PREPARING OFFICIAL WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

This regulation prescribes policies, procedures and formats for the guidance of Civil Air Patrol (CAP) writers, whether preparing hard copy or electronic communications. It is applicable to the National Headquarters staff and all CAP units.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES.
This revision adds references to electronic mail (e-mail), use of “FOR THE COMMANDER” in the closing element and the use of indorsements. It also updates functional address symbols and information on signature blocks. This revision also includes editorial changes made to improve readability, grammar and the regulation’s organization in general. Note: This regulation is revised in its entirety.

1. Writers’ Responsibilities. Success or failure in producing written communications is the result of the actions of the person writing the communication. The writer is responsible for the content of all communications he/she writes. Successful written communications may be achieved by:

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a. Managing your written communications.


(2) Organize your material to help the reader. Identify your audience for the document; write to get their attention and anticipate their questions. Consider any additional readers. Always start by putting your main message up front. Present information in the subsequent paragraphs in a logical order.

(3) Avoid words and phrases that your readers might not understand. Define each abbreviation or acronym the first time you use it. Use the same term consistently to identify a specific thought or object. Use words in a way that does not conflict with ordinary or accepted usage. Avoid ambiguous phrasing, confusing legal terms, and technical jargon that can mislead your reader.

(4) Use “you” and other pronouns to speak directly to readers (active voice). Do not refer to people as if they were inanimate objects. Address the reader as “you.” “You” reinforces the message intended for your reader. Use “we” in place of your organization’s name. Be careful using “you” if it sounds accusatory or insulting. Instead, put the emphasis on the organization by using “we.”

(5) Active voice is the best way to identify who is responsible for what action. To communicate effectively, write the strong majority (around 75%) of your sentences in the active voice.

(6) Short sentences deliver a clearer message. Your sentences should average 15 to 20 words—never make them longer than 40 words. Complex sentences confuse the reader by losing the main point in a forest of words. Resist the temptation to put everything in one sentence. Break up your idea into its logical parts and make each one the subject of its own sentence. Cut out words that are not really necessary.

(7) Avoid abbreviations and military jargon. Write out abbreviations the first time used and follow with the abbreviation in parentheses.

b. Using CAP office symbols. Office symbols (see attachment 1) are shortcuts representing the organization structure and functional responsibility. Office symbols may be used on correspondence, e-mail, forms, etc. Major functions have two-letter symbols, e.g., director of operations (DO). Since basic functions report to major functions, basic functions have three-letter (or more) symbols, e.g., emergency services officer (DOS). A basic function’s office symbol starts with the same letters as the parent function’s office symbol, and adds one more letter, e.g., emergency services training officer (DOST).

c. Distributing correspondence on a need-to-know basis. CAP units will not correspond directly with any military personnel except Headquarters CAP USAF, CAP-USAF liaison regions, and CAP-USAF State Directors, unless specifically authorized by other CAP directives.

d. Selecting the appropriate distribution method. Some distribution methods include: e-mail, facsimile (FAX) and United States Postal Service (USPS). Consider the needs of the
recipient when choosing the distribution method. Send computer-generated information electronically if the receiver needs to have the information on his/her computer.

e. **Conserving paper.** Consider if you can communicate with other means, such as a telephone call or electronic mail (e-mail). Do not print and mail out correspondence originally sent by e-mail, unless requested. Satisfy the minimum distribution requirements only. Utilize two-sided printing whenever possible.

f. **Using e-mail before using FAX or USPS.** However, do not send sensitive information unless it is appropriately marked/identified. For more information refer to CAPR 60-3, *CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions*, and the NHQ CAP emergency services website ([http://www.capmembers.com/emergency_services/operations_support/sensitive_and_classified_mission_programs.cfm](http://www.capmembers.com/emergency_services/operations_support/sensitive_and_classified_mission_programs.cfm)). When delegating an e-mail task to another person, send a courtesy copy (cc) to the originator.

2. **Types of Written Communications.**

a. Most written CAP communications fall into one of three types. These three types are described below:

(1) **Memorandum Style Letter.** This style will be used for communications between CAP units and when communicating with military agencies (see para 1c). A sample memorandum style letter is at attachment 2.

(2) **Business Style Letter.** This style will be used for communications with private concerns and individuals not connected with CAP. Sample business-style letters are at attachments 3 and 4.

(3) **Electronic Mail (E-mail).** E-mail replaces or supplements other CAP written communications such as official memorandums or letters. For additional information, see e-mail Basics in AFH 33-337, *The Tongue and Quill*.

b. Other types of CAP written communications include, but are not limited to, (1) CAP forms; (2) personalized letters; (3) meeting minutes; (4) point, talking, bullet background and position papers (additional information is available in AFH 33-337; (5) greeting/note cards and (6) hand-written notes.

c. The standard paper size is 8 1/2-inch by 11-inch white paper.

3. **Letterhead.**

a. Letterhead is appropriate for a Memorandum Style letter and a Business Style letter, but not for an e-mail. Letterhead use is optional for other types of written communications.

b. A letterhead must include these elements: unit designation; the words "Civil Air Patrol"; "United States Air Force Auxiliary"; and the geographic location of the unit. Letterhead will start 1/2 inch from the top edge of the page and be centered. Two examples are below:

| HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL MISSOURI WING UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY PO Box 15604 Kansas City MO 64108 5000 | RIVERDALE COMPOSITE SQUADRON CIVIL AIR PATROL UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY 1276 Airline Street Trenton MI 12345-5100 |
c. A CAP seal, CAP emblem, patch, or other distinctive decoration may be printed on the letterhead as long as it is in good taste. (Refer to CAPR 900 2, Use of Civil Air Patrol Seal and Emblem; Use and Display of the United States Flag and Civil Air Patrol Flags, for instructions on use and illustrations of the CAP seal and emblem.) The CAP seal will be 1 inch in diameter. Wing/unit distinctive emblems will be 1 inch wide. Align the seal/emblem 1/2 inch from the upper left and top edge of the paper. Letterhead stock printed prior to the date of this regulation may be used until exhausted.

4. Memorandum Style Heading Element. The Heading element normally applies to a hard copy memorandum or a memorandum prepared as an attachment to an e-mail.

   a. Date. Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the memorandum and on the third line below the last line of the letterhead (Note: if no letterhead is used, place the date 1 inch from the top edge of the page). Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 6 Jun 10 or 6 June 2010. Unless the date of signature has legal significance, date the original and all copies of the correspondence at the time of dispatch. However, you should date correspondence prepared for reproduction with the date it will enter the distribution system.

   b. MEMORANDUM FOR. Type on the second line below the date. Type in all capital letters (no abbreviations) or use abbreviated organizational code, office symbol, title, or name (all in capital letters). Enter multiple-addresses when you are sending the same memorandum to several offices. Use a new line for each addressee. Be consistent and use the same format throughout. Examples are below:

      MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
      EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
      NORTHEAST REGION COMMANDER

      or

      MEMORANDUM FOR CAP/CC
      NHQ CAP/EX
      NER/CC

   (1) When your list of addressees is too long to list in the heading, you may place the distribution list on a separate page and attach it to the memorandum or type them in the lower left corner of the last page of the letter, two lines below last attachment or where "cc:" (courtesy copy) element (if used), or where the attachment element would begin. The heading element would be: "MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION." Prepare an "IN TURN" memorandum when you want to send the same copy to several addresses in sequence. Align "IN TURN" under the first word in last addressee. An example follows below:

      MEMORANDUM FOR DP
      GC
      EX
      IN TURN
(2) ATTENTION. If an "ATTENTION" or "THROUGH" line is used, type "ATTENTION:" or "ATTN:" or "THROUGH:" or "THRU:" in all caps, one line after "MEMORANDUM FOR" caption. Align under addressee. EXAMPLE:

MEMORANDUM FOR NHQ CAP/EXS
ATTENTION: GERRY ROSENZWIEG

c. FROM. Type "FROM:" in all capital letters, on the second line below the last line of the "MEMORANDUM FOR" caption. The "FROM" element should contain the full mailing address of the function originating the correspondence if not in the letterhead. The first line will include the organization abbreviation and office symbol. If you include contact names, e mail addresses, fax numbers or phone numbers, place them in the last paragraph of the letter. The next lines of the "FROM" caption will indicate the delivery address (street or PO Box number), room or suite number, and then the city, state, and zip code + 4. IF THE COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS IS INCLUDED IN THE HEADING, SHOW ONLY THE ORGANIZATIONAL ABBREVIATION AND OFFICE SYMBOL IN THE "FROM" ELEMENT.

d. SUBJECT. Type "SUBJECT:" caption in all capital letters (no abbreviation), two lines below the last line of the "FROM" caption. Be brief and clear. Capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. If you need a second line, begin it directly under the first word of the subject’s first line. If you refer to an earlier communication to or from the addressee on the same subject, or to another communication or a directive, cite it in parentheses immediately after the subject. Send a copy of the referenced communication if you feel the reader may not have it. Example is below:

SUBJECT: Work Center Standard (Our Memo 3 Jun 10)
You may include a suspense date in the subject line by typing "SUSPENSE" or "SUSP" followed by a colon and the date after the subject title. EXAMPLE:

SUBJECT: CAP Letterhead Stationery (Suspense: 3 Jun 10)
If the communication supersedes a previous communication, you may place a statement in the subject line. Use "S/S" to indicate supersession. EXAMPLE:

SUBJECT: Appointment of OJT Monitor (S/S Our Memo, 23 Jun 10)

5. Business Style Heading Element.

a. Date. See paragraph 4a.

b. Return Address. If the stationery is not preprinted with the full address of the sender or sender’s organization, then you must type a return address. Begin typing the return address at the left margin four lines below the date. Include name, grade and the complete mailing address of the sender.

c. To Address. Type the recipient’s "To" address three lines below the return address. If you do not have a "Return" address, then type the "To" address four lines below the date.
d. **Salutation.** Suggested salutations are: if the letter is between CAP units, use "Dear Colonel Jones;" if the letter is to an organization other than CAP, use "Dear Sir/Ma’am" and if writing to a friend or associate, use "Dear Mr. Brown." Type it two lines below the last line of the address. Do not use punctuation at the end of the salutation. Use punctuation after abbreviations such as "Mr.," "Mrs." and "Dr."; however, no punctuation is used with CAP grade abbreviations.

6. **Body of Letter.**

a. **Margins.** Standard margins on hard copy letters should be 1 inch (top, bottom, left and right) on all pages. This does not apply to the letterhead margin specified in paragraph 3b.

b. **Font.** The standard font for all letters is Times New Roman 12. The font used in e-mail is at the discretion of the writer.

c. **Paragraphing.**

   (1) Memorandum style and e-mail. Start the first paragraph two lines below the last line of the subject. Number and letter each paragraph and subparagraph. A single paragraph is not numbered. In other words, you cannot have an (a) without a (b), or a (1) without a (2). Double space between each paragraph. See attachment 2.

   (2) Business style. Start the first paragraph two lines below the last line of the salutation. Each paragraph should be indented. Do not number paragraphs. Double space between each paragraph. Single paragraph letters of less than eight lines may be double spaced. See attachments 3 and 4.

7. **Closing Element.**

a. **FOR THE COMMANDER (Memorandum Style Only).**

   (1) FOR THE COMMANDER is only used when the writer is directed to write a communication, or if the writer is issuing a communication that would normally be issued by the commander.

   (2) Type element beginning at the center of the page, three lines below the last line of text. Show FOR THE COMMANDER in capitals.

b. **Complementary Close (Business-style Only).** Use "Sincerely" typed two lines below the last line of text beginning at the center of the page.

c. **Signature Block.** The signature block begins at the center of the page on the fifth line after the preceding text. The writer’s signature is placed in the space immediately above the signature block.

   (1) Two-Line. This is the preferred signature block. It consists of the writer’s name in all capital letters followed by a comma, the writer’s grade in normal upper and lower case followed by a comma, and the capital letters CAP on the first line. The second line states the writer’s duty title in normal upper and lower case. Examples are below:

   JONATHAN Q. OFFICER, Colonel, CAP  JASON P. KIDD, C/TSgt, CAP
   Commander                                      Cadet Logistics Officer
(2) Three Line. A three-line signature block may be used when the name and grade or the duty title are too long for a two-line format. Examples are below:

JONATHAN Q. OFFICER, Colonel, CAP  ARTHUR J. FELDEMEN, JR
Assistant Wing Deputy Director for  Brigadier General, CAP
Operational Resource Management  National Vice Commander

d. Signing for the Writer. Occasionally the person who would normally sign a written communication is not available to apply his/her signature. In this case, the individual who has temporarily assumed responsibility for the unavailable individual may sign in that person’s place. In addition to signing his/her own name, the signer inserts the word “for” just prior to the writer’s printed name. Example is below:

Alvin P. Chipmunk
for JONATHAN Q. OFFICER, Colonel, CAP
Commander

e. //SIGNED//. When a written communication has been approved for transmission by the writer and applying a hand-written signature is not feasible, //SIGNED// may be used to indicate that the communication is approved. //SIGNED// may also be used on text copies of written communications when the original was signed, and may also be used for signing e-mails. Consider written correspondence received via e-mail, copied or stamped “//SIGNED//” as authoritative. Place the //SIGNED// six spaces to the right of the center of the page. Example is below:

//SIGNED//
JONATHAN Q. OFFICER, Colonel, CAP
Commander

8. Attachment Element. Type "Attachment(s):" at the left margin, three lines below the signature element. If there is more than one attachment, list each one by number in the order you refer to them in the memorandum. Describe each attachment briefly. Cite the office or origin, the type of communication and the date. The attachment element should not be split across a page break. Examples are below:

Attachment:
CAP/CC Memo, 3 Jan 10
Attachments:
1. CAP/CC Memo, 3 Jan 10
2. NHQ CAP/EX Ltr, 4 Feb 10

9. Courtesy Copy Element. If information copies are sent to individuals other than the addressee(s), type "cc:" at left margin, two lines below the attachment element; if there is no attachment element, type the courtesy listing three lines below the signature element. List names or organization designations and office symbols of those to receive copies, one below the other. If a courtesy copy is sent without including the attachment(s), indicate such by adding "w/o Atch" at the end of the line. Example is below:
10. Indorsements. When the content of a written communication needs approval or comment by an individual higher in the chain of command, this may be done in a separate written communication or by an indorsement of the existing communication. Indorsements follow the original written communication and appear as shown below:

1st IND

FROM: West Wing/CC

TO

Approved.

JONATHAN Q. OFFICER, Colonel, CAP
Commander


a. Coordinate with offices affected by the proposed action during the draft stage to minimize the need to revise the final version. Coordinate by telephone or e-mail when possible.

b. Remember to coordinate with each office that has a functional interest. Consider the chain of command to ensure complete coordination. Schedule enough time to finish review and coordination.

12. Suspense Actions.

a. Set realistic time limits for answering priority and routine correspondence. Establish a suspense (due date) only when absolutely necessary to accomplish the assigned task. Notify the action agency of the suspense date as early as possible.

b. Control suspenses at all offices tasked with answering correspondence. Notify the originating agency before the due date if the reply is delayed.
Attachment 1 — Functional Address Symbols

Office symbols may be used alone (CC) or with the organization designation (CAP/CC, MIWG/CC, CAP-USAF/CC). Some office symbols apply to specific command levels or organizations.

Commander ............................................... CC
Vice Commander ...................................... CV
Deputy Commander ................................... CD
Executive Director (NHQ only) ................. EX
Chief of Staff ............................................. CS
First Sergeant (Cadet units only) .......... CCF

Administration .......................... DA
Aerospace Education .................. AE
Cadet Programs .................. CP
Chaplain ............................................ HC
Communications .................. DC
Controller (National staff only) ........ NC
Educational Programs (NHQ only) ........ ED
Finance .................................. FM
General Counsel (NHQ only) ........ GC
Government Relations Advisor .... GR
Information Management (CAP-USAF only) .... IM
Information Technology .......... IT
Inspector General .................. IG

Legal Officer ................................. JA
Logistics .................................. LG
A/C Maintenance Officer .......... LGM
Supply Officer .................. LGS
Transportation Officer .......... LGT
Medical Officer .................. SG
Missions (NHQ only) ................. MD
Operations (CAP-USAF only) .......... XO
Operations .................. DO
Counterdrug .................. DOC
Emergency Services .................. DOS
Standardization/Evaluation .......... DOV
Personnel .......................... DP
Plans and Programs .......... XP
Professional Development ........ PD
Public Affairs ........................ PA
Public Awareness (NHQ only) .......... PM
Membership Services (NHQ only) ...... PMM
Safety .......................... SE
MEMORANDUM FOR NHQ CAP/EXS
ATTENTION: Mr. Rosenzweig (4)

FROM: DA

SUBJECT: Format for Memorandum Style Letter (Your memo, 15 Mar 10)

1. Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the memorandum and on the third line below the last line of the letterhead. Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 6 Jun 10 or 6 June 2010.

2. Type the "MEMORANDUM FOR" caption in all caps (no abbreviations) or use abbreviated organizational code, office symbol, title, or name (all in caps). Enter multiple-addressees when you are sending the same memorandum to several offices. Use a new line for each addressee.

   a. Type "ATTENTION:" or "ATTN:" or "THROUGH:" or "THRU:" in all caps, one line after "MEMORANDUM FOR" caption.

   b. Align under addressee.

3. Type the "FROM" caption in all caps two lines below the last line of the "MEMORANDUM FOR" caption. The "FROM" caption should contain the full mailing address of the office originating the correspondence unless your letterhead reflects entire address.

4. Type the "SUBJECT" caption in all caps two lines below the last line of the "FROM" caption.

5. Begin typing the text flush with the left margin, two lines below the "SUBJECT" or reference. Number and letter each paragraph and subparagraph.

   JOHN J. DOE, Major, CAP
   Administration Officer

Attachments:
1. ..........  
2. ..........  

cc: 
    ............  
    ............  

Distribution: 
    ............  
    ............  
Attachment 3 — The CAP Official Business Style Letter (with preprinted address)

HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL MICHIGAN WING
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
25090 Altus Ave., Bldg# 1414, Room # 67
Selfridge ANGB MI 48045-4918

5 March 2010

Col John C. Doe, CAP or C/ILt Col John C. Doe, CAP
Allegan Composite Squadron
Bridge Road
Allegan MI 48227-5000

Dear Colonel Doe or Dear Cadet Doe

This is a sample format of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) business-style letter which may be used for communications with private concerns and individuals not connected with CAP.

Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the memorandum and on the third line below the last line of the letterhead. Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 5 Mar 10 or 5 March 2010.

Type the "to" address four lines below the date.

Type the salutation two lines below the last line of address. Start the first paragraph two lines below the last line of the salutation. Do not number paragraphs. Indent all paragraphs.

Type the complimentary close "Sincerely" two lines below the text, beginning at the center of the page. Type the signature element five lines below and flush with the complimentary close.

Type "Attachment(s) at the left margin, three lines below the signature element. Type "cc:" at left margin, two lines below the attachment element; if there is no attachment element, type the courtesy listing three lines below the signature element.

Sincerely

JOHN J. DOE, Major, CAP
Administrative Officer

Attachments:
1. ---------
2. ---------

cc:
---------
Attachment 4 — The CAP Official Business Style Letter (without preprinted address)

5 March 2010

Major John J. Doe, CAP
Michigan Wing Headquarters
25090 Altus Ave., Bldg# 1414, Room # 67
Selfridge ANGB MI 48045-4918

Col John C. Doe, CAP or C/II Lt Col John C. Doe, CAP
Allegan Composite Squadron
Bridge Road
Allegan MI 48227-5000

Dear Colonel Doe or Dear Cadet Doe

This is a sample format of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) business-style letter which may be used for communications with private concerns and individuals not connected with CAP.

Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the memorandum and 1 inch from the top edge of the page. Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 5 Mar 10 or 5 March 2010.

Type the return address at the left margin four lines below the date. Include name, grade and the complete mailing address of the sender. Type the "to" address three lines below the return address.

Type the salutation two lines below the last line of address. Start the first paragraph two lines below the last line of the salutation. Do not number paragraphs. Indent all paragraphs.

Type the complimentary close "Sincerely" two lines below the text, beginning at the center of the page. Type the signature element five lines below and flush with the complimentary close.

Type "Attachment(s) at the left margin, three lines below the signature element. Type "cc:" at left margin, two lines below the attachment element; if there is no attachment element, type the courtesy listing three lines below the signature element.

Sincerely

JOHN J. DOE, Major, CAP
Administrative Officer

Attachments:
1. -------------
2. -------------

cc: -------------