



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
CIVIL AIR PATROL
United States Air Force Auxiliary
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 36112-5937

ICL 25-07
25 November 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL CAP UNIT COMMANDERS

FROM: CAP/CC

SUBJECT: Interim Change Letter – CAPR 190-1, *Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs Program*

1. This interim change letter changes CAPR 190-1, *Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs Program*, dated 16 November 2016, with incorporated ICL 25-01, dated 17 March 2025, and will remain in effect along with ICL 25-01 until CAPR 150-1 and 150-3 are released. Compliance with this letter is mandatory.
2. Section 7.1. is replaced in its entirety with the following:

“7.1. Planning. PAOs at the flight, squadron, group, wing, and region levels will identify and share with their commander opportunities to promote CAP and its goals and programs for internal and external audiences. Public Affairs Officers at all levels are no longer required to create and submit a Public Affairs Plan or Crisis Communications Plan for higher-level review. Further, development of these plans is no longer a requirement to earn the technician-, senior-, or master-level PAO rating as outlined in CAPP 201.

7.1.1. External. PAOs will develop, and share with their commander, goals and initiatives to help build relationships with external constituencies of CAP and emphasize its importance in the performance of its missions.

7.1.2. Internal. PAOs will develop, and share with their commander, strategies emphasizing CAP’s importance, member recognition, retention and encouragement of member participation in unit, wing, region and national activities and training.”

3. Paragraph 7.2.6 is modified to read: “The Public Affairs Officer should check the [National Headquarters Public Affairs](#) and [Public Affairs Resources](#) page regularly for updated materials.”

4. Subparagraph 7.2.9.2 is modified to read: “CAP-generated Air Force media release requests related to Air Force-Assigned Missions will be directed to the appropriate mission approval authority. See the Media Relations Guidelines (CAPP 150-14) found on the [Civil Air Patrol publications page](#). The CAP PIO or wing will verify approval from

customers and individuals cited in any articles/photos in place prior to dissemination (not required for CAP members).

5. Section 7.4 is replaced in its entirety with the following:

"7.4. CAP Branding. A well-defined, compelling, and consistent brand identity for CAP is necessary to counter a lack of awareness of who we are and what we do as an organization. Inconsistent branding on web pages and social media channels negatively impacts member recruiting, media coverage, reputation, and funding. PAOs at all levels should:

7.4.1 Be familiar with and able to use the [Brand Portal](#) for resources available regarding branding.

7.4.2 Ensure all official social media channels (where applicable) are branded in accordance with social media guidelines provided by CAP/PA."

6. Paragraph 9.1 is replaced with the following language: "[Public Affairs Resources Page](#), a collection of relevant information for Public Affairs Officers."

7. Paragraph 10.1 delete the last sentence: "Whenever possible, multimedia materials will also depict the diversity of CAP's membership with regard to race, sex (gender), age, religion, national origin, and/or disability."

8. Paragraphs 14.2-14.5 are deleted.

9. ICL 25-01, paragraph 11.1, the following sentence is deleted "Information posted, unless timeless in content, will not be older than three months."

10. ICL 25-01, paragraph 11.3.1, is amended to read: "External Social Media: Wing PAOs, in concurrence with the Wing Commander, manage a single consolidated social media presence to represent the entire Wing, including subordinate programs, encampments, and activities. Regions and units below the wing level shall be limited to internal social media channels. External social media channels representing the national level of CAP shall be limited to a single channel on each digital platform, unless submitted through the chain of command and approved by CAP/PA."

11. ICL 25-01, paragraph 11.3.5 is amended to read: "Internal social media channels representing a Region, Group, Squadron, Flight, or Activity, may be used to share information with members and appropriate invited guests. These channels shall be restricted to the current membership and parents and/or guardians of cadets. CAP alumni and appropriate invited guests may be admitted on a case-by-case review by the channel administrator."

12. ICL 25-01, paragraph 11.3.7 to be replaced in its entirety to read: "The core social media platforms authorized for internal use for regions and units below the wing level include Facebook (only private groups), Instagram (only private accounts), and

YouTube (private/unlisted videos only). Digital communications channels, such as Discord, Slack, and other platforms, must be approved by CAP/IT. Units must submit a request with associated information to support the request for review to capsec@capnhq.gov and copy the appropriate commander with their concurrence regarding the request (squadrons and groups require Wing Commander approval, for instance). CAP/IT will evaluate and provide final approval. NHQ directorates may receive approval for communications channels for use in National Cadet Special Activities and other national programs approved by CAP/IT.”

13. ICL 25-01, new paragraph 11.3.8 is added to read “Entering information about use of these platforms into the Internet Operations Module does not constitute approval by CAP/IT. Administrators must use a cap.gov or capnhq.gov email address, follow cadet protection policies, restrict users, and follow the approval as outlined above.”

14. ICL 25-01, Paragraph 11.3.9 is added to read: “Supporting public groups/pages or “Friends of [Unit Name]” pages, or similar name variations, are not authorized as alternative official communications channels for the unit. Wings shall ensure units do not rename former channels to such names to circumvent compliance with CAPR 190-1 or associated ICLs. These groups/pages are not permitted to use Civil Air Patrol branding, insignia, or trademarks in any capacity and may not speak on behalf of the unit.”

15. All compliance elements for CAPR 190-1 as shown in Attachment 1 are replaced with the following for the D-6 Public Affairs Tab:

SUI 01:

- **Compliance Question:** Can we confirm the unit does not have, or is not in control of, public-facing social media channels?
- **How to Verify Compliance:** Using the unit's name, conduct a search engine query for any unit platforms or channels, including “friends of,” “supporters of,” and other variations which are open to the public to view content. With the generated list, verify the unit is not in control of what has been found.
- **Discrepancy Write-up:** (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 1) Unit operates public-facing social media pages and does not comply with CAPR 190-1 ICL 25-01 para 11.3.1.
- **How to Clear Discrepancy:** Provide documentation showing deletion/removal of all public-facing social media channels. If this information cannot be provided, PAO can show they are not an admin of these pages by uploading a screenshot of pages they do administer. In the case of dead accounts, PAO can show submission to the Dead Account reporting form available on the [Public Affairs Resources page](#). PAO uploads a Plan of Action to the discrepancy in Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

SUI 02:

- **Compliance Question:** Do the unit PAO's public communications and publicity efforts comply with Civil Air Patrol brand standards?
- **How to Verify Compliance:** Unit PAO uploads screenshots or pdfs with the public efforts from the last 12 months.
- **Discrepancy Write-up:** (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 2) Unit's public affairs communications do not comply with CAPR 190-1 ICL 25-01 para 7.4.2.
- **How to Clear Discrepancy:** Unit PAO creates material consistent with Civil Air Patrol brand standards and uploads a Plan of Action to the discrepancy in Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

CI 01

- **Compliance Question:** Can we confirm the wing controls only a single public-facing social media channel per platform, including encampments and other activities?
- **How to Verify Compliance:** Using the unit's name, conduct a search engine query for any unit platforms or channels, including "friends of," "supporters of," encampments and other activities or other variations which are open to the public to view content. With the generated list, verify the unit is only in control of one social media channel per platform.
- **Discrepancy Write-up:** (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 1) Wing operates more than one public-facing social media channel per platform and does not comply with CAPR 190-1 ICL 25-01 para 11.3.1.
- **How to Clear Discrepancy:** Provide documentation showing deletion/removal of all additional public-facing wing social media channels per platform, including encampment and other activities. If this information cannot be provided, PAO can show they are not an admin of these pages by uploading a screenshot of pages they do administer. In the case of dead accounts, PAO can show submission to the Dead Account reporting form available on the [Public Affairs Resources page](#). PAO uploads a Plan of Action to the discrepancy in Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

CI 02

- **Compliance Question:** Do the wing PAO/region DPA's communications comply with Civil Air Patrol brand standards?
- **How to Verify Compliance:** Wing PAO/Region DPA uploads screenshots or pdfs with the public efforts from the last 12 months.

- **Discrepancy Write-up:** (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 2) Wing/Region public affairs communications do not comply with CAP brand standards.
- **How to Clear Discrepancy:** Wing PAO/Region DPA creates material consistent with Civil Air Patrol brand standards, provides a plan of action for further compliance and uploads a Plan of Action to the discrepancy in Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

CI 03

- **Compliance Question:** Does the Wing PAO have administrative level permissions to modify all content posted to the wing website?
- **How to Verify Compliance:** Wing PAO confirms they have complete editorial access to all publicly accessible content of the wing website.
- **Discrepancy Write-up:** (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 3) Wing PAO does not have editorial access to publicly accessible pages/content. (Ref. CAPR 190-1, ICL 25-01, para 11.1)
- **How to Clear Discrepancy:** Wing PAO takes action to gain admin privileges for all publicly accessible pages/content on the site and demonstrates the ability to edit any page included in the sitemap and uploads a Plan of Action to the discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

16. This interim change letter clarifies ICL 25-01 to CAPR 190-1, to allow for calendar history older than three months, to comply with cadet protection requirements, and to address communication channels with a social media component. It also clarifies changes to CAPR 190-1 regarding the removal of requirements to submit Public Affairs and Crisis Communications plans for higher-level review, eliminates related inspection items for Public Affairs, and adds new inspection items. References to outdated or no longer available publications have been removed or updated to current publications or websites.

17. For comments or questions regarding this interim change letter, contact CAP Marketing and Strategic Communications at mac@capnhq.gov.



REGENA M. AYE, Major General, CAP
National Commander



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
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ICL 25-01
17 March 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL CAP UNIT COMMANDERS

FROM: CAP/CC

SUBJECT: Interim Change Letter – CAPR 190-1, Civil.Air.Patrol.Public.Affairs.Program

1. This interim change letter immediately changes CAPR 190-1 and will remain in effect until CAPR 150-3 is released. Compliance with this letter is mandatory.
2. CAPR 190-1, Section 7, Paragraph 7.4.2 is changed to read: Be able to use the Brand Portal at <https://civilairpatrol.frontify.com/>.
3. CAPR 190-1, Section 11, is replaced in its entirety with the following:

11.1. Website. Each Wing shall maintain a single website that is properly branded and hosted on the CAP/PA-approved platform using the appropriate domain convention. The Wing PAO will have authority over the PA content of all web pages within the Wing which are visible to the public and will keep the website accurate and current with assistance from other members as necessary. Information posted, unless timeless in content, will not be older than three months. Information located on the NHQ website will not be replicated on the unit website, this includes regulations, forms, etc. Only links to the NHQ website may be utilized to ensure accurate content.

11.2. If CAP/PA identifies non-compliance with brand standards or with content which is in conflict with guidance, with the concurrence of the National Commander/CEO, the website or content may be removed or edited for compliance.

11.3. Social Media: Official CAP Use of Social Media. Using social media to represent CAP requires consistency to tell the CAP story effectively, support a positive brand image, produce maximum impact, and reflect the organization's core values. Official social media channels are properly authorized and endorsed by CAP/PA for brand compliance, comply with CAP/IT security, and must be designated as an external or internal channel.

11.3.1. External Social Media: Wing PAOs, in concurrence with the Wing Commander, manage a single consolidated social media presence to represent the entire Wing, including subordinate programs, encampments, and activities. Units below the wing level shall be limited to internal social media channels. External social media channels representing the national level of CAP shall be limited to a single channel on each digital platform, unless approved by CAP/PA.

11.3.2. The core social media platforms authorized for external use include Facebook (pages), X, Instagram, Instagram Threads, YouTube, and SmugMug (at photos.cap.gov only). LinkedIn and Vimeo may only represent the entire organization at the national level. Channels on these platforms will adhere to the brand standards. These authorized platforms have been vetted and approved by CAP/IT for security, CAP/CP for cadet protection, and CAP/PA for brand reputation. No other social media platforms are authorized or approved, unless approved or re-approved after the publication of this ICL by CAP/PA. To submit a request for review and consideration, please complete the [Request for Social Media](#) questionnaire, which will be routed to CAP/PA.

11.3.3. Wing social media pages may include recruiting efforts, CAP merit-based achievements of members such as promotions and awards, uniform and grooming standards, uniform updates for events, cancellations, and similar details. Sharing of content is limited to CAP news relevant to the Wing, content on CAP official accounts, CAP.news, and/or official U.S. Air Force channels. All Diversity, Equity, Inclusion/Accessibility (DEI/A) and other content as listed in the Department of Defense, [Digital Content Refresh memorandum](#), dated Feb. 26, 2025, will not be posted on any social media platform, as instructed in the Civil Air Patrol, [Civil Air Patrol Actions to Address Presidential Executive Orders memorandum](#), dated Jan. 31, 2025, and applies to past and future content. Please refer any questions related to this to CAP/PA and CAP/GC.

11.3.4. Internal CAP Social Media. Internal CAP information shall be limited to social media and digital platforms that allow restricted use, e.g., a Facebook group set to private. The social media channels used for internal communication shall not be the only source of information unless all members have access to prevent the exclusion of any members.

11.3.5. Internal social media channels used to represent a chartered unit, such as a Region, Group, Squadron or Activity, may be used to share information with members and invited guests. These channels shall be restricted to the

immediate membership, parents of cadets, and CAP alumni (who are not currently suspended or removed) as appropriate.

11.3.6. At the direction of the host-wing PAO, activities (i.e., encampments, cadet special activities, etc.) may use internal social media channels to share information with members and invited guests (i.e., parents) with approval and oversight of the host-wing PAO. These channels shall be restricted to the appropriate audience. Additionally, if an activity PAO, or an individual acting in that capacity, identifies a need for limited external social media content for an encampment and/or activity to be published, this should be done through the host-wing's external social media channel and approved by the host wing PAO. When the activity does not have a host wing, most likely when national in nature, the activity may request CAP/PA to post on CAP national social media channels if external messages are needed.

11.3.7. The core social media platforms authorized for internal use include Facebook (groups), Instagram (private accounts), YouTube (private/unlisted videos only), and SmugMug. Other digital platforms must be approved by CAP/IT for security, CAP/CP for cadet protection, and CAP/PA for brand reputation, and must restrict content to specific users.

11.4. CAP Identifiers on Social Media.

11.4.1. Utilize the proper naming convention for all social media pages, both external and internal.

Page Type	Page Name
Region	Civil Air Patrol Name Region
Wing	Civil Air Patrol Name Wing
Groups	Civil Air Patrol Unit Name (WG-###)
Chartered Squadron/Flight	Civil Air Patrol Unit Name (WG-###)
National-Level Activity, Event, or Program	Civil Air Patrol Event Name

11.4.2. Profile picture: All authorized social media channels, both public and private, shall use the unit emblem only. Only the official NHQ CAP pages may use the CAP "Flying V" symbol and logo as a profile picture.

11.4.3. All authorized public and private social media channels shall include the following language in the "About" section of each platform:

This channel is an independent forum dedicated to discussion and updates about our local unit. Content shared here is not reviewed, monitored or approved by the national organization. We value your participation and encourage respectful and constructive dialogue.

11.4.4. All authorized public social media channels shall be displayed and linked to the primary website that the channel represents.

11.5. Management Authority of CAP Social Media. All official social media content is considered assets of the corporation and therefore owned by Civil Air Patrol. CAP/PA and CAP/IT shall have administrative access to all official CAP social media channels.

11.5.1. All official CAP social media channels shall be properly documented and approved in a method determined by CAP/PA that includes login credentials or access for CAP/IT via the CAP Internet Operations Form in eServices. All official social media channels shall share access with the next higher headquarters for units below the wing level and with CAP/PA for wings and higher.

11.5.2. All official CAP social media channels shall utilize an official CAP email address for administration access, i.e. @cap.gov or @capnhq.gov.

11.5.3. An official CAP email address (i.e. @cap.gov or @capnhq.gov) and website domain shall be used in the bio section of all official social media channels. The email domain used for admin access should match the website domain listed in the bio.

11.5.4. For internal groups on social media, a CAPID is not acceptable for verification of qualification for acceptance into the group.

11.6. Personal Use of Social Media as a CAP Member. Members may share their own Civil Air Patrol stories about CAP experiences. Members are also encouraged to share content from official CAP social media channels to their social media. However, when a member associates his/her social media use with CAP — including any perceived association — the member is also obligated to abide by CAP's core values when using personal social media channels. Examples include wearing a CAP uniform in a profile photo, including CAP duty positions in the about section or in relation to a post, etc. Content published online that fails to reflect

CAP's core values; fails to safeguard the good name and reputation of the United States Air Force or Civil Air Patrol; violates law, regulation or CAP policy; or is considered detrimental to CAP's brand image as determined by CAP/PA, is conduct unbecoming a member of CAP and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including membership suspension or termination.

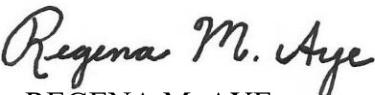
11.6.1. CAP Nexus of Continuity. A member's personal use of social media may form the basis for disciplinary action if there is a nexus (connection) between the social media channel where the misconduct occurred and CAP.

11.6.2. Online Discussions. CAP's core values shall be maintained when using personal social media to participate in official CAP social media discussion forums, commenting, or providing internal information. Such internal discussions should be treated as official CAP business and may be moderated by PAOs responsible for the forum.

11.6.3. Member Advocacy. CAP/PA may reproduce or republish any social media content posted by any member who shows or mentions CAP, a CAP member in uniform, includes a CAP trademark, or uses a corporate brand hashtag.

4. This change addresses a memo distributed from the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense dated Feb. 26, 2025. CAP has received guidance that as soon as possible, but no later than May 1, 2025, all CAP public-facing CAP unit and activity social media and web pages are to archive and then remove all news and feature articles, photos, and videos that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition, these changes are made to ensure past and future social and digital media posts remain non-partisan, non-political and without providing a stance, interpretation, or perceived interpretation of actions related to recently issued executive orders.

5. For comments or questions regarding this interim change letter, contact NHQ Marketing and Strategic Communications at mac@capnhq.gov.



REGENA M. AYE
Major General, CAP
Commander



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL

CAP REGULATION 190-1

16 NOVEMBER 2016

Corrected Copy

Public Affairs

CIVIL AIR PATROL PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

This regulation defines the purposes of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Public Affairs program and identifies policies that govern its administration. This regulation applies to all CAP units.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES.

- Removes requirement for units below wing to submit a Crisis Communication Plan.
- Requires Public Affairs Officers (PAO) at region, wing and group levels to provide training for subordinate unit PAOs.
- Corrects all references to “Public Relations” to “Public Affairs”.
- Specifies planning cycle as the first quarter of each calendar year.
- Requires familiarity with Branding Master Plan and use of the Brand Resource Guide; emphasizes website unity, CAP specified in metadata and photo captions and a unified presence in use of social media.
- Specifies Public Affairs (PA) content on websites be no older than three months.
- Denotes requirements for National Public Information Officer Team.
- Specifies cadets may enter Balsem Awards competition.

Note: Shaded areas identify new or revised material.

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Supersedes: CAPR 190-1, 17 May 2013.

OPR: PA

Distribution: National CAP website.

Pages: 13

Notice: CAP publications and forms are available digitally on the CAP National website at:

<http://www.capmembers.com/publications/>

1. Mission. The mission of the CAP PA program is to inform internal and external audiences of CAP's national importance, safeguard the image and assets of the corporation, and strengthen relations with key audiences and customers, which enables the organization to grow.

2. Public Affairs Officer Objectives.

2.1. Increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state and national missions, and its contributions to the nation.

2.2. Develop and conduct a comprehensive internal and external PA plan.

2.3. Promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry and civic groups.

2.4. Consistently communicate the CAP brand identity and inspire every member to help build awareness of CAP.

3. Assignment of the PAO.

3.1. Each unit commander will appoint a qualified individual to be the PAO. Appointed PAOs that are not fully qualified will complete appropriate training within the first 12 months of their assignment (see paragraph 6, below).

3.2. The PAO will be appointed in accordance with current personnel procedures in CAPR 35-1, *Assignment and Duty Status*. The next higher headquarters will also be notified of all PAO appointments.

3.3. In the absence of an assigned PAO, the unit commander is responsible for the duties of the PAO. If the unit commander acts as the unit's PAO for 6 months, he/she will be assigned as the PAO according to current personnel procedures in CAPR 35-1 and is required to enroll in the PAO specialty track.

4. Duties and Responsibilities. The PAO is supervised by the commander. The commander and the PAO, as the commander's delegate, are the official spokespersons for their unit. The higher headquarters PAOs serve as advisors, mentors and resources for the development and implementation of an effective PA program.

4.1. Squadron and flight PAOs are the backbone of the national PA program and are primarily responsible for implementation of the program at that level.

4.2. Group PAOs will advise, mentor and support subordinate PAOs in their group on PA matters and will conduct an active PA program in support of the unit.

4.3. The wing PAO is the primary resource in conducting a wing-wide PA program. Together with the wing commander, the wing PAO will develop goals and objectives for the wing PA program as part of a PA plan and will advise, mentor and ensure that national, region and wing objectives are implemented.

4.4. The region PAO serves as a field representative for National Headquarters Public Affairs (NHQ PA) and as a liaison among the wing, group, squadron and flight PAOs. The region PAO will demonstrate leadership in guiding the work of the wing PAOs by developing an annual region PA plan that addresses identified weaknesses and needs, including social media training needs, and supports PA's national strategic goals and objectives. Region PAOs, when needed or requested,

should serve as advisors and supervisors and consult frequently with subordinate wing, group, squadron and flight PAOs.

4.5. The National PA staff volunteers report to the Deputy Director of Public Affairs (CAP/PA). The National PA staff volunteers assist the CAP/PA with media relations, social media, internal information dissemination, special event planning and community relations for the PA program; serves as a liaison between the NHQ PA staff and membership in regard to PA matters; and works in coordination with the NHQ PA staff to implement, develop and upgrade CAP's PA program.

4.6. PAOs at all levels will advise and assist their unit commander. If requested, PAOs are authorized to advise other commanders on issues that have the potential to affect CAP's professional image, or other such matters relating to CAP and the public.

4.7. PAOs and commanders are authorized to work directly with military installation PAOs in support of CAP activities.

5. Public Affairs Support.

5.1. PAOs at the wing and region levels are authorized and encouraged to contact higher headquarters to request assistance.

5.2. PAOs at the wing and region levels are authorized and encouraged to contact and develop a working relationship with the NHQ PA office.

6. Training. Wings will provide training for subordinate unit PAOs at least annually. If possible, regions and groups should also provide annual PAO training. In addition, to ensure the success of the PA program, all PAOs are encouraged to utilize professional resources and should enroll and participate in available training, including:

6.1. PAO specialty track training CAPP 201, *Specialty Track Study Guide-Public Affairs Officer*, an in-depth PA training program leading to the technician, senior and master levels of proficiency.

6.2. [How-To Guide for Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs](#). A resource to support all initiatives.

6.3. Group, wing, region and national PA training courses, workshops, seminars and field training.

6.4. Seminars and workshops offered by the military and local, state or national organizations as deemed appropriate by the PAO and commander.

6.5. Public Information Officer (PIO) training as part of the emergency services missions of CAP.

7. Functions of Public Affairs Officers.

7.1. Planning. PAOs at the flight, squadron, group, wing and region levels will develop an annual PA plan to promote CAP, its goals and missions for internal and external audiences. These PA plans should complement the PA objectives in the National Strategic Plan. Wing and region PAOs will develop a Crisis Communications Plan to deal rapidly and effectively with emergencies. Crisis plans will be updated annually as needed. Step-by-step instructions on how to write each plan are provided on the [National Public Affairs website](#). The [PA plan](#) will follow the four-step planning process for PA:

- Step 1 -- Determine PA needs and opportunities.

- Step 2 -- Establish goals/objectives designed to fulfill needs and opportunities identified in Step 1.
- Step 3 -- Establish action strategies for each objective, including a way to measure the effectiveness of the tactics being used.
- Step 4 -- State the desired impact envisioned for each goal provided in Step 3. The unit PAO will submit a PA plan annually in the first quarter of the calendar year, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous year's goals to the wing PAO for review and input. The wing PAO will submit a PA plan annually in the first quarter of the calendar year, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous year's goals, to the region PAO and to NHQ PA for review and input. The region PAO will submit a PA plan annually in the first quarter of the calendar year, including an evaluation of the previous year's goals, for review and input to NHQ PA. All successive PA plans and corresponding evaluations will be retained in accordance with CAPR 10-2, *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*.

7.1.1. External. PAOs will develop goals and initiatives that help build relationships with external constituencies of CAP and emphasize its importance in the performance of its missions.

7.1.2. Internal. PAOs will develop strategies that emphasize CAP's importance, member recognition, retention and encouragement of member participation in unit, wing, region and national activities and training.

7.1.3. PA Crisis Communications Plan. In consultation with their commanders, PAOs at the wing and region levels will develop a Crisis Communications Plan to ensure a rapid and effective response during an emergency that may damage the organization's reputation if mishandled. Crisis PA plans will reflect guidance outlined in the CAP NHQ, [Writing a Crisis Communications Plan](#). All crisis communication plans will be approved by the commander or designated representative. Wing and region crisis plans will be reviewed annually in the first quarter of the calendar year and if revised, submitted to NHQ PA for review and input.

7.2. External Information.

7.2.1. PAOs will advise the commander on external PA strategies and methods in order to conduct an effective program.

7.2.2. Target audiences include local military installations, government agencies, schools, businesses, industry, civic organizations, constituent audiences and the media. Community and governmental relations shall not be the exclusive responsibility of the PAO, unless accepted as an additional duty. PAOs should use community service projects as a source for promotional opportunities and publicity.

7.2.3. PAOs below the region level will assemble current media contact information to foster working relationships. PAOs should meet periodically with representatives of key media to improve media awareness of CAP and to establish an understanding on the part of the PAO of the information needs and preferences of each media outlet.

7.2.4. PAOs will develop standard plans and procedures for external promotion of key events in the unit, such as participation in training and actual missions, awards, promotions and special unit activities.

7.2.5. PAOs will assemble standard NHQ PA and locally developed materials presenting the background of CAP suitable for distribution to the media, prospective members, partner agency officials and others as needed.

7.2.6. The PAO should check the NHQ PA website and PAO Toolkit contents regularly for updated materials.

7.2.7. PAOs will use available unit, wing and region websites to inform the public about CAP.

7.2.8. As NHQ PA adopts or updates positioning statements, slogans, logos and other components of a brand communications program, PAOs will incorporate these elements into their communications with external constituencies, whenever practical.

7.2.9. All PA communications (news releases, public websites, articles, newsletters, photos, etc.) will be approved by the commander and written in AP Style (as detailed in *The Associated Press Stylebook*). Official CAP correspondence will be written in accordance with the guidelines in CAPP1-2 *The CAP Guide to Effective Communications*.

7.2.9.1. The AFAM approval authority is the media release authority unless mission related guidance appoints the requesting agency's PA as the media release authority. Media release authority may be delegated.

7.2.9.2. CAP generated AF media release requests related to AFAMs will be directed to the appropriate mission approval authority. See the [Media Relations for Civil Air Patrol](#). The CAP PIO or wing will verify that approval from customers and individuals cited in any article/photo are in place prior to dissemination (not required for CAP members).

7.3. Internal Public Affairs.

7.3.1. PAOs will advise the commander on internal PA strategies and methods in order to conduct an effective program.

7.3.2. PAOs at all levels will regularly submit news advisories and releases, with photographs whenever possible, to the next higher headquarters. PAOs shall be aware that selected submissions may become part of higher headquarters' external PA activities.

7.4. PA Branding Master Plan and Branding Resource Guide. A well-defined, compelling and consistent brand identity for CAP is necessary to counter a lack of awareness of who we are and what we do as an organization. This affects member recruitment, media coverage and funding. PAOs at all levels should:

7.4.1. Be familiar with the [Branding Master Plan](#).

7.4.2. Be able to use the [Brand Resource Guide](#).

7.4.3. Ensure all official social media channels are branded in accordance with social media guidelines as provided by NHQ PA.

8. Newsletters, Magazines and other News Publications.

8.1. PAOs should publish information that tells success stories, encourages participation in meetings and activities and presents other information about the unit of interest to internal and external audiences. This information may be published as a hard copy or electronic newsletter/magazine, or by whatever method/format works best for the unit (i.e. website, social media, etc.).

8.2. A newsletter and/or magazine are not required. If a unit PAO produces a newsletter and/or magazine, one copy will be filed in hard copy or as a PDF document for later reference, and maintained as a historic unit record if space allows.

9. National Headquarters Publications.

9.1. [How-To Guide for Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs](#), the PAO's detailed manual for accomplishing the PA mission.

9.2. [Civil Air Patrol Volunteer](#) magazine, CAP's internal and external publication.

9.3. [CAP.news](#), a CAP-wide collection of online news.

10. Multimedia and Emerging Technologies.

10.1. Quality still photography, video and audio materials are essential to telling the CAP story to internal and external constituencies. The PAO shall ensure that all distributed multimedia materials, including those distributed by emerging technologies, shall be in good taste, with members shown in proper uniform, depicting the diverse and multifaceted missions and opportunities of CAP membership. Whenever possible, multimedia materials will also depict the diversity of CAP's membership with regard to race, sex (gender), age, religion, national origin, and/or disability.

10.2. Photographs meeting stipulations in paragraph 10.1, above, will be submitted to internal and external publications, along with information to be used in captions. These submissions will include photo credits.

10.3. Photo Releases. Photos and video taken in public circumstances may be published or distributed (including images posted on the World Wide Web) without specific written or verbal permission, unless local law requires permission.

10.3.1. CAP will not publish identifying information other than name, grade, and general locale of the individual's unit of assignment, limited to city, state, and flight, squadron, group, wing or region name.

10.3.2. CAP will obtain written permission from identifiable individuals appearing in photographs that are used for commercial purposes, including paid advertising purchased by CAP, but not including official publications and websites produced by CAP staff.

10.3.3. When individual circumstances cause members to request that they not appear in photographs distributed by CAP PA staff, and any member serving as a CAP photographer shall make a good-faith effort to comply with the request.

10.3.4. None of the provisions in this section will be interpreted as applying to legitimate news organizations or to members conducting photography for personal rather than corporate purposes, unless such photos and video are later adopted for corporate use.

11. Digital Communications.

11.1. Website. PAOs at the squadron, wing and region levels, in conjunction with the information technology officer and/or commander designee, will create and maintain their unit website in accordance with CAPR 110-1. Units are encouraged to utilize the website template available on the [PA Branding Resource Guide](#).

The PAO will have authority over the PA content of all web pages visible to the public and will keep the website accurate and current with assistance from other members as necessary. Information posted, unless timeless in content, will not be older than three months.

11.2. Social Media. Wing PAOs will use social media to reach out to their membership, potential members, CAP supporters and the general public by creating and maintaining wing social media channels to tell CAP stories. Flights, squadrons, groups and regions are not required to use social media but are encouraged to do so if desired. The responsibility for use of social media by CAP units rests with the unit commander and it will be overseen by the unit PAO or a member designated by the commander under the direction of the unit PAO. The unit PAO will ensure that CAP social media operations will:

11.2.1. Be conducted in accordance with existing CAP regulations and will not violate Operational Security (OPSEC) requirements.

11.2.2. Respect copyrights and trademarks in content.

11.2.3. Be maintained and kept fresh, interesting and relevant.

11.2.4. Use links and contact information from the source of the content.

11.3. Social Engagement. PAOs at every level will encourage members of their unit to talk about their positive CAP experiences and accomplishments on their personal social media accounts, as well as address questions, acknowledge comments and contribute to conversations about CAP. CAP members are not required to advocate for CAP on their personal social media accounts, but are encouraged to do so. The unit PAO will counsel their unit members that when representing CAP online they should:

11.3.1. Identify themselves as a CAP member.

11.3.2. Be polite and respectful.

11.3.3. Respond with a thank you when receiving praise.

11.3.4. Provide accurate information.

11.3.5. Refer a question that can't be answered by them to someone in the chain of command who can.

12. Public Information Officer (PIO). One of the best opportunities for CAP to get its message out to the public is when the organization is supporting emergency services missions for state and local communities. PA and media relations issues are handled by qualified personnel called PIOs or their supervisors or by incident commanders (IC) if a PIO has not been appointed. In accordance with CAPR 60-3, *CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions*, information that is releasable to the public on CAP missions should be given promptly to news media representatives. Public awareness and understanding of CAP resulting from the efforts of the PIO can play a vital role in recruitment and retention, as well as government and community

relations. The PIO provides and receives critical information, advises the IC, protects the image of CAP and provides timely information to the PA staff of each higher headquarters.

12.1. Training. In order to serve as a PIO, the individual will complete the required training and certification in accordance with [CAPR 60-3, CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions](#) and [CAPP 201, Specialty Track Study Guide – Public Affairs Officer](#).

12.2. Appointment. A PIO, fully qualified in accordance with current PIO training requirements or a trainee under supervision as outlined in CAPR 60-3, may be appointed at the discretion of the IC for any training or actual mission. ICs will fulfill the responsibilities of the PIO if one is not appointed. Assignment of a PIO is mandatory for all actual emergency services missions (not training) lasting or expected to last more than 48 hours, including, but not limited to, missing aircraft, missing persons, disaster relief or other humanitarian aid operations. Some missions, like counterdrug or homeland security operations, may require additional discretion and/or little to no dissemination of public information; the CAP National Operations Center (NOC) or NHQ PA may limit or edit what ICs and/or PIOs release.

12.3. For high profile missions, i.e. missions with the potential to attract extensive media attention at any level, a PIO will be appointed by NHQ PA; multiple PIOs may be appointed as warranted. NHQ PA will coordinate the PIO appointment with the applicable wing and region commander.

13. Reporting. CAP units below NHQ may establish quarterly reporting requirements for their subordinate unit PA activities. Reporting requirements should avoid becoming an unreasonable administrative burden. These reports may be submitted electronically.

14. Awards. Annually CAP recognizes PAOs at all levels who excelled in conducting and managing an exceptional PA program.

14.1. The Colonel Robert (Bud) V. Payton Public Affairs Officer of the Year award recognizes the PAO who epitomizes the PA program of CAP. The award is presented to a PAO at any level of the organization who provides outstanding and exemplary support for the CAP Cadet Program, Aerospace Education Program and Emergency Services Program and has a PA plan that greatly enhances the perceived value of CAP to the community.

14.1.1. Deadline 15 January. Unit commanders should submit nominations on a CAPF 120, *Recommendation for Decoration*, with full supporting documentation to the wing commander for consideration.

14.1.2. Deadline 15 February. Wing commanders will review the nominations from unit commanders within their wings and forward the best nominee to the region commander for consideration.

14.1.3. Deadline 15 March. Region commanders will select the best of the wing nominees and forward one nomination to NHQ PA for consideration.

14.1.4. Deadline 15 April. The CAP/PA Deputy Director, will co-chair a committee to rank order the submissions and forward with a recommendation to the Awards Committee to present to the National Commander, who will make the final decision.

14.1.5. The award will be presented annually during the CAP National Conference.

14.2. The Maj Howell Balsem Exceptional Achievement Awards recognize excellence in nine major categories of the CAP PA program, as listed below. All entries must be the work of a PAO or PIO or any member whose work product was generated while acting as a PAO/PIO including cadet and senior members. All entries must be the work of the person submitting the entry. Competition is limited to five entries per member. A project may only be entered once. All entries must have been generated during the previous calendar year and must be items that were approved by the PAO/PIO's commander. All entries must be submitted electronically. The online template for submissions will be open in January and close at midnight on 15 May; the system will automatically shut down 16 May and no other entries will be accepted.

Major Categories:

- Brochure/Poster/Flyer
- Magazine
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Website
- Photography –submit only a single image per entry
- External Media Coverage of CAP
- Event Promotion
- Crisis Management
- Social Media

14.3. The Balsem Awards program is administered by the Deputy Director for Public Affairs. Winners are selected based solely on the judges' view of each entry's creativity and overall effectiveness, with emphasis on following the four-step planning process.

14.4. The judges may award a first-place Balsem Award, second-place Award of Excellence, and third-place Certificate of Merit for each category, OR the judges may opt to not present an award in any category. More than one first-, second- or third-place award may be selected, as the judges deem appropriate.

14.5. The Lt Col Al Pabon Best in Show will be awarded at the judges' discretion.

JOSEPH R. VAZQUEZ
MAJOR GENERAL, CAP
COMMANDER

Attachment 1 - Compliance Elements**D-6 Public Affairs****Questions**

Checklist and Tab	Compliance Question	How to Verify Compliance	Discrepancy Write-up	How to Clear Discrepancy
SUI 01	Has the Unit PAO developed an annual PA plan to promote CAP, its goals and missions, IAW CAP regulations?	Review unit PA plan located in eServices.	(A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 1) Unit has not developed an annual PA plan IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.	Develop a PA plan and upload to eServices. Ensure coordination is accomplished before you request closure to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS). Attach a plan of action, approved by Unit/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.
CI 01	Has the Wing PAO developed an annual PA Plan to promote CAP, its goals and missions IAW CAP regulations?	Review the wing PA plan located in eServices.	(A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 1) Wing has not developed an annual PA Plan IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.	Develop a PA plan and upload to eServices. Ensure coordination is accomplished before you request closure to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS). Attach a plan of action, approved by Wing/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.
SUI 02	Was the PA plan completed IAW CAP regulations? Does the PA plan include the four step planning process for PA, including an evaluation of the previous year's goals?			

Checklist and Tab	Compliance Question	How to Verify Compliance	Discrepancy Write-up	How to Clear Discrepancy
	<p>a) Four Step:</p> <p>Step 1) Determine PA needs and opportunities.</p> <p>Step 2) Establish objectives designed to fulfill needs and opportunities identified in Step 1.</p> <p>Step 3) Establish goals and action strategies for each objective.</p> <p>Step 4) State the desired impact envisioned for each goal provided in Step 3.</p> <p>b) Is an evaluation of the previous year's goals included in this step?</p>	<p>a) Review the plan to ensure all four steps were included.</p> <p>b) Review the evaluation.</p>	<p>a) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6, Question 2) Unit PAO failed to follow the four step process when completing the PA plan IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.</p> <p>b) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (Question 2) Unit annual PA plan did not include an evaluation of the previous year's goals IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.</p>	<p>a) Modify the PA plan to include all four steps. Upload PA plan to eServices and ensure that coordination is completed before submitting request for closure in Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).</p> <p>b) Complete and upload an evaluation of the previous year's goals to eServices and ensure coordination is completed before submitting request for closure in the DTS.</p> <p>Attach a plan of action, approved by Unit/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.</p>
CI 02	<p>Was the PA plan completed IAW CAP regulations?</p> <p>Does the PA plan include the four step planning process for PA, including an evaluation of the previous year's goals?</p> <p>a) Four Step:</p> <p>Step 1) Determine PA needs and opportunities.</p> <p>Step 2) Establish objectives designed to fulfill needs and opportunities identified in Step 1.</p> <p>Step 3) Establish goals and action strategies for each objective.</p> <p>Step 4) State the desired impact envisioned for each goal provided in Step 3.</p>	<p>a) Review the plan to ensure all four steps were included.</p>	<p>a) (A-Discrepancy): [D6] (Question 2) Wing PAO failed to follow the four step process when completing the PA plan IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.</p>	<p>a) Modify the PA plan to include all four steps. Submit the PA plan into eServices and ensure that coordination has been accomplished before submitting request for closure to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).</p>

Checklist and Tab	Compliance Question	How to Verify Compliance	Discrepancy Write-up	How to Clear Discrepancy
	b) Is an evaluation of the previous year's goals included in this step?	b) Review the evaluation.	b) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (Question 2) Wing annual PA plan did not include an evaluation of the previous year's goals IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.	b) Complete and submit the evaluation of the previous year's goals into eServices and ensure coordination has been accomplished before you submit a request for closure for this discrepancy in the DTS. Attach a plan of action, approved by Wing/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.
CI 03	Has the wing submitted its annual PA plan to NHQ PA for review and input?	Review coordination in eServices to ensure coordination was accomplished.	(A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 3) Wing did not send its annual PA plan to Region/PAO and NHQ PA IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.	Accomplish coordination. Submit a plan of action, approved by the Wing/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.
CI 04	Has the Wing PAO developed a PA Crisis Communications Plan?	Review the PA Crisis Communication Plan located in eServices.	(A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 4) Wing did not develop a PA Crisis Communications Plan IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.3	Develop a PA Crisis Communications Plan and upload into eServices. Ensure that all coordination has been accomplished before you submit a request for closure to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS). Attach a plan of action, approved by Wing/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the DTS.
CI 05	Has the Wing PAO submitted the PA Crisis Communication Plan to the Region PAO and NHQ PA for review?	Review coordination in eServices to ensure coordination was accomplished.	(A-Discrepancy) [xx] (D6 Question 5) Wing did not submit its PA Crisis Communication Plan to the Region PAO and NHQ PA IAW CAPR 190-1 para 7.1.3.	Accomplish coordination. Submit a plan of action, approved by the Wing/CC, to prevent reoccurrence to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS).

Checklist and Tab	Compliance Question	How to Verify Compliance	Discrepancy Write-up	How to Clear Discrepancy
CI 06	<p>Does the public access wing website comply with CAP regulations?</p> <p>a) Did the PAO or the commander's designee(s) create the public access wing website?</p> <p>b) Does the PAO or the commander's designee(s) maintain the public access wing website?</p> <p>c) Does the PAO have authority over the content of all public access wing website pages?</p> <p>d) Is posted information on the public access wing website accurate and current (less than 3 months old) unless timeless in content?</p>	<p>Wing shall provide a link to the public access wing website</p>	<p>a) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 6) The PAO or the commander's designee(s) have not created a public access wing website IAW CAPR 190-1 para 11.1.</p> <p>b) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 6) The PAO or the commander's designee(s) do not maintain the public access wing website IAW CAPR 190-1 para 11.1.</p> <p>c) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 6) The PAO does not have authority over the content of all public access wing website pages visible to the public IAW CAPR 190-1 para 11.1.</p> <p>d) (A-Discrepancy): [xx] (D6 Question 6) Wing public access website has inaccurate or outdated content (3 months old that is not timeless in content) IAW 190-1 para 11.1.</p>	<p>a) Create a wing website and upload the link to this discrepancy in the Discrepancy Tracking System (DTS). Ensure inspectors have access to the link to verify.</p> <p>b) Upload verification that the website is being maintained to this discrepancy in the DTS. Ensure inspectors have access to the link to verify.</p> <p>c) Upload verification that the PAO has the authority over all web pages visible to the public to this discrepancy in the DTS. Ensure inspectors have access to verify.</p> <p>d) Upload verification that information on the website is accurate and is up to date to this discrepancy in the DTS. Ensure inspectors have access to the link to verify.</p>