2022

NL Officer Command Team

Commanding Officer and Executive Officer positions within a Navy League Corps

NL 610

Change	Date	By Whom

Amendments to this publication are the responsibility of the National Navy League Cadet Portfolio Chair. Suggested amendments shall be forwarded through the division to the National Office of the NLOC.

Navy League Officer Training and Development Program
Corps Command Team

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Introduction:

Taking command of a Navy League Cadet Corps is a decision that should never be taken lightly. The work and time required is overwhelming, but the rewards can be immeasurable. The recognition you receive as the visible head of our organization in your community is something you can be proud of, but pride in the young lives you have become a part of will be a feeling you will cherish for the rest of your life. Some will find the level of authority and responsibility that comes with a command position daunting but the weight of that duty will strengthen your character and make you a better leader.

You may be a standing Executive Officer preparing for your turn in the big chair or possibly, you were thrown into the position at the last minute, due to need and your own sense of responsibility to the cadets in your corps. Whatever the reason that applies, this study package is intended to provide you with the knowledge to get off on the right foot. It will serve as a quick reference to vital information you may require as you progress in your command role. It will present you with examples of best practices and, perhaps most importantly, provide information who to contact when the answers you need are not readily available.

Topic to be covered:

1) Taking Command
2) Public Relations
3) Command Duties and Responsibilities

At the end of this document is a list of references that pertain to most aspect of the Navy League of Canada. Be sure you look at them.

Section 1: Taking Command

Preparing to take Command

1. Selection / Approval Process

As in all things, there is a process to becoming part of the Command Team of a Navy League Corps. If you are in a well-structured Corps, you will have worked your way through the ranks and have received the nod from the present Commanding Officer to serve as Executive Officer. The selection of officers for corps positions is at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. You would have been chosen for this position based on your dedication to the Corps and your abilities as an officer.

Being promoted to the position of Executive Officer is normally part of a succession plan. By this time, you should have a firm understanding of how the corps functions and what it takes to effectively operate on a nightly basis. It is expected that your time will be spent honing your command skills and being mentored by your Commanding Officer to learn the responsibilities and duties of that position. There is a lot of work performed by the Command Team behind the scenes that may not be visible to the rest of the corps officers. Use this time to prepare for the position by familiarizing yourself with the workload involved.

Although it may be part of the Commanding Officer's succession plan, when the time arrives for you to be promoted to the position of Commanding Officer, there is still an approval process that must be adhered to before you are able to assume command.
The decision having been made by a serving Commanding Officer that they wish to relinquish command, that Officer must notify the branch in writing advising them of the intention to resign. A successor should be recommended as well as the desired date for the official ceremony. This should be done at least (45) forty-five days in advance of the selected date. At this time, an NL 304 (Navy League Officer Personnel Transaction) should be completed by the successor and their predecessor and be included in the package to the Branch President

It is the branches prerogative to then accept or reject the recommended successor as well as the desired date for the change of command. Should the branch reject either the applicant or the date, it then becomes the Branch's responsibility to select their own successor and/or date. Notice of rejection should be accompanied with reasons for why their decision was reached.

Having made their decision, the Branch must pass notification up the chain of command to Division and through them to National with the National office having the final approval. Each level will then inform members and staff, as necessary, of the command change. They will be advised as to the new designated Commanding Officer, their mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, and the effective date of the change of command.

The Branch will also relay this information to the outgoing Commanding Officer. The Change of Command Certificates along with the official forms are to be forwarded to the Branch by Division. Upon receiving the authorization from Branch the outgoing Commanding Officer is to relay the impending change information to their successor, Corps Officers (particularly the Stores and Admin Officer) and the Division Area Officer.

As detailed in *NL 210 (Navy League Officer Terms of Reference)*, the Commanding Officer is overall, responsible for all records and equipment entrusted to their care by the Branch. Therefore, as the incoming Commanding Officer, it is very important to have a complete understanding of exactly what you are taking responsibility for. Musters of all records uniforms and equipment must be completed by the Commanding Officer and their successor and signed by both. It is suggested that your Branch's Navy League Cadet Chairperson or an appointed representative takes part in these musters. It provides an open and transparent accounting of property for which they are ultimately responsible. What these musters consist of is covered in the following sections as detailed in *NL 8, Section 4 Change of Command*.

2. Records Muster

The corps records, files and database (if used) should be reviewed by both the incoming and outgoing Commanding Officers to ensure accuracy and familiarization. All records including necessary publications and regulations need to be readily available and are the most current version. Discrepancies should be corrected and records brought up to date.

Items which must be included in this muster are:

a. Cadet personnel files

b. Officer personnel files

c. Corps Standing Orders

d. Orders and instructions as issued by your Division

e. Mailing and contact lists for cadets, officers, instructors and Branch personnel

f. Ship's Log

g. Correspondence files

h. Attendance and nominal rolls

i. Relevant local publications

j. Cadet Training lesson plans

k. Officer Training lesson plans

It is highly suggested that, as the incoming Commanding Officer, you make the time to review all pertinent Navy League publications and forms. These publications are regularly being revised as needed. For this reason, it is recommended that these documents are always accessed directly from the national website at www.navyleague.ca. If it is necessary to have them printed or stored on a computer, they should be checked against the website twice a year and updated as necessary. The national office will have a revision list at the beginning of each document to assist with finding these changes.

3. **Stores Muster**

After receipt of notification of the change of command, the Stores Officer shall prepare the stores muster. The Stores Muster shall take place a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the change of command. The following people are to be present at the muster:

   a. Branch President or their designate
   b. Outgoing Commanding Officer
   c. Incoming Commanding Officer, and;
   d. Stores Officer

The Branch President is the only individual of this group with the authority to write-off any inventory. Should the Branch President not be in attendance, it is the responsibility of the designated person to inform the Branch of these write-offs and request their disposal.

Articles which are part of the stores muster are:

   a. Cadets uniform clothing and badges
   b. Officers uniform clothing and badges
   c. Training Aids
   d. Trophies
   e. Furniture (if applicable)
   f. Flags (if applicable)
   g. Sports gear (if applicable)
   h. Band equipment (if applicable)
   i. Boat house equipment and supplies (if applicable)
   j. Other relevant items.

4. **Kit Muster**

At any time, the majority of your uniform stores will have been issued out to the cadets and staff in your corps. It is highly recommended that either the Branch or the incoming Commanding Officer request a formal kit muster of all items under issue to corps personnel. This should take place in conjunction with the stores muster and a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the change of command. This muster should also be used to update officer and cadet files to ensure the location of corps property is properly accounted.

Senior Chain of Command

1. Reporting to your Local Branch

It is important to remember that your purview as Commanding Officer extends only to the operation of your corps. All administrative authority rests with your local Branch. Approvals for funding, event participation, staff enrollment and promotion must be received from the Branch before you proceed. Oversight of your roll as Commanding Officer and the program you deliver is also their responsibility. Developing a professional camaraderie and good working relationship with your Branch will directly affect the success of your term as Commanding Officer.

As a Commanding Officer (or Executive Officer in their absence), you are the main link between your local Branch and your Corps. All events, paperwork, requests and approvals from yourself and your officers should proceed through you to the Branch Representative. That person may either be the Branch President or the Navy League Cadet Chairperson depending on the size and structure of your Branch.

At every regular Branch meeting, you will be required to provide a report on the status of your corps. This report should include the following:

1. Cadet and Officer strengths

2. Attendance reports for Officers and Cadets covering the time since the previous meeting

3. Upcoming scheduled events such as fundraisers, corps activities or parades

4. Budgets and funding requests for items such as training aids, uniforms and planned excursions

5. After-action reports on activities that have previously taken place, and;

6. Submission of forms for approval such as Officer Transactions (NL 304), award submissions (see Awards and Recognition Program in Publications at navyleague.ca), budgets, letters of intent, and operation orders.

Item number 5 is probably one of the most important parts of your report. Branch members come and go just the same as officers do. These reports provide a source of reference that can be used when planning events in the future. Remember that Branch members are hardworking volunteers as well. They give their time for the benefit of the cadets just as we do. Let them hear how much the cadets enjoyed a particular event or activity that they too, worked to make happen. Let them hear about how proud a new cadet was on the first day they wore their uniform for which the Branch raised funds to purchase. Hearing these words of appreciation provides a sense of purpose to their work and they will be more likely to continue their efforts in the future.

2. Divisional Structure

Over your term as a Navy League Officer, you most likely have become familiar with the structure of your local operation. It is a partnership between Branch volunteers and corps officers to operate the Navy League program locally under the auspices of the national regulations and policies. The corps officers, following the direction of the Commanding Officer, operate and deliver the program to the cadets under the authority and administration of the Branch President and their designated subordinates.

This same structure is used at the Division and National levels of the program. This section will focus on the Divisional structure. Further information can be found in:

a) *NL (21) Administrative Orders*

b) *NL (210) Navy League Officer Terms of Reference*

c) *NL (35) Branch Organization.*

A.   Division Organization

"A Division of the Navy League of Canada is a territorial body, composed of Branches, duly authorized by the National Board of Directors to conduct the affairs of the Navy League and to be responsible for the operation of such Branches within the boundaries set by the National Board of Directors." (*NL 35 -Branch Organization*)
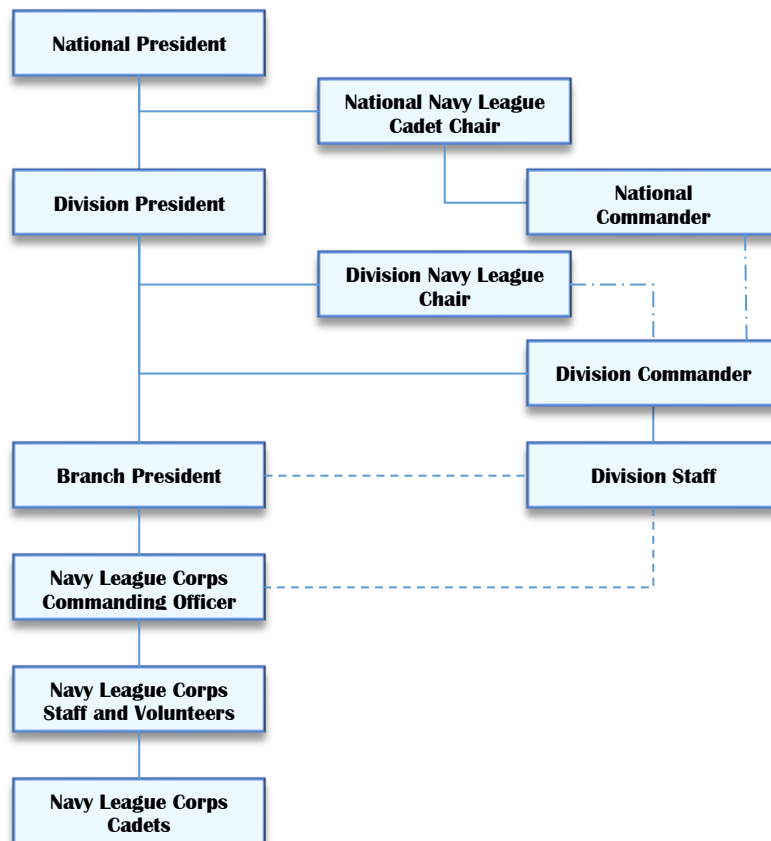
The organization of your Division bears a strong resemblance to that of your local Branch. It is important to remember that just as in your local Branch, the Division is responsible for more than the administration of the Navy League Cadet program. The Division has a mandate to support the Sea Cadet program, administer the Navy League Cadet program and to promote maritime affairs within its region.

The above chart shows the direct chain of command as it relates to the Navy League Cadet program. After reporting to your local Branch President, your chain of command will usually branch off to the Divisional staff officers under the direction of the Division Commander and the Division Navy League Cadet Chairperson. While you will have very little interaction within the Division structural chain, it is important to know how the system works as a whole.

At the Division level, the Navy League Cadet Program falls under the authority of the Division President. Normally, a Navy League Cadet Chairperson is selected or elected to assist the President with administering the program throughout the division. The Chairperson will then form a committee of members to assist with tasks. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson and their committee to ensure that directives received from the National office through the Division President, are enacted by local Branches and Navy League Cadet Corps.

B.   Officer Structure

While the next direct step in your chain of authority lies with the local Branch President, there is a parallel chain consisting of Division staff officers under the command of the Division Commander who reports to the Division Navy League Cadet Chairperson. These personnel are there to assist you in navigating any issues you may encounter that you do not have the experience or knowledge to resolve on your own. They are also in place to ensure the regulations, standards and policies of the Navy League are upheld by individual cadet corps. They operate training programs for officers within their areas and may be responsible for planning and operating cadet activities attended by multiple corps within their area of responsibility. Division Area Officers hold no authority over Branches or individual Corps officers. Their primary role is to support the Division, local Branches and corps in the development and implementation of the Navy League Cadet Program within their boundaries.

Division Area Officer positions include the following;
  1. Division Commander
  2. Division Administration Officer
  3. Division Training Officer, and;
  4. Division Area Officers

The responsibilities of each position are laid out in *NL (210) Navy League Officer Terms of Reference*. Additional responsibilities may be assigned as required by the Division Navy League Cadet Chairperson.

3. National Structure

A.   Board of Directors

The National Board of Directors is the governing body of The Navy League of Canada. It consists of:

(a) The National President;
(b) The National First Vice-President;
(c) The National Treasurer;
(d) The National Vice-Presidents;
(e) The Immediate Past National President;
(f) Each Division President;
(g) Individual Members who have been elected to serve on the National Board of Directors; and,
(h) The National Secretary

B.   Branch Structure

At the national level, the Navy League program is administered by a Navy League Cadet Committee under the direction of the Vice President, Navy League Cadets. It is the purpose of this committee to further the development and growth of the Navy League Cadet program nationwide. This committee is an advisory body to the National Board of Directors. Any major program or policy changes made to the Navy League Cadet Program put forth by the committee must first be approved by the National Board by vote. More detailed information concerning the structure and responsibilities of the National Executive Committee, the National Board of Directors and the National Navy League Cadet Committee can be found in *NL (20) Terms of Reference* and in *NL (18) Navy League Bylaws*

C.   Officer Structure

As mentioned in the previous section on Division Structure, each Division has a Commander who is appointed by the Division Navy League Cadet Chairperson from the Division Staff roster. Each Division Commander forms a part of a national advisory committee, responsible to the National Vice President, Navy League Cadets. This committee serves to provide a Navy League Officer's perspective to issues pertaining to the Navy League Cadet Program. During the National Commanders Conference, the Division Commanders select one of their number to serve as National Commander. The term of this appointment is three years.

4.   In relation to DND/ CIC

A.   Marks of respect and proper etiquette

Navy League Cadet Officers, including Division staff, have no authority over Canadian Forces Cadet Instructor Cadre (CIC) (Sea Cadet) Officers or Royal Canadian Sea Cadets, regardless of relative ranks. Similarly, CIC Officers and Royal Canadian Sea Cadets have no authority over Navy League Cadet Officers or Cadets. Notwithstanding the above paragraph, it is expected that all CIC Officers, Sea Cadets, Navy League Cadet Officers and Cadets, recognize each-other and their respective roles in the cadet program. By showing common courtesy at all times and the appropriate military courtesies when appropriate; it will provide for a more cohesive group and working environment.

B.   Partnerships and relations

Building and improving relations and where possible, participating in mutual activities with a local Canadian Cadet Organization (CCO) which include Air, Army and Sea Cadet units is an essential task for any Commanding Officer. One of the mandates of the Navy League Cadet program is to promote an interest in our cadets to continue in the CCO once they come of age. It is important for both Navy League and Cadet Instructor Cadre (CIC) officers to realize that mutual partnerships and interactions between our groups serve to forward that goal. While it may not always be possible due to a variety of circumstances, any opportunity to provide Navy League Cadets with a foreshadowing of what the CCO program has to offer will be beneficial to their continued participation in the Cadet program.

More details on these partnerships and interrelationships can be found in the Memorandums of Understanding between the Department of National Defense and the Navy League of Canada. These memorandums can be found on the Navy League website under Publications.

5.   Information and assistance processes

Just because you have been promoted to the position of Commanding Officer, it in no way means that you immediately possess all the knowledge and answers that may be required of you. That is to be expected. Throughout the organization, information and assistance is available to aid you in the execution of your responsibilities. The issue will normally be where to go and who to talk with to assist in the resolution of difficulties that are sure to arise. As in all things, following the Chain of Command is important. The system would soon break down if a Division President was suddenly required to field requests for information from every Commanding Officer in their area.

For most issues, talking with your Navy League Chair or Branch President would be the best starting point. If the answer is not known, reaching out to your Division Area Officer would be the next step. These are experienced officers who have served as Commanding Officers in the past. If they are not able to offer immediate assistance, they will know how to get the required response.

Unfortunately, if your issue concerns an immediate superior, you may find that properly following the chain of command is impossible. In these cases, refer to the *NL (21) Administrative Orders* under the heading of Conflict Resolution Guidance to know how to properly navigate the situation.

Change of Command Ceremony

We could not call ourselves a naval based organization without adhering to long standing traditions and ceremonies. Taking command of a Navy League Corps is no exception. A Change of Command ceremony is considered a formal parade and has many administrative and procedural components. It requires coordinated contributions from the Branch, Corps Officers and Division Area Officers to make it a success. This section will provide you with the resources and required reading to ensure your ceremony proceeds as it should.

The administrative requirements and responsibilities have already been covered in Section 1 of this document.

As previously stated, the Change of Command Ceremony is considered a formal parade. Procedures and protocols governing a formal parade can be found in *NL(8) Navy League Cadet Regulations* and *NL(225) Navy League Cadet and Officer Drill Manual* under the section Formal Inspection Procedures. Protocols relating directly to the Change of Command ceremony are found in the same publication under the section Change of Command.

The Change of Command Ceremony serves to honour the outgoing Commanding Officer for their efforts and hard work over the term of their appointment. As well, it welcomes the new Commanding Officer and provides a solemnity to the responsibility and duty they have undertaken. While they may be the guests of honour of the ceremony, they are not the most important people present. The wellbeing of the cadets should always be at the forefront. An essential consideration in planning a successful ceremony should be brevity. Keep inspections, speeches and pomp to a minimum while simultaneously conveying to the cadets the importance of the occasion.

Section 2: Public Relations

Branch Relations

1.   Working together to build a successful program

The secret to operating a successful Navy League Cadet program is complete cooperation between the Branch and the Corps officers. It is imperative for each to remember that the other is also working towards the same goal, that is to provide the cadets with the best experience possible. Untold difficulties can erupt if this chain of cooperation is broken. The actions and responsibilities of each group are specified in publications and regulations. Too often, usually due to ignorance, lines of responsibility and authority get crossed and dissention arises between the two groups.

In most cases, as a Commanding Officer, you will be the visible face of the organization. Most public interactions will naturally occur during training nights and civic parades. Since these are primarily officer operations, local individuals will identify you with authority due to the uniform you wear. Do not let this perceived importance inflate your ego. As the administrative body, the Branch, under the leadership of the President, holds the ultimate authority in determining how the program is operated in their area as directed by national policies and regulations. In *NL (35) Branch Organization Guide* under Branch Responsibilities it states that the Branch is responsible for the "control, supervision and administration" of Navy League Cadet Corps sponsored by Branch and authorization of all Corps extra-curricular activities.

Various Navy League publications define the roles and responsibilities, and layout the boundaries of authority for both the Branch under the direction of the Branch President and the Corps under the Commanding Officer. *(See references).* When both groups are working in harmony, these lines can become blurred. In the spirit of cooperation, a Commanding Officer may exceed to limits of their authority with the intention of aiding the Branch or ensuring a cadet event goes off without a hitch. Branch members may take it upon themselves to participate in training activities with the intention of assisting overworked officers and a desire to interact with the cadets. Most of the time, these irregular efforts are welcome and appreciated, but conflict or a change in personnel can quickly cause these well-meant efforts to be a source of dispute.

The key to navigating these waters lies in knowledge, communication and using the administrative tools already available. Help from either group is always welcome by the other as long as each is aware of the necessary protocols to be followed. If the proper procedures are adhered to, everyone, most importantly the cadets, benefits.

A.   Corps and Branch defined responsibilities

While areas of responsibility are clearly defined in regulations, it is important to remember they are not absolute. It simply lays out which body has the final authority in the activity. For example, recruitment of officers and cadets is under the scope of Branch authority. That does not mean they are solely responsible for every aspect of the undertaking. The Branch may secure the location and ensure that recruitment materials are on hand, but the participation of officers and sometimes cadets to speak to their experiences and share their operational knowledge of the program is paramount to the success of the endeavor.

All items associated with the operation of the Navy League Cadet program, such as uniforms, accessories and equipment and training aids do not belong to the Corps. They are the property of the Navy League of Canada under control of the local Branch. It is best to think of the situation as though they are on loan to the Commanding Officer in order to implement the training program for the cadets.

Defined responsibilities for Branches and Commanding Officers can be found in *NL 35 Branch Organization Guide* respectively under Branch Organization and Terms of Reference, Corps Officers.

B.   Primary and supporting roles of each group

Each arm of the Navy League has specific roles and responsibilities when it comes to delivering the program in your community. In regards to a financial event such as fundraising, the Branch will most likely be the organizing body while the corps officers and cadets will play a supporting role. If you are planning an overnight camp, you may hold the authority for organizing training, meals, accommodations and travel arrangements. **However, the Branch must approve your overall plan and will be responsible for all payments that were laid out in your event budget.** The Branch would possibly serve in a supporting role by providing meals, travel arrangements and extra supervision for your event.

Recruiting is a subject that often materializes when discussing this topic. Recruiting is primarily a Branch responsibility but it is an event that would normally be staffed and operated by officers and cadets. It is a pursuit that should be regularly advanced by both the corps staff and the Branch. Historically, at your corps, recruiting may have been relegated to the Commanding Officer. If that is the case, feel free to continue to do so, but remember that final authorization for any recruiting activity must be received from the Branch before commencing.

As Commanding Officer, your primary responsibility begins and ends with the delivery and organization of the training program to your cadets. The development of yearly training programs, scheduling attendance at memorial events and parades and organizing sporting events and campouts are all the responsibility of the Commanding Officer and their staff. Remember that although delivery of the program may be under the authority of the Commanding Officer, all plans and aspects thereof must receive approval and authorization from the Branch. Relationship between the Branch and Corps is found in *NL 64 Branch – Navy League Cadet Relationship Guide.*

C.   Approval processes

As a Commanding Officer, it is important to remember when planning any activity that you keep the Branch involved. Almost everything you do will require approval from some level. The approval process always starts with your local Branch then proceeds up the chain if needed. The approval process is based primarily on distance. The further the distance to attend the activity, the higher the required level of approval. An *NL (330) Letter of Intent* (LOI) must be completed for any cadet or officer activity outside of the regular training night currently registered with the Branch. If your corps meets twice a week, an LOI must be generated for the secondary training.

The limits of approval for each Branch level are listed below and can be found in the *NL (330) Letter of Intent*.

    i.   Local Branch – any activity occurring within 50km of your parade location.

    ii.   Division – any activity in excess of 50km but within Divisional boundaries.

    iii.   National Office – any activity outside your Divisional boundaries.

2.   Navy League Cadet Committee

As previously mentioned, in most cases, the Branch is responsible for more than just the operation of the Navy League Cadet program. To facilitate this, a properly organized Branch will consist of a Navy League Cadet Committee under the direction of the Branch's Navy League Cadet Chairperson. This Chairperson and their committee is there to help facilitate your needs and serves as the main intermediary for all interactions between the corps and the Branch.

The duties and responsibilities of the Navy League Cadet Committee are laid out in *NL (35) Branch Organization Guide.*

Public and community relationships

    As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. In our world, it takes a community to grow a successful cadet corp. Generally, involvement in a Navy League Corps by cadets and parents lasts three years. Without public exposure, you are relying on word of mouth to sustain recruitment numbers. There is a reason why the program is known as the best kept secret. Working to increase the visibility of your corps in your community will increase interest and augment recruitment of cadets and volunteers. Building relationships with businesses and service groups, can assist in promoting your corps through participation in local events and general awareness of the organization. It can also provide a financial benefit. The better informed these community partners are of what the Navy League program provides to youth, the more likely they are to offer support with monetary and product donations.

1.   Publicity and media relations

Beyond regular training operations, recruiting and fundraising are the most demanding commitments of the program. These endeavors are normally the prerogative of the Branch, but as repeatedly mentioned, they require a cooperative effort to be successful. A good Commanding Officer actively participates in these efforts.

The avenues available to promote the Navy League in your area are as boundless as your imagination. Newspapers, social media pages, signage and community involvement are a just a few examples. In this section, we will look at some customary approaches and examine the benefits and pitfalls associated with each. In knowing what to be aware of when promoting the organization, you can then apply this knowledge to the methods that work best in your area.

A.   Working with traditional and social medias

Most corps will already have their own social media pages. These are great communication tools for planning activities and upcoming events. Because these medias are primarily used for the dissemination of training or activity information, a member of your staff is usually tasked with maintaining the site. This means that as Commanding Officer, you are ultimately responsible for what is posted. If there are not already established protocols in use, it is strongly advised that you make the time to develop them. The publication *NL (23) Social Media Guidelines* is available on the national website. Consider this required reading as a Commanding Officer. It sets the minimum guidelines for Navy League members when using social media as a tool. You can then augment these protocols as needed to best serve your individual corps efforts.

Promoting the organization in traditional medias usually comes at a cost and is therefore the responsibility of the Branch. This does not mean that you can disregard it as part of your duties. A Commanding Officer should always be looking for new and inexpensive ways to promote their corps. Finding innovative approaches, such as group advertising, can provide great results at a much lower cost. Never be afraid to take the initiative. Do the homework and present your proposal to the Branch for approval.

2.   Building relations with local service groups

Most communities have several service clubs that work to support a variety of civic programs in their area. These service groups can provide a wealth of support for your corps. As a naval themed program, it is easy to focus on military based groups such as your local Legion when reaching out for sponsorships. These groups will already have some base knowledge of our program and will usually be willing to assist where possible. These organizations are great supporters of cadet programs, but there are many other service clubs that operate with a mandate to support programs for youth.

Royal Canadian Legions, Lion's Clubs, Masonic groups, Kiwanis clubs, Knights of Columbus and Rotary Clubs are just a few of the community minded associations that may be willing to assist with sponsorship of some kind. These groups are also great sources of guest speakers, Reviewing Officers and guests of honour for various events at your corps. Be sure to investigate each association before reaching out. Look into special interests and favorite programs that they support and see if you can make a direct link between those interests and how they would relate and benefit your corps. As well, showing some knowledge about the club in advance is just good business. It creates a sense of respect instead of just another non-profit looking for sponsorship.

On the topic of respect, it is important to remember that these groups are also comprised of volunteers working hard to improve their communities. Just like you.   Making your cadets and staff available, within reason and Navy League policies, to assist these groups that support you can reap great rewards. It serves to say thank you to an organization by helping to carry flags or banners in a parade.   Having cadets' open doors for guests during a special event. Requesting logos to promote those sponsors on trailers and sailboats.

These are just a few examples of cooperation and partnership that can benefit both organizations. It shows appreciation for the support you have received, helps instill in your cadets a sense of civic responsibility and most of all, it raises awareness of your local corps and the Navy League of Canada in general.

When forming these relationships, there are a few points that must be kept in mind.

a. Private businesses are not the same as service clubs. Their support is appreciated and recognition should be given. It would not be appropriate to have cadets or officers assisting with sales in anyway, but attending an opening ceremony in uniform as a guest or speaker would be acceptable.

b. If a group has asked for your corps to represented at an event, ask yourself if the activity is cadet appropriate, or could you ask for officers and Branch members to volunteer. Is the event an appropriate representation of the values and precepts of the Navy League?

c. Will the public exposure you will receive be beneficial to your organization?

d. What benefit is there for the cadets to attend? Will they enjoy a new experience? Will they learn something or strengthen the values we are attempting to imbue in them?

e. And finally, if you choose to invite a guest speaker from a group for a Navy League event, make sure it is appropriate for the occasion. Let the invitee know what the event is, why it is being held and who will be present for their address. This will assist them in preparing and allow them to ensure the discourse is appropriate.

Public Speaking

More than forty percent of the population suffers from Glossophobia, the fear of public speaking. The fear often arises when people overestimate the stakes of communicating their ideas in front of others, viewing the speaking event as a potential threat to their credibility, image, and chance to reach an audience. Fear of public speaking is a common form of anxiety. It can range from slight nervousness to paralyzing fear and panic. Many people with this fear avoid public speaking situations altogether, or they suffer through them with shaking hands and a quavering voice.

As a Commanding Officer, you are regularly going to be called upon to speak in front of Branch members, parents, cadets and your peers. This is part of the job and cannot be ignored just because you are not comfortable with the idea. The silver lining is that you can overcome your fear by facing it and getting better at it. The more you do it, the better you will become. There will be ample opportunities to practice. Speaking to cadets and parents as a group during Sunset. Delivering reports during Branch meetings. Teaching development classes to new officers. These are all friendly environments and supportive faces on which you can practice and hone your skills.

Whether you have a fear of public speaking you need to overcome, or just want to improve your skills as a Commanding Officer, **mayoclinic.org** has put out a list of suggestions to help you achieve your goal however other organizations such as **toastmasters.org** or **optimist.org** are available.

- Know your topic. The better you understand what you're talking about — and the more you care about the topic — the less likely you'll make a mistake or get off track. And if you do get lost, you'll be able to recover quickly. Take some time to consider what questions the audience may ask and have your responses ready.
- Get organized. Ahead of time, carefully plan out the information you want to present, including any props, audio or visual aids. The more organized you are, the less nervous you'll be. Use an outline on a small card to stay on track. If possible, visit the place where you'll be speaking and review available equipment before your presentation.
- Practice, and then practice some more. Practice your complete presentation several times. Do it for some people you're comfortable with and ask for feedback. It may also be helpful to practice with a few people with whom you're less familiar. Consider making a video of your presentation so you can watch it and see opportunities for improvement.
- Challenge specific worries. When you're afraid of something, you may overestimate the likelihood of bad things happening. List your specific worries. Then directly challenge them by identifying probable and alternative outcomes and any objective evidence that supports each worry or the likelihood that your feared outcomes will happen.
- Visualize your success. Imagine that your presentation will go well. Positive thoughts can help decrease some of your negativity about your social performance and relieve some anxiety.
- Do some deep breathing. This can be very calming. Take two or more deep, slow breaths before you get up to the podium and during your speech.
- Focus on your material, not on your audience. People mainly pay attention to new information — not how it's presented. They may not notice your nervousness. If audience members do notice that you're nervous, they may root for you and want your presentation to be a success.
- Don't fear a moment of silence. If you lose track of what you're saying or start to feel nervous and your mind goes blank, it may seem like you've been silent for an eternity. In reality, it's probably only a few seconds. Even if it's longer, it's likely your audience won't mind a pause to consider what you've been saying. Just take a few slow, deep breaths.
- Recognize your success. After your speech or presentation, give yourself a pat on the back. It may not have been perfect, but chances are you're far more critical of yourself than your audience is. See if any of your specific worries actually occurred. Everyone makes mistakes. Look at any mistakes you made as an opportunity to improve your skills.
- Get support. Join a group that offers support for people who have difficulty with public speaking. One effective resource is Toastmasters, a non-profit organization with local chapters that focuses on training people in speaking and leadership skills.

Use the guidelines above when preparing and delivering your monthly Branch reports. If it helps, consider them monthly public speaking practice sessions. Remember, these reports serve two purposes. To report on the status of the corps and to obtain approval for activities and funding. The first is fairly easy. Usually you are reciting facts from a prepared document. The second is more difficult. Your plan for an activity may be the best in years, but if you cannot sell your proposal to the Branch, you will not be able to receive their support and approval. Your idea may never see the light of day.

It cannot be said enough. Preparation and practice are the key. Be concise in the beginning, but be prepared to expand on a particular subject if asked. Know your proposal in and out, from front to back. Questions will be asked. Some will disagree with your idea for vague or no reasons. Do not let your emotions get the best of you. Be prepared to give knowledgeable, exact answers. Others are more likely to follow the lead of someone who knows what they are speaking about. Studying the list above and delivering your full address with confidence will increase the likelihood of gaining support from your Branch.

There is also a likelihood that as Commanding Officer, you will be called on to give an address during a public gathering. Look at these opportunities as a gift. Never pass up a chance to talk about the Navy League Cadet program and to promote your corps. Prepare for these opportunities by developing multiple short speeches with general information about the program and what it offers to young people as cadets and to adults as Officers and Branch members. Practice these addresses in front of a mirror until you can give them by rote. Having multiple works prepared allows you to choose the best one to fit the situation you are being asked to speak to.

Written Communications

Effective written communication skills are very important for a Commanding Officer to develop. Paperwork is a necessary evil that comes with the position. Whether developing Standing Orders, preparing a Branch report or injury report, knowing which type of written communication you should use and how to properly compose them can make the difference between your email being taken seriously in your position or your Letter of Request for donations being shredded.

There are several types of written communication. Knowing the correct type to use for your purpose can be as important as the message content. Some of the more widely used types will be defined and explained below. In wanting to provide you with the best possible information and references, excerpts from professional publications were used in putting this section together. Credit to the original authors can be found in the reference section. Use this list to further your knowledge of proper written communications.

1. Memos, Letters and Emails

Like many others, you have probably composed a short memo and received lengthy formal letters and emails that seem to go on for days. These are examples of incorrect use of these written communication types. Memos, or memorandum are meant to be permanent, important documents, formal letters are usually written to someone who do not know, usually in pursuit of a specific goal, while emails are quick temporary messages. They are accurately described as follows;

A. **Emails win for fast, temporary communications** that readers quickly read, act on, and delete. Emails excel at succinct requests and replies, speedy updates, short reminders or check-ins, time-sensitive announcements, and similar short-lived messages. They are perfect for briefly introducing attachments such as memos.

B. **Use a memo when you are writing a message built to last.** If your communication is a detailed proposal, a significant report, a serious recommendation, a technical explanation, meeting minutes, a new policy, or something else that readers will consult more than once, make it a memo. Your readers will be able to save the document, read it, and find it when they need the information again.

C. **Use a memo when formatting matters.** If the piece contains bullet points, bold headings, columns, tables, a graph, or even a good balance of white space, a memo will help you retain that formatting. To guarantee your formatting, save the memo as a PDF. If your audience reads emails on their phones, an attachment may be the only way to preserve the formatting you intend.

D. **If people will print your communication, use a memo rather than an email.** If your message belongs on a bulletin board—for example, in an employee break room—write a memo. If people will discuss your ideas at a meeting, write a memo to make it easy for them to print the document you intended.

E. **To communicate formally, choose a memo.** Memos provide a place at the top of the message to insert the company name and logo and the professional titles of senders and receivers. Those inclusions make the message appear more formal. Also, a well-formatted message conveys significance.

F. **When you worry that your message is too long as an email, write a memo.** Impossibly long emails often result when you try to incorporate important, lasting information in them. But memos work best when people will return to your message for information. (See B above) For instance, if you are communicating the details of the four-stage construction project, use a memo. To convey pros and cons of a major purchasing decision, lay out your research in a memo. Attach your memo to an email that gives your readers a brief summary of the memo contents. For some readers, that summary will be enough. Those who need the information will read and save the memo.

G. To communicate complex information to people outside your organization (clients, citizens, etc.), consider a memo or a letter. A letter is the traditional format for external correspondence, especially to people you serve, such as customers and patients. But you can choose a memo to write to vendors, consultants, members, clients, professional peers, and others who collaborate with you to get results.

Knowing the proper format to use is also important. Using the correct format that fits the purpose of your correspondence demonstrates professionalism and respect for the person or institution you are trying to connect with.

i.   Parts of a Memo

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/memos/parts_of_a_memo.html

Standard memos are divided into segments to organize the information and to help achieve the writer's purpose.

a)   Heading Segment

The heading segment follows this general format:
  TO: (readers' names and job titles)
  FROM: (your name and job title)
  DATE: (complete and current date)
  SUBJECT: (what the memo is about, highlighted in some way)

Make sure you address the reader by his or her correct name and title for a formal memo. Be specific and concise in your subject line. For example, "Uniforms" as a subject line could mean anything from a dress regulation change to needing to order lanyards. Instead use something like, "Uniform order request".

b)   Opening Segment

The purpose of a memo is usually found in the opening paragraph and includes: the purpose of the memo, the context and problem, and the specific assignment or task. Before indulging the reader with details and the context, give the reader a brief overview of what the memo will be about. Choosing how specific your introduction will depend on your memo plan style. The more direct the memo plan, the more explicit the introduction should be. Including the purpose of the memo will help clarify the reason the audience should read this document. The introduction should be brief: approximately the length of a short paragraph.

c)   Context

The context is the event, circumstance, or background of the problem you are solving. You may use a paragraph or a few sentences to establish the background and state the problem. Oftentimes it is sufficient to use the opening of a sentence to completely explain the context, such as:

"After reviewing the draft training syllabus for next year,". Include only what your reader needs, but be sure it is clear.

d)   Task Segment

One essential portion of a memo is the task statement where you should describe what you are doing to help solve the problem. If the action was requested, your task may be indicated by a sentence opening like:

"You asked that I look at...."

If you want to explain your intentions, you might say,

"To determine the best method of organizing the next fundraiser, I will...."

Include only as much information as is needed by the decision-makers in the context, but be convincing that a real problem exists. Do not ramble on with insignificant details. If you are having trouble putting the task into words, consider whether you have clarified the situation. You may need to do more planning before you're ready to write your memo.

e)   Summary Segment

If your memo is longer than a page, you may want to include a separate summary segment. However, this section is not necessary for short memos and should not take up a significant amount of space. This segment provides a brief statement of the key recommendations you have reached. These will help your reader understand the key points of the memo immediately. This segment may also include references to methods and sources you have used in your research.

f)   Discussion Segments

The discussion segments are the longest portions of the memo, and are the parts in which you include all the details that support your ideas. Begin with the information that is most important. This may mean that you will start with key findings or recommendations. Start with your most general information and move to your specific or supporting facts. (Be sure to use the same format when including details: strongest to weakest.) The discussion segments include the supporting ideas, facts, and research that back up your argument in the memo. Include strong points and evidence to persuade the reader to follow your recommended actions. If this section is inadequate, the memo will not be as effective as it could be.

g) Closing Segment

After the reader has absorbed all of your information, you want to close with a courteous ending that states what action you want your reader to take. Make sure you consider how the reader will benefit from the desired actions and how you can make those actions easier. For example, you might say:

"I will be glad to discuss this recommendation with you during our parade night next week and will follow through on any decisions you make."

h) Necessary Attachments

Make sure you document your findings or provide detailed information whenever necessary. You can do this by attaching lists, graphs, tables, etc. at the end of your memo. Be sure to refer to your attachments in your memo and add a notation about what is attached below your closing, like this:

Attached: Focus Group Results, January- May 2007

ii. Parts of a formal letter

Today, a printed letter is usually reserved for important professional communications, such as recommendation letters, job cover letters, resignation letters, legal correspondence, and company communications. Since a letter is a formal mode of communication, you'll want to know how to write one that is professional. Correct formatting is especially important if you're sending a hard copy to the recipient rather than an email because the letter needs to fit the page and look good.

The following sample letter format illustrates the information you need to include when writing a letter, along with advice on the appropriate font, salutation, spacing, closing, and signature for business correspondence.

a) **Personal Contact Information** *(Include your contact information unless you are writing on letterhead that already includes it.)*

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, Province, Postal Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

b) **Date** (*Fully write out the date. Do not use abbreviations. For example, June 7, 2003)*

c) **Contact Information** *(The person or company you are writing to)*

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State Zip Code

d) **Greeting**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:
Use a formal salutation, not a first name, unless you know the person well. If you do not know the person's gender, you can write out their full name. For instance, "Dear Pat Crody" instead of "Dear Mr. Crody" or "Dear Ms. Crody." If you do not know the recipient's name, it's still common and acceptable to use the old-fashioned "To Whom It May Concern."

e) **Body of Letter**

- The first paragraph of your letter should provide an introduction as to why you are writing so that your reason for contacting the person is obvious from the beginning.

- In the following paragraphs, provide specific details about your request or the information you are providing.

- The last paragraph of your letter should reiterate the reason you are writing and thank the reader for reviewing your request. If appropriate, it should also politely ask for a written response or for the opportunity to arrange a meeting to further discuss your request.

f) **Closing**

Best regards**,** Sincerely, Respectfully, …

g) **Signature**

Handwritten Signature *(For a hard copy letter, use black or blue ink to sign the letter.)*

h) **Typed Signature**

iii.   Parts of an email

https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/EmailCommunication.htm

The average office worker receives around 80 emails each day. With that volume of mail, individual messages can easily get overlooked. Follow these simple rules to get your emails noticed and acted upon.

1. Don't over communicate by Email

One of the biggest sources of stress at work is the sheer volume of emails that people receive. So, before you begin writing an email, ask yourself: "Is this really necessary?"
As part of this, you should use the phone or IM to deal with questions that are likely to need some back-and-forth discussion.

Also, email is not as secure as you might want it to be, particularly as people may forward emails without thinking to delete the conversation history. So avoid sharing sensitive or personal information in an email, and don't write about anything that you, or the subject of your email, wouldn't like to see plastered on a billboard by your office.

Whenever possible, deliver bad news in person. This helps you to communicate with empathy, compassion, and understanding, and to make amends if your message has been taken the wrong way.

2. Make Good Use of Subject Lines

A newspaper headline has two functions: it grabs your attention, and it summarizes the article, so that you can decide whether to read it or not. The subject line of your email message should do the same thing.

A blank subject line is more likely to be overlooked or rejected as "spam," so always use a few well-chosen words to tell the recipient what the email is about.

You may want to include the date in the subject line if your message is one of a regular series of emails, such as a weekly project report. For a message that needs a response, you might also want to include a call to action, such as "Please reply by November 7."
A well-written subject line like the one below delivers the most important information, without the recipient even having to open the email. This serves as a prompt that reminds recipients about your meeting every time they glance at their inbox.

Bad Example	Good Example
Subject: Meeting	Subject: PASS Process Meeting - 10 a.m. February 25, 2014

If you have a very short message to convey, and you can fit the whole thing into the subject line, use "EOM" (End of Message) to let recipients know that they don't need to open the email to get all the information that they need.

Example
Subject: Could you please send the February sales report? Thanks! EOM

(Of course, this is only useful if recipients know what "EOM" means.)

3. Keep Messages Clear and Brief

Emails, like traditional business letters, need to be clear and concise. Keep your sentences short and to the point. The body of the email should be direct and informative, and it should contain all pertinent information.

Unlike traditional letters, however, it costs no more to send several emails than it does to send just one. So, if you need to communicate with someone about a number of different topics, consider writing a separate email for each one. This makes your message clearer, and it allows your correspondent to reply to one topic at a time.

Bad Example	Good Example
Subject: Revisions For Sales Report	Subject: Revisions For Sales Report
Hi Jackie, Thanks for sending that report last week. I read it yesterday, and I feel that Chapter 2 needs more specific information about our sales figures. I also felt that the tone could be more formal. Also, I wanted to let you know that I've scheduled a meeting with the PR department for this Friday regarding the new ad campaign. It's at 11:00 a.m. and will be in the small conference room. Please let me know if you can make that time. Thanks! Monica	Hi Jackie, Thanks for sending that report last week. I read it yesterday, and I feel that Chapter 2 needs more specific information about our sales figures. I also felt that the tone could be more formal. Could you amend it with these comments in mind? Thanks for your hard work on this! Monica (Monica then follows this up with a separate email about the PR department meeting.)

It's important to find balance here. You don't want to bombard someone with emails, and it makes sense to combine several, related, points into one email. When this happens, **keep things simple** with numbered paragraphs or bullet points, and consider **"chunking"** information into small, well-organized units to make it easier to digest.

Notice, too, that in the good example above, Monica specified what she wanted Jackie to do (in this case, amend the report). If you make it easy for people to see what you want, there's a better chance that they will give you this.

4.   Be Polite

People often think that emails can be less formal than traditional letters. But the messages you send are a reflection of your own professionalism, values, and attention to detail, so a certain level of formality is needed.

Unless you're on good terms with someone, avoid informal language, slang, jargon, and inappropriate abbreviations. Emoticons can be useful for clarifying your intent, but it's best to use them only with people you know well.

Close your message with "Regards," "Yours sincerely," or "All the best," depending on the situation.
Recipients may decide to print emails and share them with others, so always be polite.

5.   Check the Tone

When we meet people face-to-face, we use the other person's body language, vocal tone, and facial expressions to assess how they feel. Email robs us of this information, and this means that we can't tell when people have misunderstood our messages.
Your choice of words, sentence length, punctuation, and capitalization can easily be misinterpreted without visual and auditory cues. In the first example below, Emma might think that Harry is frustrated or angry, but, in reality, he feels fine.

Bad Example	Good Example
Emma, I need your report by 5 p.m. today or I'll miss my deadline. Harry	Hi Emma, Thanks for all your hard work on that report. Could you please get your version over to me by 5 p.m., so I don't miss my deadline? Thanks so much! Harry

Think about how your email "feels" emotionally. If your intentions or emotions could be misunderstood, find a less ambiguous way to phrase your words.

6.   Proofreading

Finally, before you hit "send," take a moment to review your email for spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes. Your email messages are as much a part of your professional image as the clothes you wear, so it looks bad to send out a message that contains typos.

As you proofread, pay careful attention to the length of your email. People are more likely to read short, concise emails than long, rambling ones, so make sure that your emails are as short as possible, without excluding necessary information.

A.   Key Points

Most of us spend a significant portion of our day reading and composing emails. But the messages we send can be confusing to others.

To write effective emails, first ask yourself if you should be using email at all. Sometimes, it might be better to pick up the phone.

Make your emails concise and to the point. Only send them to the people who really need to see them, and be clear about what you would like the recipient to do next.

Remember that your emails are a reflection of your professionalism, values, and attention to detail. Try to imagine how others might interpret the tone of your message. Be polite, and always proofread what you have written before you click "send."

7.   Orders

As a Navy League Commanding Officer you will be required to compose Ops Orders for any overnight cadet activity and to write or revise your corps' Standing Orders upon taking command.

These orders should be composed as a memorandum. Remember to format your document using indented numbering for easy reference to individual sections. An order specifies the instruction to a unit in a structured format that makes it easy to find each specific requirement. The most common format used by various militaries around the world is the Five Paragraph Order. The five paragraphs can be remembered with the acronym **SMEAC**: "S" Situation, "M" Mission, "E" Execution, "A" Administration/Logistics, "C" Command/Signal.

It is important to remember that your available "volunteer" time is finite. There are many things to do and learn as a new Commanding Officer and these documents can be quite detailed and onerous to compose. Using existing documents and templates is a great way to manage your time and energy. The NL 8 publication is an excellent example or the proper format to use when creating orders and there are many samples available from other corps that you can revise and edit to suit your needs and planned activities.

Section 3: Command Duties and Responsibilities

Mentoring and succession planning

1.   Importance of succession planning

The most important component of being in command is not necessarily what you do while in the position, but the state of affairs you leave when your term is completed. Developing a comprehensive Officer Development Program and a logical succession plan can make all the difference when it comes to the future success or your corps.

As Executive Officer, you will likely have had a few years with your corps. Like everyone else in your position, you will have had the opportunity to observe other corps officers in their positions and will have developed opinions of their abilities and the tasks within the operation that they would be able to manage. When building your plan, start with a list of positions in your corps, from Divisional Officer to Executive Officer. Spend some time observing your staff closely and consider which position on your list would best suit their knowledge and potential. Talk with them and see where their interests lay. Compile this information and build your plan.

At this point it is important to mention that succession plans are living documents. This means that they are open for change at any time, for a variety of reasons. You may not necessarily agree with your Commanding Officer's plan. Officers may leave the program for a variety of reasons. An officer you have selected for promotion may not want the added responsibilities and opt out of your plan. For these reasons and any of the multitude of other possibilities that could throw a wrench into your plans, it is strongly suggested that you have an alternative plan developed and ready to go at a moment's notice.

Having a succession plan in place is essential to the long term prosperity of your corps. You might think that you can deal with the loss of a positional officer within your ranks. You believe in your team's ability to close ranks and deal with any situation that may arise. Over the short term, that is true, and confidence in the commitment of your officers is a good thing. However, when a key position cannot be permanently filled with an officer familiar with its requirements, a void is created. Other officers, including yourself may try to assist to cover the gap, but more often than not, this leads to burnout which will result in losing more officers. Over time you will be left with a minimum of staff covering multiple positions and only doing the bare minimum in any of them. Within a year, your fine-tuned machine that was turning out a great program is now being run by three officers scrambling to conceal the chaos.

You may think that you have it all under control, but it will become obvious to parents that there is something wrong. Things will not run as smoothly, trips and activities will have to be cancelled as overworked officers start bowing out of volunteering. New parents will rethink their child's participation and recruitment declines. Cadets stop enjoying themselves as much and may even begin to think that they may have more fun joining the dodgeball club at school.

This is a worst case scenario, but it does happen more often than you may think. A succession plan with alternatives coupled with a well-run mentorship program provides you and all your staff with the tools to handle any situation. Some preparation and planning will ensure that this situation will not happen to you.

It is well advised that you include others when building your plan. Your Commanding Officer will have had their own succession plan and should have communicated it with you.   Compare your plan with theirs and ask questions if there are discrepancies. They may have information that you do not. Include your Branch or Navy League Committee as well. Share your plan and how you arrived at your conclusions. Gather their input and observations and build that into your plan. Having their endorsement of your plan will highly guarantee its success through the approval process.

2.   Building a Mentorship Program

Participation in the Navy League organization is on a volunteer basis. It is work, but it should also be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. A properly instituted mentorship program can be the difference between grateful acceptance of a new challenge and the feeling that you have just been thrown to the wolves. If you are fortunate enough to be part of a corps that already operates a mentorship program, you will have already been exposed to the benefits it provides. Being able to assume command of a cadet corps with full knowledge of the duties, responsibilities and expectations that come with the position will allow you to enjoy the role instead of feeling burdened and stressed before you even take the dais.

This view point can be applied to all positions within your corps. Building a mentorship program is not that difficult. As part of the Command Team, you will need to make sure that each the tasks and duties of each corps position are properly instituted by the officer currently assigned. If you are satisfied with the performance of that officer, when the opportunity for promotion arises, the advancing officer then serves as mentor for their replacement. Who would better serve as a mentor than the person who has the most recent familiarity with the requirements of the post? When you are first instituting such a program, there may be some criticism because of the perceived extra work that will have to be done. As the routine becomes established for all the positions in your corps, it will become second nature. It will allow for the seamless continuation of proven practices. It will also prevent officers new to the position from trying to reinvent the wheel simply because they do not understand how to properly fulfill the duties required from them.

There is a direct benefit to you as well. Assigning mentors to officers assuming new positions is a form of delegation. It not only provides them with an experienced source of knowledge, it also reduces the constant stream of questions you will undoubtedly find yourself exposed to if you have not. A question that may turn into an hour long research project for you as Commanding Officer could most likely be answered in a matter of minutes by the person who just vacated the position.

Building a mentorship program for your corps can seem like a complicated and time consuming endeavor. It is important to remember that the work you do will benefit your corps years after you have gone. Do not overwhelm yourself by trying to develop a full blown program on top of everything else you are trying to learn. Begin the process simply and build upon your original concept as time allows. Reach out to other corps. Are there successful programs already being used? Most corps are willing to share information if asked. Mentoring is also a widely accepted practice in the corporate field. The internet is full of useful articles and templates that you may

find helpful in developing your program. This is not a new concept. Make the best use of your time by using the knowledge and information that is already available.

3.   Mentoring your replacement

The day you fill the position of Commanding Officer is the day you should begin training your replacement. If a succession plan has been developed, your successor will already know who they are and should be in the process of reading this same document in preparing to become part of the command team of the corps as the new Executive Officer. The best way to prepare your Executive Officer for assuming command is to involve them in as much of what you do as possible. Keep in mind that they also have their own positional responsibilities to fulfill. You need to remember that your expectation should be to learn what responsibilities your position is comprised of versus doing your job for you. It is a delicate balance between building their leadership skills to best prepare them to fill the role without overloading them with the burden of two workloads.

Prepare your report to the Branch and familiarize them with your intent and the necessary procedures. Have them present the report to the Branch. This will help develop their public speaking skills and become acquainted with the process. Have them present when dealing with a difficult cadet or when addressing a parents' concern. Have a follow up conversation explaining how you arrived at the conclusion you did. Ask for their feedback and how they would have handled the situation. Another suggestion would be to have regularly scheduled meetings between the two of you. Review planning for upcoming events and activities. Discuss their progress and development as part of the command team and give the candidate the opportunity to provide feedback on the mentoring you are providing to them. It will allow you to make adjustments and may turn into a learning experience for both of you.

Lastly, make sure to report your successor's progress and development to the Branch. Keep them informed as much as possible. Remember, they have the final say in approving your replacement. If they feel they are as invested in the development of the new Commanding Officer as you are, it will be a smooth transition when the time arrives.

Officer Recruitment and Development

Staffing your Corps
The subject of officer recruitment has been touched on throughout this publication. Responsibilities and approval processes have been discussed. In this section, we will delve into why, as Commanding Officer, you are an important part of this process.

As a Commanding Officer you will be front and center at the majority of your cadet events. Your officers and Branch members will be regularly approaching you with inquiries. Cadets will be waiting to speak with you. Possibly about training or parade positions, or maybe about their new puppy. You are the one standing on the dais addressing the parade during Colours and Sunset. During public events, officials will be speaking with you or asking you to speak.

The one thing that will become obvious to those not familiar with the structure of the organization such as parents, guests and members of your community is that you are the one in charge. You will become the focal point directly representing the Navy League of Canada. How you conduct yourself in these situations is key. It will directly relate to how others view the program as a whole and, in regards to this section, could be a determining factor when they are considering their participation as an officer.

There are many sources of volunteers to draw from when building and sustaining your officer compliment. Each source has benefits as well as disadvantages. Current members or veterans of the Canadian Forces come onboard with an abundance of knowledge and experience, but may not be able to convey that knowledge in a manner that benefits the age group of our program. Parents would love to volunteer in order to share an experience with their children, but may have no familiarity with the naval aspects of the program. They are also likely to only be involved as long as their cadets are in the program. College and university students who require volunteer credits as part of their curriculum or who were former cadets themselves are another great resource. They come with relatable experience but have time constraints and will probably move on as their personal lives develop. To say that one demographic provides better potential volunteers than another is false. The reliability of a volunteer rests in the person, not their background. Your job as Commanding Officer is to draw volunteers from any or all of these groups and utilize their experience as best fits your plan and recognizing their potential while accepting personal and professional limitations.

As Commanding Officer you have the opportunity to observe and meet potential volunteers on a weekly basis. Try not to get so caught up in your routine that you fail to notice the parent who waits for their cadet every night because it's too far to make the return trip home. Approach that parent and discuss the possibilities of becoming involved. Be sure to take the time to meet and discuss the program with those who would like to show an interest. Schedule open house forums on a regular basis to encourage interest. These discussions give you an opportunity to promote the benefits of volunteering with the program. It also provides you with greater insight as to why the person wants to volunteer. Make it a habit to have promotional material and applications on hand. Be truthful about the commitment and time involved.

Your position provides you with unique possibilities when it comes to recruitment. The Branch can organize recruitment drives or publish advertisements but you have the chance to repeatedly influence and encourage participation in people who are already coming to you instead of having to seek them out. You have the occasion to regularly observe them and recognize their abilities and potential long before they even ask for an application. Do not miss the chance to capitalize on this opportunity.

The final word on the subject is that it needs to be seen as an ongoing process. Your officer recruitment plan may consist of an annual volunteer drive. You may have a full complement and feel that more recruitment is not necessary. The nature of volunteering would suggest that neither of these examples could be considered as best practices. Recruiting should always be near the forefront of your overall plan. It is a subject that should regularly be visited in officer and Branch meetings and in-person conversations when appropriate.

1.   Officer development

If you have been successful in building an effective recruiting program, you should have a number of officers and volunteers ready to assist you in executing your plan. Filling your staff compliment is only half the battle. Too often, new volunteers are left to fend for themselves or set on the sidelines to observe. The Command Team and other existing members of your staff may be too busy with their own duties to engage with them. This creates its own problem as these new volunteers will soon feel overwhelmed or that their time is being wasted and could be better spent elsewhere. A comprehensive Officer Development Program coupled with an effective Mentorship Program, as previously discussed, will address and solve this problem.

A.   Surviving the Screening Process

The most crucial time for a new volunteer is the period that occurs while they are waiting for their screening process to be completed. These candidates have finally decided to make the commitment to your corps and are eager to get started. They have submitted their paperwork and are now told they cannot participate until they have received their VSS card. As time passes, their interest wains and more often than not they drop out before they can even get started. Your Officer Development plan needs to begin at this important step.

It is not enough to have binders filled with the Pre Enrollment publications (**Officer Training Standards**) that you pass off to the candidates and expect them to read. Build a plan that keeps them actively engaged in the weekly corps operations. While they cannot directly participate with the cadets until they complete the process, there are a wide variety of tasks that can be assigned to make them feel included and involved.

An effective Pre Enrollment training plan could include the following aspects:

1) Once applications are handed in, the candidate receives a binder or reference sheet for Pre Enrollment Publications. These are to be completed as Home Study Packages.
   a) Assign a Mentor to assist the candidate with completion of the packages.
   b) Time should be scheduled biweekly to address any questions or concerns the candidate may have with the material.

2) Take the time to introduce the candidate to the rest of your staff and members of the Branch. This will provide an opportunity for your staff to become familiar with the candidate. It also gives the candidate a sense of becoming a part of the team.

3) Create a list of tasks that candidates can participate in during regular parade nights while remaining apart from the cadets. This list will vary from corps to corps but some examples could include:
   a) Organizing stores
   b) Building planned training aids
   c) Reviewing lesson plans and Standing Orders
   d) Creating information boards for parent communication

4) Arrange presentations by Branch members relating to their responsibilities and roles in delivering the program

5) Discuss the candidate's personal interests, hobbies and job skills. Examine with them how that experience can relate and contribute to program. Task the candidate with putting together a plan to develop some optional training classes.

How you decide to make use of this waiting period will have a direct effect on the retention of new volunteers. While it is regulated that candidates cannot engage with the cadets until they are properly screened, there are still many tasks that can be assigned. By keeping them engaged in the program, they will be more likely to continue and be better prepared when they are cleared to fully participate.

2.   Building an effective team

In order to build an effective team, you must have a complete understanding of the needs of your corps. As volunteers make up the foundation of the program, you may not always get exactly what you want in every applicant. A good Commanding Officer recognizes the talents and abilities of their officers and fits those pieces together to address the identified needs of the corps.

You will find that for some volunteers, participation in a single role is all they are willing to provide. These people may just want to help out but have no desire to become a Navy League Officer. That is okay. Complete their paperwork and screening and put them to good use. It is not unusual to find that a person who has a professional background in office management may only want to assist as Administration Officer but have no interest in other aspects of the program. Some may view these candidates as being narrow minded or not wanting to fully engage. This is a hasty judgement. If a person has a specific skill set and are willing to share their experience, your job is to use that knowledge for the benefit of the program, even if that is the only responsibility they are willing to meet. Filling a critical position with professional level experience provides a major relief and opens up a large block of time that can then be allocated elsewhere. A paramedic who wants to volunteer but cannot regularly participate on a weekly basis should still be viewed as a potential asset. Discuss the possibilities of attendance at weekend events as Medical Officer or of overseeing First Aid training when they are available.

By making the best use of all resources in the capacity available you will quickly round out an efficient officer compliment. There is no limit to the amount of officers or volunteers you can recruit. It is a matter of identifying the needs of your corps and filling those needs as best as possible.

3.   Continued development

Up to this point, if you have been following the advice as laid out here, you have developed an overall plan. You have attracted an assortment of volunteers and officer candidates. and used their individual expertise to fill your needs. Your corps is running like clockwork and you are in cruise control. However, now is not the time to let off on the gas. As stated before, the greatest impact you can have is what you leave behind when your term is completed.

While it may seem like everything is progressing according to your plan, you still must pay attention to the future. Ongoing training is vital for the long term success of your corps. Most people want to learn, want to be challenged. Officers who are left in the same position and routine for too long can become complacent and stagnant. They become comfortable in their role and can be resistant to new ideas.

As Commanding Officer, you have the ability to avoid these problematic scenarios. The training opportunities you can provide your staff are only limited by corps finances, your imagination and the officer's ability to participate. Of course there is the regular training that coincides with officer promotions, but these only occur annually or biannually. Do not hesitate to send an experienced officer to a Division training weekend for a refresher. There may be changes to regulations or new ideas that they can be exposed to and bring back for the benefit of the whole staff.

You also have the opportunity to develop a local training program for your staff. Come up with a variety of topics for training opportunities at the start of the year and assign an officer as the subject expert and instructor. Have them prepare a syllabus and present it for review. Some examples of topics could include but are not limited to:

     i.   Communications – Semaphore, Radio and Morse Code

    ii.   Seamanship skills

   iii.   Drill

   iv.   Building effective training aids

    v.   Scheduling guest speakers to lecture on

       1) Leadership skills

       2) Working with youth

       3) Dealing with behavioral issues

     The list of possibilities could go on and on. Discuss the opportunities with your staff and gain insight into their availability and interests. Consideration must be given to not overworking your staff or putting too much demand on their time.

Planning and running Corps events

One of the most time consuming tasks you will be involved in during your tenure as Commanding Officer will be organizing cadet activities away from your home corps. That being said, it is a proven fact that a well thought out plan designed with an attention to detail results in a successful event. This section will cover the best practices when developing a plan for your activity.

1.   Preliminary planning

One of the deciding factors on whether or not your event will be a success happens during the very first stage of planning. You may think that your idea for a weekend event is great and that the cadets will love the experience. You very well may be correct. But however amazing your idea may be, there is still a checklist you should cover:

A.   Does your event correspond to the purposes and objectives of the NLOC program.

As a rule, you want to ensure that the event you are planning corresponds to the purposes and objectives of the program. A trip to Disneyland would be appreciated by the cadets, but does it really represent the ideals of the Navy League of Canada.

B.   Introduce plan to officer staff.

You will always need more staffing at any event than just yourself. You will want to gain an idea of your officer's level of interest in your plan. You will also want to ensure that they are willing to give up the extra time to attend. Present a detailed outline of your plan the same way you would introduce a sales pitch. You want your staff to buy into your idea. If they support your idea, they will be more likely to contribute thoughts and ideas. This involvement will help flesh out your plan and give you a better chance at success. It will also help promote the event with the Branch if it is presented as a team project.

C.   Present your idea to the Branch for preliminary approval

This is where your idea begins to transform into a legible blueprint for your event. Build up your initial outline with the contributions your officers have provided to you. Make some early inquiries into locations, travel costs, extracurricular activity costs and nutritional requirements and form a starting point budget. Task one of your officers to developing a rough schedule that reflects your idea. These parts do not have to be overly detailed at this point, but the more complete your outline is, the better prepared you will be to answer the inevitable questions that will be presented by the Branch.

Remember that the Branch must approve of your plan and agree to finance it. If there are more pressing expenditures, or shortcomings that are pointed out without explanation, you may not get the approval to proceed. Making sure your outline is comprehensive and that you have answers readily available will help your plan to gain traction. If finances are strained, have some fundraising ideas ready to present as well. It would even be beneficial to go over your presentation with your Navy League Cadet Chairperson and their committee before giving a full report to the Branch as a whole. Having this early support could make all the difference.

2.   Determine Administrative requirements

Once you have received the initial Branch permission to continue with the planning stage of your event, you need to look at the administrative requirements that are required and complete and have them submitted as needed.

A.   *NL (330) Letter of Intent* (LOI)

You may recall the requirements for approval of a LOI differs depending on how far from your home corps location you intend to travel. The distances are listed directly on the LOI form. For quick reference, they are as follows;

i. Local Branch – any activity occurring within 50km of your parade location.
ii. Division – any activity in excess of 50km but within Divisional boundaries.
iii. National Office – any activity outside your Divisional boundaries.

These authorizations require time to process, and need to meet higher standards of approval. Make sure to submit a complete LOI as soon in the planning process as possible to allow you to make any changes that may be needed.

B.   Operations Orders

Ops Orders are required for any event that lasts overnight or longer. An LOI is suitable for daytrips and short duration activities, but it does not contain the necessary information to demonstrate that proper planning has been done to ensure the safety and well-being of the cadets. A properly completed Operations Order should contain but not be limited to the following;

i.   Situation – This is an introduction to your event and should provide a brief synopsis explaining who, what, where and when of the activity.
ii.   Execution – This section of your Ops orders lays out the flow of your event. This is not a timed schedule, just a general outline. It should specifically lay out who is responsible to complete certain tasks and during which part of the activity you expect that action to be taken. This is where you want to have exact details so your staff know what is required of them with minimal direct supervision.
iii. Service/ Support – This section should include information on any support required from outside your officer staff. Examples could include;
a. Medical support requirements hospital directions
b. Emergency procedures covering fires and reporting medical incidents
c. Dress standards (parents would have to be prepared)
d. Galley needs and requirements
e. Resupply plans
f. Facility requirements
iv.   Command and Signal – Command and signal covers exactly what it says. This section lays out your chain of command for your event. It also covers communication directives and information on who to contact in cases of emergency, authorizations or planning inquiries. You should also include a distribution list. This list will show who is receiving a copy of your orders for approval and information.

There is no regulated standard or template for creating an Operational Order. It is the information contained within that is important, not the format. If a sample is not available at your corps, reach out to your Division Staff for previous orders used by other corps for their activities.

Once you have a sample outline and view the information it contains, you can use that knowledge to create your own template. It would be a good idea to complete Ops Orders for events even if it is not required. The simpler the event, the simpler the orders. Whether or not it is needed, this provides a great practice opportunity and will help to make sure pertinent details are not missed. You would be amazed at the important elements that are forgotten during what should be trouble-free events because of overlooked steps in planning.

3.   Building a successful event

As with most things you will encounter as a Commanding Officer, it will be almost impossible to pull off a successful event on your own. Like the saying goes, many hands make light work. Break your event into manageable task assignments and delegate individuals to look after the organization and execution of those duties.

When taking the team approach to event planning, it is important to remember that early delegation of responsibilities will ensure the maximum amount of preparation time and directly affect the possibility of success for your activity. Assign tasks as soon as possible in the development stage of your plan and hold regular team meetings to observe the progress of the plan and demonstrate how all the individual assignments contribute to the overall success of the event.

When organizing any event, create a checklist to help ensure important details are not overlooked. You can even use the list as a tool for delegating responsibilities to your team. A sample list for event organization could include the following sections:

    a.   Transportation
    b.   Accommodations
    c.   Food
    d.   Schedules
       i.   Training
      ii.   Event timings
    e. Contact information
    f. In case of emergencies

3.   Executing your plan

Up to this point, a lot of work has gone into planning your event. It is now time to see if all that effort was worth it. To successfully execute your plan, you must have an effective command team in place. Your command team needs to have a clear picture of all the aspects that have been delegated and how they need to fit together to ensure success. The size of the team should reflect the size of the activity. An afternoon parade may only have an organizing officer assigned while a weekend camping trip would have a complete command team directing a number of officers and volunteers in supporting roles.

You have planned your work, now work your plan. Why spend all that effort planning only to throw it all away when the time comes. Do not let the unexpected throw you off course. If you have fully developed your plan, you should be able to anticipate and be prepared for the unexpected. Try not to deviate unless it is absolutely necessary. Through the planning stages, you have delegated tasks and responsibilities to a wide variety of people.

A small deviation from your plan could cause adverse ripple effects down the chain of command. It may not ruin your activity, but would most likely make for difficulties and confusion among your staff. Knowledge is the key. Make sure your whole team is aware of any alternative plans you may have developed to handle unforeseen changes, such as weather, that may come up. If everyone knows what is expected, responding to the unexpected becomes a smooth conversion.

Before the start of the activity, make sure to schedule a preliminary briefing or O Group. This will provide you the chance to make sure all tasks were delegated, and that everyone knows what they are supposed to do. Be sure to schedule additional briefings as needed. This gives your team members a chance to provide immediate feedback on individual parts of your plan.

After Action Reports

By the time everything is cleaned up, supplies are put away and the cadets are turned back over to their parents, you will most likely want nothing more than to give yourself a pat on the back and to fall fast asleep for a week. There is still one very important step that is often overlooked. The After action report. This report does not have to be completed immediately, but should be taken care of while details are still fresh in your mind and those of your officers.

After Action Reports should be completed by all officers and volunteers involved in the event. These reports do not have to be formal, but should openly and honestly give the pros and cons of the event from their perspective. You will want to have their reports reflect their opinion of the overall event, of the planning and implementation processes and of their individual assignments.

As Commanding Officer or the Organizing Officer for the event, you should never take these reports as criticism. They should be viewed as constructive information that can be used to build a better event in the future. This type of feedback from the viewpoint of people who were actually there is invaluable. These reports should be compiled and filed with the corps and Branch for use by future Commanding Officers when planning similar events.

Budgets and Finances

1.   Finances

Just as in most aspects of life, finance management is an important part of your duties as a Commanding Officer. Various regulation publications touch on the subject of financial responsibilities as it pertains to the assorted positions within the organization. These explanations can be confusing and a source of dissention between corps and Branch.

When all references are accumulated and read together, the picture becomes clearer when laid out as follows:

1. As stated in *NL (8) sec. 9.3.01,* the control of all revenue and expenditures relating to the operation of a corps is vested in the Navy League Branch.

2. Day-to-day management of finances will be the handled by your Branch Treasurer under your (Branch President) supervision. As stated in *NL (33) Branch President Guide* under Finances: Neither NL or SC cadet officers are to handle funds. All donations and funds raised are managed by the Branch.

    a. The use of the word "handle" should be taken in the context of the section of publication in which it appears. It is meant that as a Branch President, you cannot assign an NL or SC officer as a treasurer or as a person responsible for managing financial accounts of a Branch.

3. As stated in *NL (64)* Chapter 3 *under Finances*, a Commanding Officer shall submit all fund raising monies to the Branch for accounting and safekeeping. The Commanding Officer and his staff must not be in a situation where they are the custodians of the funds raised. ALL funds are to be held by the Branch for use in support of the corps activities.

4. As stated in *NL (8) sec.9.1.02*, a Corps and its officers shall not pledge the credit of The Navy League of Canada, or any Division, Branch or other component of the Navy League.

5. As stated in *NL (210)* under Commanding Officer Finances, the Commanding Officer shall submit and justify, on an annual basis, a proposed budget in support of the Corps activities of the Navy League of Canada. Once approved by the Branch, the Commanding Officer shall be responsible to track and report use of this budget to the Branch President.

6.   All the anticipated expenditures of a corps should be defined and included in a corps' annual budget request. That budget must be submitted to the Branch for approval so the Branch knows how much money it is expected to raise for the corps in the coming year.

7. As stated in *NL8 sec. 9.1.01*, all expenditures of League funds are conditional upon there being sufficient monies available and budgeted for the expenditure.

The *NL 64 Branch-Navy League Cadet Relationship Guide* between Branch and an NL Commanding Officer should be considered required reading in regards to the handling of finances. It provides good context and examples of how to work as a team with your Branch within these regulations.

2.   Budgets

As Commanding Officer, you must prepare a yearly training budget and submit it to the Branch for approval. This is normally an annual process, the timing of which is specified by your individual Branch. This budget should include all aspects of the training year from buying ropes for knot classes to an end of year trip for your cadets. As recommended in previous sections, you should have prepared budgets for special events that you have planned. These should be included in your annual budget.

It is important to remember that just because you have submitted a budget it does not mean that it will be approved. A Branch works on a volunteer basis just as you do. This means that if they cannot garner enough support to raise the needed funds, you may not get everything you ask for. You may find it better to prepare your budget then present it to the Branch in a "needs and wants" format. This will provide the Branch with a list of expenditures that you are willing to cut if necessary and those that are absolutely necessary for the running of your corps.

You are also responsible for the accounting and tracking of those funds accounted for in your approved budget. It is quite normal for actual expenditures to be over or under the amount that was budgeted. Be sure to include any accounting discrepancies during your monthly Branch report. Have recommendations ready for dealing with these differences. Gaining approval for reallocating expenses will be much easier if you can show you have a competent plan. You will also have more control over the positive or negative effects to your operation that these variations can produce.

The link below provides you with a download of a sample template that can be adjusted to your corps' particular needs and activities and used to prepare your budget and track expenditures. Copy and paste into your browser.
https://thenavyleagueofcanada-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/jclute_navyleague_ca/EWLlvwSE1V1CmlPYbAPUUHcBNYDA7fGquBdlLLSs92fnig

Administrative Responsibilities

Most serving Commanding Officers will tell you that having a competent Administration Officer is the largest piece of the puzzle when it comes to the success of their tenure. It is a huge responsibility and one that most loathe to take on themselves unless absolutely necessary. You will probably find that as Commanding Officer, you will be working more closely with your AdminO than any other officer in your staff.

Whether you have a competent Administration Officer or have assumed those duties yourself, it is important to remember that the overall responsibility for all record keeping at your corps belongs to you. It is up to you to make sure all records are up to date, forms and applications are submitted to the proper authority in time and standing orders and safety plans are created and current.

Take the time to review the administration responsibilities under Commanding Officer in NL (210) Terms of Reference – Navy League Cadet Officers. Also reread the duties and responsibilities of the Administration Officer to ensure you have a firm understanding of what you are answerable for if asked.

Disciplinary Responsibilities

As Commanding Officer, you are responsible for maintaining and administering discipline among the officers and cadets of your corps. Remember that while the Navy League emulates a military organization, we are in fact a group of volunteers that manage a program for preteen children. Any necessary discipline that is required should always be tempered by this fact.

The most important rule for a Commanding Officer when it comes to discipline is to lead by example. How can you discipline a cadet for a sloppy uniform if your own is not up to the proper standard? "Do as I say and not as I do" is not a workable philosophy when everyone is looking to you as a model of proper behaviour and deportment.

The Navy League of Canada has a publication which outlines examples of disciplinary measures that can be used for a variety of infractions and incidents. For cadets, *NL (8) Annex A Table 1* has options for consequences of misbehaviour and *NL (8) Annex A Table 2* has Misbehaviour / Consequences. If you are unsure of what is appropriate when it comes to enforcing discipline among the cadets of your corps, contact your Divisional Area Officer or speak to other experienced Commanding Officers for guidance.

With the exception of egregious violations, it is always better to be lenient when administering discipline instead of being heavy handed. Changing behaviours is usually more successful when positive encouragement is used in the place of punishment. You will receive better end results and greater respect from your fellow officers, cadets and parents by learning to handle these unpleasant instances in a constructive manner.

Discipline amongst officers should never be carried out in front of the cadets. If the occasion arises that a correction needs to be made on the spot, call the officer to the side and speak with them quietly. Follow up later with a one on one conversation if needed. The only exception to this would be if the safety of the cadets is in jeopardy. It is your job to lead these fellow volunteers. To instruct them in proper behaviour and decorum. Be the educator instead of the boss and you will find yourself at the head of an effective and unified team.

NL (8) Sec 4.13 details the procedures to be followed with respect to officers. To ensure that the proper steps are taken, this section must be followed. Any time there is reason to discipline an officer, the incident must be documented as stated in *NL (8) 4.13.05*.

Building Effective Conflict Resolution Skills

As a Commanding Officer, your number one job is to build an effective team that works together to deliver an amazing program to the children who have decided to become a Navy League Cadet. To achieve this goal, you will have to manage and work with a variety of people. Branch members, corps officers and parents are all individuals with their own personalities. It is inevitable that at some point, these personalities will come into conflict. Learning how to deal with these conflicts is what will define you as a great leader.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines conflict as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. This is common knowledge. For a Commanding Officer, knowing what creates conflict, how to resolve it, and the negative and positive outcomes it can produce is vital.

Conflict arises when two or more people have different ideologies. In our case, these ideologies usually refer to how these individuals believe the program should be administered. Most conflicts share the same root causes such as:

    i. Goals and aspirations
    ii. Personality conflicts
    iii. Resource availability, and;
    iv. Values

When you find yourself in the position of having to mediate a conflict, it is important to remember that, in most cases, both individuals are likely trying to improve something for the benefit of the cadets or the program. The end goal for both may be the similar, it is usually the path they want to take that is causing the issue.

Poorly managed conflict can impact the cohesiveness and functioning of a cadet corps faster than any other hardship you will encounter as a Commanding Officer. As uncomfortable a situation as it may be, it is never a good idea to ignore conflict. At the first available opportunity, gather information from all parties involved, one at a time. Review this information as a whole then bring everyone together to discuss the situation.

You may not be able to make everyone happy, but if you are able to put together a plan that incorporates the best from all involved, more often than not, your decision will be respected as being in the best interests of the organization.

Some of the common ways of dealing with conflict are:

A.   Accommodation

When a conflict arises due to a sense of bias or fairness, providing accommodations can be the simplest way to reach a resolution. Be careful when making accommodations on an individual level as this may be viewed as favoritism. You may inadvertently create a larger conflict amongst a larger number of complainants.

B.   Competition

Conflicts can arise when one person believes they deserve or are a better fit for a position, award or duty than another. In this case, resolving conflict through competition can provide favorable results. In some cases, it can affirm a decision or provide new information that may change your mind. In the best case, both parties can come to realize that the best decision has been made. They may not be happy with your decision, but they will respect it.

C.   Compromise

Handling conflict through compromise will likely be your primary method. In most cases providing each party with the satisfaction of gaining some, but not all, of what they may be petitioning for will leave both sides happy.

D.   Collaboration

While it will not always be possible, solving conflict through collaboration should always be your number one choice of solutions. Earlier it was stated that in most cases, both parties only want what is best for the corps. If you are able to convince both parties to work together to solve their differences for the benefit of the organization, it will only serve to strengthen your support team for the ultimate benefit of the corps and its cadets. Everybody wins!

This leads us to the positive side of conflict. Yes, you heard it correctly. Conflict can have many positive results if handled correctly. Conflict can bring different ideas to the table. One or more may be different than yours and possibly better. These ideas can provide you with alternatives that can be employed at present or in future planning. Learning to properly mediate conflict will improve your leadership skills and arriving at fair and just decisions will increase your respect among your peers.

Make the time to instruct your fellow officers in conflict resolution and help them develop their own skills. Create training sessions using officers as protagonists and antagonists in a variety of scenarios created to reflect possible conflicting interactions. Even if you are not comfortable yourself, observing how others handle these situations will provide you with insight into what to do and, in some cases, what not to do when dealing with real conflicts.

Some sample scenarios might include:

    1.   Officer – Officer conflicts
                Questionable officer behaviour
                Poor attendance or preparation

    2.   Officer – Branch conflicts
                Branch doesn't support activity plans (always says no)

    3.   Officer – Parent conflicts
                Cadet not promoted and parent upset

Make up as many scenarios as you can think of. Use this as a self-evaluation tool as well. Revisit past conflicts and introduce them into these training sessions. See how others handle the same problem and consider if there may be a better way to handle a similar situation in the future.

When mediating conflict, one cannot overlook the significance of intention versus impact. Most conflict situations will be emotionally charged. By the time any sort of planned mediation takes place, those involved may find themselves worked up making it more difficult to resolve their differences. This will also make them more susceptible to taking offense even if it is not intended.

In these situations, you must be very careful with the words you choose to use. You may have the best of intentions when responding to a complainant but when emotions have been rubbed raw, it can become impossible to judge what the impact of your words may have on others. Remember that while conflict should be addressed as soon as possible, it does not need to be solved immediately. It is okay to break away to a later time and give cooler heads a chance to prevail.

Lastly, you will not always win when it comes to resolving conflict. More often than not, one party or the other will depart unhappy. If a conflict is too complex, do not hesitate to reach out for assistance. Seek advice from your Branch President or Division Staff. You may lose cadets or even officers and you have to be okay with that. As long as you have been as thorough and as fair as possible, stand firm knowing that you have done your best to handle the situation. Commanding Officers are still only volunteers and in most cases will have no professional training in dealing with conflict.

For further information, review section 2.08 Conflict Resolution Guidance which can be found in the NL 21 Administrative Orders.

References

<u>Manuals</u>

NL 8 - Navy League Cadet Regulations
NL 21 - Navy League Administrative Orders
NL 22 - Navy League Harassment Prevention, Workplace Violence and Child Abuse
NL 23 - Social Media Guidelines
NL 33 - Branch President Guide
NL 35 - Branch Organization Guide
NL 50 - Navy League of Canada Communications Guidelines for Branch, Division and Members
NL 64 - Branch-Navy League Cadet Relationship Guide
NL 210 - Navy League Cadet Officer Terms of Reference
NL 215 - Parent Information Handbook
NL 225 - Navy League Cadet Drill Manual
NL 410 - Navy League Cadet Dress Regulations
NL 420 - Navy League Cadet Training Standards

<u>Forms</u>

WC112 - Insurance Claim Form
NL 102 - Driver's Log Page
NL 301 - Volunteer Registration Form
NL 302 - Volunteer Renewal Form
NL 303 - Adult (Staff) Medical Questionnaire
NL 304 - Navy League Officer Personnel Transaction
NL 305 - Officer Transfer Form
NL 320 - Navy League of Canada Membership Application
NL 321 - Navy League of Canada Cadet Medical Questionnaire
NL 322 - Navy League Cadet Transfer Form
NL 330 - Navy League Letter of Intent
NL 333 - Corps Inspection Report
NL 337 - Navy League Cadet Corps Ship's Log
NL 338 - Navy League Cadet Corps Stores Muster
NL 339 - Navy League Incident Report Form