

Encampment Visitors Guide

April 2024

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! On behalf of General Phelka, thank you very much for agreeing to serve as an Encampment Visitor. This is an important program to help improve participant's experiences nationwide. The Encampment Program is a centerpiece of cadet life and an important stepping stone to even greater opportunities. Your active participation is essential to not only support the Encampment Program but also to foster its ongoing growth and development.

Your task is to physically visit the assigned encampment. By visiting another wing's encampment, you'll be able to meet other adult leaders and see the encampment play out in a whole new environment. You'll be able to exchange ideas, share best practices, and learn from one another in a collaborative environment. Whether you've been to two encampments or twenty, there's always something new to learn and share.

Please note that in previous years visitors were asked to complete a checklist including compliance items. This compliance-type checklist has been completely spun off as a separate commander's resource. The Visitor's Strategy Exchange Form has broad, open-ended questions to spark discussions. While it's important to be aware of the national standards, that should not be the primary focus of your visit. You and the host encampment are very much on the same team- working to support the cadets. Instead of looking for faults, please focus on building relationships with other adult leaders, sharing your own knowledge and expertise, gathering tips, and learning from others in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Working with encampment staff, observe and discuss the encampment and record responses for the items on the Strategy Exchange Form. Discussions aren't meant to be one-way inquiries, but exchanges where you also share your encampment experiences. If you're able to do so, please take videos and photos of successful techniques and moments to share in addition to the Strategy Exchange Form. In order to ensure the timely spread of best practices, visitors will provide their report to NHQ / CP within 10 days and a copy will be sent to the Region.

PRE-COORDINATION

After receiving the tasking to serve as an Encampment Visitor, contact the Encampment Commander and Commandant of Cadets to let them know that you will be visiting the encampment. Copy your initial communications to the Wing Commander and DCP. The Encampment Visitors Program is to be completely transparent to the CAP leadership.

Ideally the wing/region should provide some funding for transportation, lodging, and meals. Coordinate transportation and billeting to co-locate with the encampment whenever possible. Depending on the facility and availability it may be possible to lodge with the activity. Otherwise look for a nearby hotel. Similarly, you may be able to join the activity for meals, but in other circumstances you may need to provide meals for yourself. If the activity is taking place on a military base or other secure area, you'll need to coordinate access.

Before arrival, take some time and carefully review current encampment guidance, including CAPR 60-1 (particularly Chapter 9, "Cadet Encampments"), CAPP 60-15 (CPP Implementation Guide, particularly Chapters 8, 9, & 10), and CAPP 60-70 (Encampment Guide).

ACTIVITY

Upon arrival, connect with the encampment commander and commandant. Share your tasking, this Visitors Guide, and let the commander know that you will outbrief as well.

In coordination with the encampment staff, closely observe the events of the activity. The Strategy Exchange Form invites you to have conversations with different people throughout the activity. Your experience will very much be dictated by the encampment's training plans for the days of your visit. Most visits will include shadowing a training officer to observe a flight, visiting the headquarters to talk with the support staff, and observing student training and any special activities. Chat with participants to get their perspective whenever this can be done without disruption. This may take the form of talking to cadet cadre who are waiting for students to be released from a class, chatting with cadets gathered outside the mess hall waiting for the rest of their flight to finish eating, visiting the support staff in the headquarters during a quiet moment, having a conversation with a training officer while their flight is practicing volleyball, and/or other opportunities that arise.

Note that encampments have very long days and it's not necessary to be present from Reveille to the final staff meeting. Try and select the most relevant experiences and feel free to step away for periods of time.

In the prompted dialogues visitors should share their own experiences as they discuss and learn about the host encampment. You are highly encouraged to share stories from your home wing's encampment, but be wary of offering unsolicited critiques. The Visitor's role is *not* to lecture or otherwise attempt to correct the visited encampment. It is particularly

important for Visitors to identify and capture successful classes, electives, and / or administrative procedures that should be shared with other encampments. If you have concerns about anything you witness, please reach out to the National Cadet Team for assistance.

VISIT DISCUSSION PROMPTS

The following questions are included in the [Encampment Visitor Strategy Exchange Form](#).

- I. Activity Demographics
 1. How does the number of students, cadre, and senior staff compare to previous years?
 2. Does the encampment have an advanced training flight or other program for 2nd year cadets? If yes, what form does that training take?
 3. Are all senior staff members here for the full activity? Is there a plan for "part-time" senior support? If so, what does that look like?
 4. What's your opinion on the adult:cadet ratio this year? Do you feel that it's sufficient, or do you think it could be improved in some way?
- II. Registration:
 1. Is encampment registration first-come, first-served, or is there another prioritization system in place?
 2. Do you use an online program or service for registration? How is that meeting or not meeting your needs?
- III. Location
 1. What are the encampment facilities like? Does the location meet the encampment's needs?
 2. How easy is it for wing cadets to get to? Out of state cadets?
 3. How accessible is the location for people with disabilities?
 4. If the encampment has been in this location before, are there any special relationships or considerations you have with the leadership?
- IV. Dining
 1. What is the dining plan for the activity?
 2. Are students able to access snacks outside of meal times?
 3. How are participants with special dietary needs accommodated?
- V. Cadet cadre selection and training:
 1. How does your wing typically select cadet cadre for your encampment? Is there a set timeline for cadre selection?
 2. What kind of pre-encampment training do you offer to your cadet cadre?
- VI. Training Officers:
 1. How are training officers recruited?
 2. What instruction/training do training officers receive?
- VII. Special features:
 1. What special activities, sports, tours, or classes are offered?
 2. What kind of culmination events do you typically have at the end of encampment?
 3. What Air Force support has the encampment received?

VIII. Cadet highlights:

1. What's a favorite thing that cadets have enjoyed so far?
2. Is there anything that cadets typically don't enjoy?
3. What activities are cadets most looking forward to next?
4. Have you had any success stories about cadets taking something they've learned at your camp back to their home squadron?

IX. What's one thing you'd like to steal and bring back to your wing's encampment from another camp you've visited?

X. What's one thing that you think might be good to implement at this wing's encampment?

CLOSING

Before leaving, please provide an outbriefing to the encampment commander noting successes and challenges that you have noted.

After leaving the encampment area, prepare and submit your Report of Visit via [this link](#) within 10 days. Copies will be distributed to the Region Deputy Commander for Support, Cadet Programs and NHQ staff as appropriate. Prompt reporting helps spread successful practices during the current encampment season. Narrative responses are encouraged, but need not include the full conversations. Select the particularly relevant points to summarize. Include pertinent videos and photos highlighting both successful moments, as well as those aspects that do not appear to meet established standards.

Again, thank you for taking time away from family, work, and other assignments to help us improve the encampment program. Your efforts are truly appreciated.