



HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL CONNECTICUT WING
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
PO Box 1233 Middletown, CT 06457-1233
Tel: (860) 262-5847
Fax: (860) 262-5848



14 September 2008

EXPLANATION

This is a combined document. It consists of the following subdocuments:

1. Wing Public Affairs Plan
2. The PAO's Flight Plan
3. Crisis Communications Plan

Some of the contents of this document were obtained from a similar document prepared by Capt James Ridley, Public Affairs Officer for New York Wing, CAP. Permission was granted by Capt Ridley (July 2008).

Wing Public Affairs Plan

I. Introduction

This Wing Public Affairs Plan is mandated by CAPR 190-1 to be prepared annually. It represents the plans of the Connecticut Wing (CTWG) for its Public Affairs Program, including regular marketing communications, mission communications, and crisis communications. It was prepared by Lieutenant Heidi Loiseau, Director of Public Affairs, and Colonel Peter Jensen, Wing Commander, in consultation with other staff.

II. Situation Analysis

The region of the United States covered by Connecticut Wing (CTWG) of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) encompasses the entire state of Connecticut including the Connecticut coast of Long Island Sound. Connecticut is geographically diverse ranging from urban areas like its capital city Hartford to rural and mountainous areas like the Litchfield Hills of Litchfield County. The southern part of Connecticut contains sea-level areas and public and private beaches along the Long Island Sound coast. The major river running south to Long Island Sound is the Connecticut River. The Wing consists of 13 squadrons and no units because Connecticut is a small state.

Approximately 90% of the squadrons have a Public Affairs Officer (PAO) assigned. Approximately 10% of the squadrons are using the squadron commanders as PAOs.

CTWG headquarters (HQ) is somewhat centrally located in Middletown, Connecticut. CTWG is responsible for program management and coordination among the squadrons.

- Strengths:** CTWG has a diverse, experienced staff that is committed to the highest ideals of volunteer service. Although CTWG officers and staff live in different parts of CT, commuting to CTWG HQ is not too great a distance. They meet at CTWG HQ on the third Wednesday of each month for an officer/staff meeting. The squadron commanders meet at CTWG HQ for a "Commanders Call" meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. CT is a relatively small state, making meetings with key personnel feasible. Squadron CAP pilots fly regular Long Island Sound Patrol (LISP) sortie/missions. There have been documented cases of CAP observers spotting suspicious watercraft and watercraft in distress and assisting the Coast Guard. CTWG is an acknowledged leader in all of its missions and is serving the local communities and the nation. In Public Affairs, CTWG has become active under a PAO appointed in July 2008 after a dormant Public Affairs period. High priority on the Public Affairs agenda are (1) media outreach and (2) training squadron PAOs. Between July and September 2008, the CTWG PAO has liaised with two television entities (CPTV and *Crossroads Magazine*) that have begun work on producing television programs that will feature CAP. The current Director of Public Affairs/PAO for CTWG has experience teaching adults, designing training programs, and she is a published freelance writer. These skills will enable her to perform her PAO duties and train squadron PAOs. The CTWG PAO is fortunate to have several mentors who are PAOs for other Wings around the United States. CTWG officers are also available and helpful.
- Weaknesses:** The Director of Public Affairs for CTWG has only been in service since July 2008 and is still learning her job duties. She also lacks formal training and did not attend the Public Affairs Academy in August 2008. Most of the squadron PAOs also lack formal PAO training. They do not have enough working knowledge of their PAO job duties nor do they possess the necessary skills and understanding of how to carry those duties out. Some squadron commanders are acting as PAOs. Since CAP is a volunteer organization, this might present a conflict when choosing between commander duties and PAO duties. CTWG has only one qualified, experienced Mission Information Officer (MIO). Even though Connecticut is a small state, CTWG needs to work towards certifying more MIOs through their E/S programs. CTWG must also elevate its profile in the public arena. Rarely if ever has any activity from CTWG been featured in a nationally distributed CAP publication.
- Areas for Improvement:** Areas for improvement include recruitment, spreading the CAP reputation, and training PAOs of the CT squadrons. Training should also be across disciplines. PAOs will be encouraged to fly as observers, attend encampments, interface with the media, produce newsletters, and have a state legislator and media present every time a Mitchell Award is granted at a squadron. Publicity will also accompany the legislators' presence at any awards presentation. Training will be provided at the Wing, online, and at the squadron level. The CTWG PAO needs to focus on the recruitment, training and retention of highly motivated members to serve dual functions as PAO's and MIO's. The CTWG web site can be used to better communicate information with members and the public alike. The CTWG PAO should also run workshops for squadron PAOs twice a year. She has compiled a tentative curriculum of topics for the PAO workshops which is contained in the PAO Continuity Binder. Squadron PAOs should send periodic reports to the CTWG PAO. This currently does not take place.
- Opportunities:** CT is very involved in Emergency Services and has been involved in many missions in the last year that reflected well on the organization. CTWG has made strides in putting mutual support, interoperability, and joint training into effect. CTWG holds timely SAREXs. CT squadrons fly regular Long Island Sound Patrol (LISP) sorties. This can be an opportunity for educators and media alike to ride along and learn about CAP's missions. CTWG should find innovative ways to recruit and enlist the help of members of the state legislature. This could be an opportunity for more funding and a wider dissemination of CAP's reputation statewide. An electronic link to a web site of PAO tools can be useful to PAOs in training. The link is http://www.capchannel.com/pao_downloads .

- **Threats:** CT CAP squadrons vary in their health, from active dynamic teams to smaller composite squadrons that struggle to survive and enlist the volunteer efforts of senior members. The need for further training and professional development is constant. Many squadron PAOs are inexperienced at the functions of the Public Affairs program. This seems to be a familiar theme in other Wings across the region and nation. A great many senior members and cadets pay their squadron dues but are inactive members. The benefit of this is that the squadrons have funding through inactive members' dues. But the membership numbers falsely reflect the number of members who are actually active and available for missions.
- **Major Events:** Each year CTWG conducts a Wing Conference, Cadet Encampment, a cadet ball, leadership training, and other workshops. In addition, each squadron also conducts fund raising activities like sales and guard duty at festivals and fairs in addition to many of the aforementioned activities on their own.

III. Wing Goals

Connecticut Wing (CTWG) has established the following goals for 2008:

- A. Good management and accountability of funding and resources.
- B. Coordination of training to ensure interoperability
- C. Retention and the professional development of members
- D. Compliance with CAP regulations, directives, and requirements of higher headquarters
- E. Increased number of effective squadron PAOs

IV. Public Affairs Objectives

Connecticut Wing (CTWG) has established the following Public Affairs (PA) objectives for 2008:

- A. Support the PA/Marketing Plan, Strategies and Goals of CAP Regional and National Headquarters.
- B. Recruit more talented members to the PAO ranks.
- C. Support and mentor the PAO's of CTWG, especially new PAO's and MIO's.
- D. Increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions, and its contributions to our nation.
- E. Promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry, higher education, and civic groups within the territory of the CTWG.
- F. Conduct more CTWG sponsored PAO workshops.

V. Public Affairs Goals and Strategies

The Connecticut Wing's (CTWG's) Public Affairs (PA) effort focuses primarily on the role of program management and support. Most external media and public contacts in CAP occur at the Wing and local level, CTWG's effort is one of monitoring implementation of the program in subordinate squadrons, and providing PA services that support the squadrons and CTWG headquarters.

CTWG has set the following goals for its PA Program. Each goal is described. The measures of success are also provided and each goal lists which objective it supports. As part the CTWG PAO's routine reporting, the CTWG PAO will summarize these measures and report to the CTWG commander on progress and successes/failures to date.

GOAL # 1 Publish a Quarterly Newsletter.

Description: The development of a CTWG newsletter is under the guidance of 2nd¹ Lt. Heidi Loiseau, the CTWG PAO. She will use a newsletter template from a current squadron-based newsletter, *The Coastwatcher*, produced and edited by Capt Stephen Rocketto. The proposed CTWG newsletter will be available on the CTWG web site and/or through member e-mail subscription (free). The stories will be about CAP successes and role models across the CTWG. It will also preview upcoming activities, report on past activities, as well as communicate significant missions, esprit de corps, and professional development.

A hard copy of the newsletter will be created for the CT Wing Conference. Special editions will also be published in hard copy format on an "as-needed" basis.

It will primarily be an internal communications and retention tool, however it will be available for distribution to the community, CTWG members, prospective members, and other interested parties outside of CAP.

Measure of Success: A newsletter is produced and distributed electronically via the web or by e-mail subscription to CAP members in CT and once or twice a year in hard copy format.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, C, D, E

GOAL # 2 Insure that every squadron has an active, engaged and trained Public Affairs Officer.

Description: The success of the CAP Public Affairs program rests with each group having an active and engaged PAO. The CTWG PAO will work with the squadron commanders to identify candidates for this position and assist where desired.

The CTWG PAO will work with the squadron PAOs in order to develop training goals for their programs; this will include the establishment of PAO workshops and MIO classes.

Measure of Success: Each group has an assigned PAO that is or will be enrolled in the PAO Specialty Track. Data comes from the monthly report issued by the CTWG IT Officer. The number of group PAOs that attend the conference call meetings, workshops, and the CT Wing Conference will be one of the measuring sticks.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

GOAL# 3 Insure that each squadron has a cadre of trained and active Mission Information Officers.

Description: Brig Gen Courter in her March 2008 letter to the Wing commanders stated the importance of having only qualified spokespeople speaking for CAP during operational missions. Having qualified members working this function can mean success or failure during a mission. MIOs will be actively sought out and trained. Connecticut needs more trained MIOs than the one it currently has.

Measure of Success: An increase in the number of MIO's assigned to each wing. This data comes from WMIRS. CTWG conducts an MIO workshop and provides support materials via the New York Wing Web site www.nywg.cap.gov/OnlineNews.htm

The CTWG PAO is currently working towards obtaining her MIO Rating and has completed several FEMA courses and will be working towards the completion of all FEMA related courses needed for the Mission IO/PIO function.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, C, D, E

GOAL# 4 Promote and create regular submissions to the CAP News Online

news service and other CAP publications, either in print version or electronic version.

Description: While most news releases within CTWG will originate from the Wing or local levels, appropriate CTWG news articles and other releases will be adapted and delivered to the Civil Air Patrol News Online.

The CTWG PAO will promote the distribution of news stories and releases to CAP Online News, the *Wheels Up* newsletter, and other print and electronic CAP media. This will be included in training and conference updates.

Measure of Success: The CTWG PAO will develop a semi-annual spreadsheet that tracks the number of releases/stories published in print and electronic news CAP publications. This will be reported to each squadron commander, squadron PAO, and CTWG leadership.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, C, D, E, F

GOAL# 5 Insure the CTWG Web site is a valued source of information for CAP members.

Description: The CTWG Public Affairs staff will collaborate, as needed, with the Wing Webmaster/IT Officer to ensure that the Web site's direct and subconscious messages for the general public all reflect positively on the Wing and larger CAP organization.

Measure of Success: The website is regularly updated with current content (such as the *Wheels Up* Newsletter) and meets the needs of the Wing staff and commander.

Supports PA Objectives A, C, D

GOAL# 6 Provide Public Affair support for Wing and wing-sponsored events and activities.

Description: By order of the Wing commander, every event and activity sponsored or staged by CTWG or respective Wing staff members on behalf of the CTWG shall have an appointed Public Affairs Officer who shall:

- Coordinate in advance with the Wing Public Affairs staff.
- Prepare one or more advance news releases to be delivered to the editor of the *Wheels Up* not later than the newsletter deadline of the month prior to the event.
- Prepare one or more advance news releases to be delivered to the local media where the event (if appropriate) is to be held not later than one week prior to the event.
- Collect information and photographs to "tell the story" of the event.
- Prepare a timely news release (with one or more photographs) about the event reporting its results and successes, delivered to local media where the event is held (if appropriate) and also to the *Wheels Up* CAP News Online.
- Set up an online submission procedure and webform for ease of article submissions and PAO requests

If no separate PAO is appointed for the activity, the event Project Officer shall perform these functions.

Measure of Success: Releases, news stories, photos and related media are generated and submitted to the CTWG PAO for release and archiving for "value added" use later.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, C, D

GOAL# 7 Mentor and train squadron Public Affairs staff and other interested members by implementing the PA Training Plan.

Description: Because training, mentoring and professional development are vital for Wing and

squadron PAO's, the CTWG PA staff will develop resources and training materials that will be available via Internet/distance technology.

These materials will include practical resources for daily use by PAOs, as well as professional development materials geared to the Public Affairs specialty training track and the Mission Information Officer function.

In order to accomplish this task a PAO committee will be established with PAOs from around the Wing taking leadership roles and implementing mentoring programs and training sessions and workshops around the Wing at specific times simultaneously with other areas.

Measure of Success: Plan, organize and execute PAO Workshops around the Wing. The number of participants will be the measure of success.

Supports PA Objectives A, B, F

GOAL# 8 Promote and support the "Flight Plan" (Appendix A) as the basic unit Public Affairs strategy in Connecticut Wing.

Description: The CTWG PAO will use the "Flight Plan" to guide PAOs and help Wing and squadron PAOs to establish a direction for their programs. The Flight Plan outlines the Wing PAO's goals for each squadron for the Wing. It is the measure that is used to measure PA program effectiveness for the Wing's squadron and Wing PAO Recognition Program. It is also the cornerstone for developing support and training for unit PAO's

Measure of Success: Buy-in is measured by the effectiveness of Wing/squadron programs.

Supports PA Objectives A, B

GOAL# 9 Ensure each Wing has a plan of action that supports this plan and CAPR 190-1.

Description: As per CAPR 190-1 each Wing will develop a PA and Crisis Communication Plan. This plan will be submitted to the Wing PAO (delegated Wing approval authority) for Wing level review and approval. Approved plans will be posted to the Connecticut Wing Web site www.ctwg.cap.gov

Measure of Success: Each Group has an approved plan posted to www.ctwg.cap.gov

Supports PA Objectives A, B

GOAL# 10 Promote the recognition of PAOs by squadrons.

Description: The Wing PAO will establish a process to implement the PAO Recognition program as outlined in CAPR 190-1. This process will be published at www.ctwg.cap.gov The Wing PAO will submit the name(s) of a squadron PAO who based upon their performance during the previous year, will be designated as the "Squadron PAO of the Year." This award will be presented at the Wing Conference that year. A separate award for the "Cadet PAO of the Year" will also be established in 2008 and be presented for the first time in 2009 at the Wing Conference.

The Wing PAO will also promote the Balsem awards in the Wing and make the maximum number of nominations allowed.

Measure of Success: Each squadron or Wing staff member submits a nomination for the Wing PAO of the Year Award. The CTWG PAO promotes nominations for the Balsem Awards.

Supports PA Objectives A, B

GOAL# 11 Ensure 2-way communications between the Wing PAO and squadron PAOs and National headquarters.

Description: Good communications is very important between CTWG and the squadrons.

The CTWG PAO will serve as a representative of and advisor to the Region and National headquarters. CTWG PA staff will maintain regular communication with NERHQ, NHQ/PA and CAP/PA.

The Wing PAO holds on an as-needed basis conference calls with all the squadron PAOs and encourages them to attend the CTWG Conference.

Measure of Success: A log will be maintained of the conference and Wing PAO calls and this log will be shared with the Wing leadership.

Supports PA Objectives A, B

VIII. Annual Review

This plan will be reviewed each year in the month of January. This review will consist of a comprehensive review of the Public Affairs (PA) program as outlined in this plan. This review will go over successes, failures, areas for improvement and update goals/objectives for the next year. The review will be posted to www.ctwg.cap.gov and serve as the annual report of the CTWG PAO.

Squadron commanders and PAOs will be asked for input prior to implementation of the revised plan of action.

VII. Promulgation

This plan upon approval of the CTWG commander will be communicated to every commander and PAO in the Wing via www.ctwg.cap.gov and the others in the appropriate PAO communications channel.

APPROVED:

/////Signed/////

Peter Jensen, Colonel, CAP
Commander

APPENDIXES:

- A. The PAO's Flight Plan
- B. Wing PA Training Plan

DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)

CTWG Wing Commander
CTWG Staff
CTWG Wing and Squadron PAO's
NER PAO
CAP NHQ/PA
CAP/PA

RECORD OF REVIEW:

Prepared by CTWG Public Affairs September 2008

Review Date	Commander's Initials
Initial Plan 4 Sep 2008	Approved by CC on 14 Sep 2008



The PAO's Flight Plan

"A Path to Success as a Squadron PAO"

The PAO's Flight Plan is a basic strategy that a Wing and squadron PAO can use to be successful. It is four objectives listed below:

1. Submit 1-2 releases/stories to local and CAP media monthly.
2. Develop and maintain a Wing Web site.
3. Publish a Wing and squadron newsletter.
4. Conduct an outreach event each year.

1. Provide press/news releases and stories to local and CAP media.

This is important because if no one hears about CAP no one knows about CAP. A Wing and squadron PAO should strive to get 1-2 releases out per month.

Suggested stories that the media may be interested in include

- Cadet achievements and promotions (Milestones)
- Member successes (in and out of CAP)
- Significant Wing and squadron events
- Actual and training missions

Include action pictures if possible in your release. Nothing is more boring than a traditional "grip & grin." Build a library of images of unit members for this purpose.

Don't forget to send copies of your releases to your Wing and Wing PAOs as well as CAP Online News.

The old CAPM 190-1 has some great ideas for releases. It and templates/samples of releases can be found on the resource DVD. CAP Online News has great examples as well.

2. Develop and maintain a Wing and squadron Web site.

It is critical for a unit to have a Web site that

- Tells the squadron story.
- Does not duplicate materials from higher headquarters.

- Has original content.
- Has news and pictures of Wing and/or squadron members doing CAP related work/activities.
- Is updated regularly.

3. Unit Newsletters

Successful Wings and squadrons publish a regular newsletter. It tells the Wing's/squadron's story to its members and outside customers/friends and family.

This news letter can take any form that you (the PAO) and your commander agree on. Some Wings/squadrons do a printed version. Some do it as a PDF file or place it on a list serve or as a Web page. The newsletter can be sent via e-mail to CAP members and/or placed on the Wing Web site. You are limited by your creativity and resources.

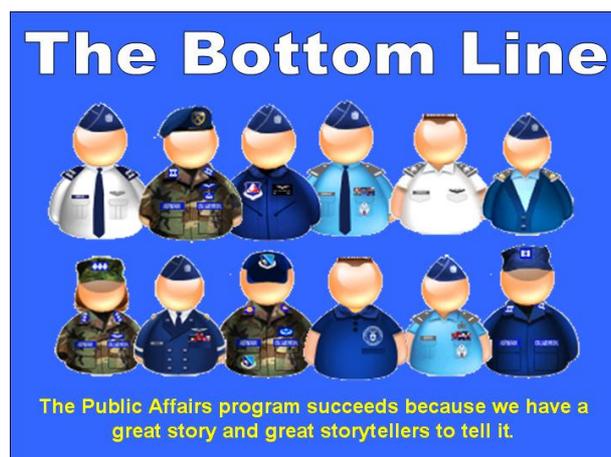
The New York Wing Public Affairs Web site has some samples of newsletters you can look at for ideas.

Make sure that your newsletter is available on your Wing/squadron Web site.

4. Community Outreach Events

You can't get support for your unit unless the community knows about you.

An outreach event or "Open House" can help with this. Squadrons should do one open house each year to let the community know it are out there and to try and attract new members.



Public Affairs Training – PAO Workshops

Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to establish objectives, goals and a time frame for a Wing Public Affairs (PA) training program and to meet the requirements for PA planning as set out in CAPR 190-1.

Time Frame:

This training plan is effective 4 September 2008 and expires on 4 September 2010. This plan will be updated annually to reflect changing priorities, needs of the field, and task accomplishment.

Execution

CTWG/PA will provide support for Public Affairs Officers and commanders. The emphasis is on resource sharing, mentoring, Mission Information Officer Support and training, support of the PA Specialty Track and individual learning to accomplish the CAP's Public Affairs Mission as defined in CAPR 190-1 through the use of the PAO Committee.

This will be accomplished by the completion of five key objectives that support the PAO's Flight Plan that we promote to PAO's as a basic plan of action.

KEY PAO OBJECTIVES
Objective 1: PA Resource Website – www.ctwg.cap.gov and www.nywg.cap.gov
Objective 2: PAO Committee
Objective 3: PA Online Training (being developed)
Objective 4: Mentoring and Outreach - Through squadron PAOs
Objective 5: Wing PAO Workshops



The Flight Plan

The PAO's Flight Plan is a basic strategy that a Unit PAO can use to be successful.

- 1. Submit releases/stories to local & CAP media**
- 2. Develop and Maintain a Unit Website**
- 3. Publish a Unit Newsletter**
- 4. Conduct an Outreach Event each year**

Integrity - Volunteer Service - Excellence - Respect

Objective 1: PA Resources Website – WWW.NYWG.CAP.GOV/OnlineNews.htm

Objective: Manage a training/resource Web site that will deliver training and resources to interested members especially Unit and Wing PAO's. To be updated regularly with new content. The domain name for the Web site in New York is www.nywg.cap.gov/OnlineNews.htm

The PA page on the CTWG Web site is not up and running yet, but it will be modeled after the aforementioned New York Wing Web PAO page.

The CTWG PA Web site will provide information and resources for PAOs in the Wing and squadrons. It will be updated on a regular basis.

The following items will be added as part of this project:

- CTWG Photo Album
- Links to National PA site
- Resources - Various
- PAO Workshop presentations
- Information on MIO Training Requirements
- Wing News Releases and Online News

Future Enhancements Will Include:

- Presentations from the 2009 PAO Academy and from the one held in August of 2008
- About the Wing PA Team – Biographicals of the Director and PAO Committee or Deputy Directors
- For CAP Commanders – Short trainings/presentations for CAP commanders on PA and its roles
- Recognition Programs – PAO of the Year and other programs such as Cadet PAO of the Year
- Become a PAO – Recruitment Web page and video for attracting new PAO's (current and new members)
- CAP News RSS Feed, pod casts, streaming video, and/or other Web 2.0 multimedia

The PA Web site/page will also link to the newsletter page at the main Wing website and provide a summary of stories featured in each issue and an RSS feed will be added to highlight stories on CTWG squadrons on CAP News Online.

A key part of this objective is to drive traffic to the Web site -- to regularly remind PAOs, commanders and interested members in the Wing of the resources on the Web site. The Web site will be promoted during the Deputy Director's visits to the squadrons, PAO Training, Wing Conference, and regular e-mail communications to the PAOs.

Major additions and features about the site will be added to the *Wheels Up* Newsletter on a regular basis as well as the site's "ONLINE NEWS" page. *Wheels Up* will become a quarterly electronic publication which will be produced in hard copy format once a year for distribution at the CTWG Conference.

Objective 2: PAO Communications - PAO Committee

Objective: To foster communications with the PAO's of Connecticut Wing.

All Wing PAOs e-mail addresses are included in a CTWG PAO email distribution list and is used as the major form of communication with Wing PAOs along with the CTWG PA Web page and Locator List

(Directory). Using motivated experienced PAOs from around the Wing located geographically, the committee will plan, organize and execute Wing PA communications, training and mentoring.

The CTWG Web site will also include a calendar listing all key events which are coming up within the Wing.

Objective 3: Online Training

Objectives:

- To develop knowledge of public relations and marketing skills as it relates to conducting an effective local Public Affairs and Marketing Program.
- To provide a means by which the Public Affairs Officer can obtain the professional skills necessary to promote Civil Air Patrol, the United States Air Force Auxiliary.
- To provide specific skills training for the Mission Information Officer function in Emergency Services.

Methods:

Online Course Delivery on the CTWG PA Web pages

This section is planned to include the following:

Information on obtaining ratings in CAP Public Affairs

PAO Workshops – Information on the location of the next workshops as well as PowerPoint presentations used in past workshops that will be downloadable

The Encampment PAO – Online Video Presentation and Downloadable Resources that talk about the role of the Encampment PAO, mentoring, and working with cadets. Also included will be Best Practices and Available Resources.

New Wing PAO Orientation – Mentorship TBD

Developing a PA Plan that will be approved – TBD

CAP Crisis Communications 101 – Template for squadrons to follow

Objective 4: Mentoring and Outreach

Wing PA staff will make themselves available to PAOs and commanders at all levels that seek advice and assistance. This is and will be primarily done thru e-mail and other electronic communications. A primary focus is supporting/advising Wing PAOs.

PA team members will reach out to PAOs and commanders by active participation in the Wing Conference. The main group tasked with mentorship and training will be the PAO Committee.

Objective 5: Wing PAO Workshops

The PAO Committee will plan, organize, and execute a series of PAO workshops at the local levels which will then be copied and executed by those trained during the initial workshops and will continue until all

the PAOs within the Wing have had the opportunity to attend at least one. Thereafter further workshops will be held as refresher courses and update sessions.

Approvals, Review and Distribution

/////Signed/////

Heidi A. Loiseau, 2Lt, CAP
Director of Public Affairs

Distribution: 1 Each

CTWG Key-3
CTWG Staff
CTWG Wing Commander
CTWG Wing PAO
CT squadron PAO's
CAP/PA
NHQ/PM/CS/CSM/PA



HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL CONNECTICUT WING
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
PO Box 1233 Middletown, CT 06457-1233
Tel: (860) 262-5847
Fax: (860) 262-5848



14 September 2008

Crisis Communications Plan

Applicability:

This annual plan, required to be prepared annually by CAPR 190-1, applies to the Connecticut Wing Headquarters. It is the responsibility of the Wing staff and Wing commanders to be familiar with this plan and use it as a guide for Wing Public Affairs staff in developing Wing Plans and in the approval of subordinate squadron plans.

This plan does not override normal command functions and decisions of incident command staff; however, its contents should be part of their training.

This plan supports the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy as published on the National CAP Website. (Link: http://www.cap.gov/visitors/members/public_affairs/public_affairs_crisis_policy/)

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Ensure the flow of accurate and timely information to Wing leadership, staff, the media and the public during a crisis.
- Provide the media with a reasonable level of access per CAP regulations and policy.
- Make it possible for Public Affairs staff to develop unified messages in a crisis.
- Minimize unnecessary damage to the integrity and reputation of the Wing and CAP.
- Counteract inaccurate criticism by providing accurate and honest information.

A crisis situation is defined as any situation deemed by Wing staff as having a major impact on the Wing or CAP as an organization, and the public. Examples of a crisis situation may include incidents at CAP activities involving serious injury and/or loss of life, terrorism, a member death, natural disasters, major crimes, or major disruptions of operations. Crisis situations may include police investigations or other situations that require a public response.

This plan is not intended to change the way emergencies are initially reported. All applicable CAP regulations will be followed in these initial and subsequent reports.

It is the goal of this Crisis Communications Plan (CC Plan) to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that leaders and spokespeople/communicators are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a crisis. The CC Plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of the Wing and does not supplant that decision-making process.

Each crisis or emergency will require a unique public information response. The extent of the response will depend on the nature of the crisis.

Assumptions:

It is almost always the WRONG decision to withhold comment during a crisis situation. Doing this allows other entities to portray Civil Air Patrol in ways that may be inaccurate and unflattering. Rather, carefully crafted comments provided early in the crisis and updated regularly best position CAP in public opinion as being professional and responsible, regardless of the specific nature of the crisis situation.

Often the only information the public receives about an emergency/crisis is through the media; therefore, media relations is an essential component of any CC Plan. Timing is critical and a response must be issued as soon as possible with follow-up bulletins, as required.

With the advent of Internet technology, rumors can spread quickly via e-mail, blogs and online forums. Therefore, it is critical that responses be issued as quickly as possible via various channels of online communication, both formal (such as the Wing Web site and listservs) and informally.

A crisis situation could be big news and is likely to result in more public exposure for the Wing than dozens of “good news” stories. Timely, accurate, and appropriate information dissemination is paramount.

Crisis Communications Team:

A Crisis Communications Team (CCT) should be established that consists of key personnel. Membership of the CCT may vary slightly, depending on the details of the crisis, but the CCT will typically consist of the following members:

- Wing Commander
- Wing Vice Commander
- Wing Chief of Staff
- Wing Deputy Chief of Staff
- Public Affairs Director (Wing PAO)
- Legal Officer
- Wing CISM Officer
- Other staff with experience in working a crisis, or with positions relevant to the details of the crisis
- Expert sources as needed

It is the Wing commander's expectation that crisis situations be resolved and worked out at the local and Wing levels. The Wing's CCT and its members are available as consultants to squadron CCT's as needed and appropriate.

When the scope of the crisis/incident reaches beyond the borders or capabilities of a squadron or Wing, the Region CCT will assume control of the situation as directed by the Wing commander.

National Headquarters will be immediately made aware of the Wing CCT's activation thru normal channels and or the National Operations Center.

The CCT exists to advise the commander and craft the message during a crisis. The commander makes final decisions after obtaining and considering advice from the CCT.

A CCT list should be generated and updated twice a year on the 1st of January and 30th of June.

Crisis Center: It is expected that CCTs will work virtually through e-mail, phones and conference calls. If the need exists to set up a crisis center, commanders are expected to use their best judgment as to location, size and scope of activities. The Wing PAO will be consulted prior to standing up a crisis center.

Crisis Communications Technology: Connecticut Wing and subordinate squadrons have a means of communicating during a crisis situation. It involves a combination of e-mail and cell phone notification. The alerting system is available for a state-wide alert that can be generated at both the squadron-level and Wing-level. The activation addresses are listed below:

CTWG e-mail alert: ctwg_notify@apollo.homeip.net

CTWG cell phone alert: ctwg_notify_cell@apollo.homeip.net

Crisis Materials: The Wing PAO is assigned the task of maintaining materials to assist in the management of a crisis. As a minimum, the Wing PA staff will maintain the following materials (may be electronic):

- This Crisis Communications Plan (for Connecticut Wing)
- Current/Updated roster of the Crisis Communications Team
- Contact information for Wing commander, relevant Wing staff members, Wing Public Affairs Officer, squadron Public Affairs Officers, CAP National HQ, and CAP-USAF
- Media List (from most current online sources)
- CAP Fact sheets to include locally produced fact sheets on Connecticut Wing

- Positive statistics about CAP (Most of this data can be obtained from CAP Watch or E-services, and national headquarters. Method of collection and assembly will be up to the Wing Public Affairs staff)

Spokesperson: The Commander and Wing PAO are the spokespeople for the organization and will be expected to work with local media. Other CAP members will give information about the crisis to the media only when authorized by the commander or Wing PAO. Otherwise, members should respectfully refer media representatives to the crisis center or designated spokesperson. When the crisis primarily affects a subordinate squadron, the Wing commander and Wing PAO will be available to assist the squadron and either the Wing commander or the Wing PAO can serve as the local spokesperson as needed.

Electronic Resources: E-mail and Web messages can be important to the way CAP tells its stories during a crisis. External information provided to the media should be placed on the Wing Web site (and appropriate subordinate squadron Web sites) concurrently with their news release to the media. The squadron or Wing PAO will provide internal information to members about the crisis using e-mail and other channels as appropriate to communicate with CAP members and the public. These electronic communications will be approved by the commander before being disseminated.

Multiple Crisis Communication Teams:

Should a crisis have high severity or affect a large geographic area, Crisis Communications Teams may be activated at multiple levels of the organization. The PAO at each level should coordinate promptly with higher headquarters when a CCT has been activated. When a determination is made as to which level of the organization is the PRIMARY source for media information, other CCTs should provide support and be prepared to reinforce the same messages, if contacted by the media.

Phases of Response

Immediate: The Wing commander and the Wing PAO (in consultation with the local squadron commander/PAO) will determine if an official statement should be prepared and released. If warranted, they and the CCT will develop answers to specific questions that may be asked by the media and the media statement (release).

In some cases, it may be appropriate for CAP to make an initial announcement of an accident or incident. In other cases, it may be better to wait and "see if the media notices." **Regardless, if representatives of the media inquire, CAP should make a prompt response and never answer "no comment."**

As part of this phase, talking points should be developed. These are short simple messages that tell our story, emphasizing positive points. They should be agreed to by the Crisis Communications Team and delivered to all members authorized to speak to the media.

In a major crisis, the media may contact CAP staff at the local and/or Wing levels. Is it typically MORE effective for CAP if multiple authorized spokespeople all talk with the media using the same talking points, as opposed to a single member being the ONLY person to grant interviews? Yes. As a result, in a major crisis generating broad media attention, there should be authorized spokespeople at the local and Wing levels.

Commanders and their PAOs should not be afraid to work with local media in a crisis situation. Many times the local media covering the crisis will be the same media that will cover the Wing or squadron in good times. CAP is not afraid to tell the truth. The truth must be told in a way that best reflects on CAP. Then, move on. Do not over-embellish or use useless filler statements. You will build a better long term relationship if you are candid in bad or rough times.

The PAO will obtain basic information (type of crisis/emergency; time of emergency; actions taken; areas and number of people involved; injuries or fatalities; extent of damage) and prepare an official news release. The PAO will brief staff and other area commanders who may have to answer questions from local media.

Key PAO Tasks

- The PA staff will verify all sources of information.
- The PAO will clear news releases with the commander as quickly as possible before releasing to the media.
- The PAO will log and document all media inquiries.

Ongoing Period: In an ongoing crisis, the PAO (with the help of the Crisis Communications Team) as appropriate will:

- Provide the public and constituents with basic information about the crisis via the news media and on the Wing and/or squadron Web site/page.
- Provide the CAP members with basic information about the crisis via electronic mail or other means such as radio and insure that copies of all updates are concurrently sent to higher HQ.
- Keep the public, media and constituents informed of the situation and provide advice on what they should or should not do to prevent further damage or loss of life to reduce panic or interference with emergency response efforts. Information will be provided via the Wing website and via news releases to the area media.
- Log all media inquiries and responses.
- Instruct the public on how to obtain further advice or information.

Recovery Period: The PAO will issue media updates for as long as necessary, then scale back information dissemination activities as warranted. Such updates will be posted online on the Wing Web site and/or squadron Web site/page. Upon termination of the crisis situation, the PAO will schedule a meeting of all key players to review all actions taken and lessons learned. These will be included in an after-action report to be forwarded to the Wing commander and other appropriate leaders and/or departments and to higher headquarters Public Affairs.

Updates: This Crisis Communications Plan will be reviewed and updated every year in the month of January.

The Crisis Communications Team should interact periodically to discuss this Plan and any updates. The commander will convene these meetings. Results of the meetings and revisions of this Plan are to be documented and filed with the Plan. Copies of this Plan should be provided to all members listed or mentioned in the Plan and any other personnel who might play a role in the event of a crisis.

Training: Wing Crisis Communications Team members will be required to view the "Crisis Communication Presentation" during the month of January. After viewing the presentation, the members will acknowledge to the Wing PAO via e-mail that they reviewed the presentation. A compiled register will be filed with the plan and record of plan review/updates.

/////Signed/////

Peter Jensen, Colonel, CAP
Commander

DISTRIBUTION: 1 Each (Electronic)

CTWG Staff
Connecticut Squadron PAOs
NER PAO
CAP NHQ/PA
CAP/PA

RECORD OF REVIEW:

Review Date	Commander's Initials

Appendix A: Connecticut Wing Crisis Communications Team

Name	Duty Assignment/Team Role	Contact Information
Col Peter Jensen	Wing Commander	192 Park Street #5 New Canaan, CT 06840-5750 Home: 203-594-9629 Work: Cell: 203-644-4317 E-mail: pjensen@ctwg.cap.gov peter@jensen.org ctwgcc@gmail.com Call Sign:
Lt Col Andrew Marteka	Vice Commander - Squadrons	6231 Town Brooke Middletown, CT 06457-6617 Home: Work: 860-683-3382 Cell: 860-301-2099 E-mail: amarteka@ctwg.cap.gov amarteka@aol.com Call Sign :
Lt. Col Cassandra Huchko	Chief of Staff	15 Helen Street Plainville, CT 06062-1628 Home: 860-747-4497 Work: Cell: Fax: 860-606-9400 E-mail: chuchko@juno.com Call Sign:
Col Lloyd Sturges	Director of Operations	40 Olmstead Road West Redding, CT 06896-1021 Home: 203-438-9105 Cell (CAP): 860-841-2511 Cell (Pers): 203-437-1145 Work: 203-438-9105 Fax: 203-438-9105 E-mail: Irskeeter@optonline.net Call Sign:

2Lt Heidi Loiseau	Director of Public Affairs	29 Baldwin Street West Haven, CT 06516 Home: 203-934-9692 Work: 203-934-9692 Cell: rloiseau@erols.com
(This will be added later.)	Chaplain	
(This will be added later.)	Legal Affairs Officer	

Appendix B:

**CAP Leadership/MIO/PAO Talking Points:
Fatalities or serious injuries sustained by CAP members.**

Adapt these general talking points as appropriate to the specific accident or incident. In many cases, the primary comments in bold will be all that needs to be said. Add the rest of the information only if asked.

1. Our hearts go out to the families of the members involved, and to all of the CAP members in _____(where the members are from)_____ who work hard to serve their state and country with a professional level of skill, even though they are volunteers.

2. CAP has an outstanding Flying Safety Record -- about one third of the number of accidents in the general aviation community per 100,000 hours flown.

Additional information, only if asked to elaborate: When you consider that CAP's missions are typically flown only 1,000 feet above the ground, leaving little time to react in an emergency situation, CAP's low accident rate is even more significant. Though CAP flies in a high-risk environment, one of the reasons our accident rate is so low is because we have successfully used ORM or operational risk management - a technique developed by the Air Force safety community and eagerly adopted by CAP.

The National Transportation Safety Board's accident rates for general aviation over the a recent 3 year period as compared to CAP's are as follows:

	NTS	CAP
2004	6.49	5.23
2005	7.20	2.8
2006	6.64	1.84

- Every one of our pilots takes a flight safety check at least annually, and they are evaluated on their ability to fly mission profiles biennially.
- We have a safety education program whereby both aircrew and non-aircrew are briefed on safety issues during monthly safety meetings.
- Also, every CAP wing is given an evaluation on its ability to perform search and rescue/disaster relief missions biennially.

3. CAP aircrews are absolute professionals and highly trained in all aspects of aerial search and rescue [including mountain flying techniques].

Additional information, only if asked to elaborate: Aerial search and rescue is clearly a demanding mission, given the requirement to fly typically only 1,000 feet above the ground. However, our aircrew members fully understand the dangers associated with SAR missions and train hard to minimize them, but they consider their duties to be critical. Over the years, CAP has been credited with saving on average about 75 lives annually.

4. Civil Air Patrol maintains its aircraft rigorously to standards that meet or exceed FAA standards. The maintenance is timely, thorough and carried out by FAA-certified mechanics CAP-wide. Bottom line -- CAP maintenance policies are stricter than or as strict as general aviation standards in America, with greater emphasis placed on regular aircraft inspections throughout the fleet.

5. There is no way I could speculate on what may have caused this to happen. I am sure it will be the subject of an official investigation.

Additional information, if asked to elaborate: Do NOT be trapped into discussing possible or hypothetical causes or explanations for what happened. Rather, go back to point #1 -- the investigation WILL happen, and meanwhile, our big concern is for the families and fellow members of the people killed/injured.

Note:

Do not feel that you must rush an answer. If you have to pause 10 seconds after the question is asked to formulate your answer, no problem. Remember that TV stations, in particular, will probably only use 10 or 15 seconds worth of your actual words, anyway.

**Appendix C:
CAP Leadership/MIO/PAO Talking Points:
CAP members accused of sexual misconduct**

Adapt these general talking points as appropriate to the specific situation.

1. The status of the accused is:
 - No longer a member
 - Suspended
 - Other
2. No complaint has been filed with CAP adult or child or any family member (assuming this is true).
3. The CAP Cadet Protection Program ensures that more than one adult member is always present on activities with our youth members, and in particular our rules prohibit private "one-on-one" interaction between individual youth and adult members.

Notes:

In a media interview. Always find ways to come back to these points.

If the reporter asks you about your feelings or emotions, dodge the question. "My feelings and emotions are that I am glad that CAP has procedures in place to prevent inappropriate contact from taking place."

Avoid repeating back the words the reporter uses in asking the question. For example a reporter might ask "would you say that CAP was lucky that there were no problems with this person?" If you repeat "was lucky" either to say CAP WAS lucky, or to say, "No, I wouldn't say CAP was lucky," you are allowing the reporter to put words in your mouth that may then be quoted.

Avoid answering hypothetical questions.

Do not feel that you must rush an answer. If you have to pause 10 seconds after the question is asked to formulate your answer, no problem. Remember that they will probably only use 10 or 15 seconds worth of your actual words, anyway.