUES HANDLED AT ENCAMPMENT?

All information about medications and pre-existing medical conditions *must* be disclosed during the application process. After applications are submitted, any changes to medical conditions that might restrict a cadet's full participation during encampment must be communicated to encampment staff, in advance, to determine if any special accommodations can be made. Some illnesses or medical conditions may be disqualifying. If a cadet is found to have an unreported or undisclosed medical condition during the check-in process, and that condition restricts participation, the cadet may be dismissed from encampment without a refund.

In accordance with CAP regulations, the taking and monitoring of prescription medication is the responsibility of the individual member for whom the medication was prescribed or, if the member is a minor, the member's parent or guardian. Except in extraordinary circumstances, CAP members, regardless of age, will be responsible for transporting, storing, monitoring their medication needs, and taking their own medications, including inhalers and epinephrine pens.

CAP is not a health care provider, and CAP members are not permitted to act in the role of health care providers during the performance of official CAP duties. Consequently, CAP members are not permitted to function as pharmacists, physicians, nurses, or in any other role that would permit the administration and dispensing of drugs under various federal and state laws and regulations.

If a cadet has not attained the necessary level of maturity or is unable to safely self-medicate, you should consider postponing encampment attendance until the cadet can handle the self-medication task.

By CAP Regulations, medical care within CAP is limited to emergency care, only (i.e., first aid and stabilization) within the training and qualifications of the person rendering such care, until such time that private professional or authorized military care can be obtained.

Encampment health service staff's level of training is often limited to basic First Aid and CPR. Encampment staff will only treat minor cuts, scrapes, blisters, bruises, and mild cases of dehydration to the limits of their training. This is similar to medical care that might be conducted in the home.

Medical emergencies will be handled by 911 calls and, if necessary, transport to appropriate medical facilities. In these situations, parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible using the emergency contact information that is submitted during the application process.

In cases where an injury or illness is not an emergency but encampment staff decides that the cadet should

be seen by a physician as a precaution, encampment staff will contact parents/guardians as soon as possible and advise them of the situation and discuss options. Options will include transport to an Emergency Room by CAP personnel or pick-up by parents and subsequent treatment. Depending on the nature and severity of an illness/injury, dismissal from encampment is possible.

WHAT DO CADETS NEED TO BRING TO AN ENCAMPMENT?

The Packing List on the encampment website contains items that all cadets must bring as well as *contraband/prohibited items*. Items on the list are *required* unless specifically indicated as optional. Check, double check, and triple check all items before departing for encampment. Each year, some cadets arrive without required items. Although not required, an extra blues shirt and an extra set of BDU trousers and shirt are very helpful.

Cadets should copy or download the Packing List from the Cadet Encampment page of the Colorado Wing website. Start acquiring everything on the list *early*. This allows you more time to obtain some of the items. Squadron commanders or squadron supply officers can make recommendations and may be able to assist in obtaining uniform items. Some uniform items may need to be ordered so allow adequate time. *No uniform items or accessories are available at encampment!*

Important! Complete an inventory of all required items immediately prior to departing for encampment.

ENCAMPMENT CHECK IN PROCESS.

Do not drop off minor cadets at encampment to check-in alone. Parent(s) or Guardian(s) or another responsible adult must remain with the cadets during baggage drop-off, sign-in, and medical review. This will allow last minute problems with application paperwork and/or medication or medical issues to be resolved with parental assistance.

Instances have occurred where cadets have arrived at encampment and have been turned away because of incomplete application paperwork. This activity is usually completely booked and there are often cadets on the waiting list that come to the check-in in case of no-shows or cadets being turned away for some reason. ***Remain with your cadet son or daughter until check-in is complete and you are advised that you may depart!***

Later on check-in day, after parent departure, encampment senior staff members inspect each cadet's luggage. ***Encampment staff will confiscate contraband/prohibited items.*** These are listed on the encampment packing list. Please do not "surprise" your cadet by tucking away a package of chocolate chip cookies in their luggage. ***They will get the blame - but not the cookies!***

Haircuts and hairstyles will be inspected prior to check-in. Haircuts and hairstyles must meet CAP grooming standards throughout encampment. Staff will not allow cadets to in-process if hair does not meet CAP grooming standards. Cadets with haircuts/hairstyles that do not meet standards will be given an opportunity to go to the base barbershop for a haircut at their own expense.

If they decline, they will not in-process and will not get a refund. The simple solution is to get a haircut that meets standards immediately before encampment and that ***will remain within standards throughout encampment. If in doubt, cut it shorter!***

The encampment grooming standards policy is posted on the encampment website and will be included in the arrival and in-processing instructions that you will receive several weeks before encampment begins.

FINAL THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS.

Please, make every possible effort to attend the end of encampment graduation ceremony and parade. Encampment is an intense, but very rewarding experience for cadets. Encampment graduates become better cadets. Most cadets are *ready* to go home at the end of encampment; they are happy that it is over. In retrospect, most will admit that they would not trade the experience for anything. They are proud of

what they accomplish. This sense of pride develops as the week progresses and as they begin to look forward to participation in the graduation parade. Parents will see this display of pride when attending graduation. You will immediately see it in their attitude. Please make every effort to attend both the graduation presentation and the parade. Bring your camera!

By the end of encampment, every cadet *will* know how to say "Sir" or "Ma'am" when addressing or responding to cadet or senior officers. The *will* know how to keep living quarters clean and organized. They *will* know how to make their bed and they *will* know how to hang up their clothes at night. Whether or not they will continue to do these things at home is between you and them, but they *will* know how to do it.

Encampment Staff