

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education (AETC)**  
**Maxwell-Gunter AFB, AL 36118**

**5 Feb 15**  
*Certified Current 1 Mar 17*

**AIRMAN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL**  
**STUDENT GUIDE**

**PART I**  
**COVER SHEET**

**LESSON TITLE: SA01, STANDARDS AND DISCIPLINE**

**TIME:** 3 hours

**METHOD:** Guided Discussion/Experiential

**REFERENCES:**

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2618. *The Enlisted Force Structure*, 27 February 2009.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, 12 November 2014.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2907. *The Air Force Unfavorable Information File Program*, 26 November 2014.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 51-202. *Nonjudicial Punishment*, 31 March 2015.

Air Force Pamphlet (AFPAM) 36-2627. *Airman and NCO Performance Feedback System*, 1 August 1997.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2406. *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*, 8 November 2016.

Department of the Air Force. *United States Air Force Core Values*, 1 January 1997.

Smith, Ralph R., and Dennis K. Reischl. *Performance Standards Made Simple*. Huntsville Alabama: Federal Personnel Management Institute, Inc., 1991.

Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), 1950. Accessed on 09 Jan 2017  
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ucmj.htm>

Manual for Courts-Martial United States, 2012.

<http://www.afjag.af.mil/About-Us/Docket> Accessed 09 January 2017

**INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS:** SA01HO1-4 to be handed out in class.

**STUDENT PREPARATION:** Students must complete all reading assignments (3,200 words – approx 45 minutes) and come to class fully prepared to participate in experiential exercises and guided discussions.

## **PART IA**

**GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOME:** Students who graduate from Airman Leadership School are prepared to perform first-level supervisory responsibilities, effectively lead individuals and work teams as evidenced by their comprehension of Standards and Discipline.

### **SUPPORTED COMPETENCIES/DIRECTIVES:**

The *Standards and Discipline* lesson supports the following Air Force Core Values:

- Integrity First
- Service Before Self
- Excellence in All We Do

The *Standards and Discipline* lesson supports the following Enlisted Force Structure Competencies:

- Correct conduct and behavior that may place you or other Airmen at risk
- Exhibit professional behavior, military bearing, respect for authority, and high standards of dress and appearance, on-and off-duty
- NCOs have the authority to issue lawful orders appropriate for completion of assigned tasks
- Correct and counsel subordinates who do not meet deployment readiness standards
- Instill professional behaviors in subordinates
- Correct those who violate standards
- Hold subordinates accountable when they do not meet established standards
- Take an active leadership role by staying involved with subordinates on a daily basis

**TERMINAL COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE:** Comprehend Standards and Discipline concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

### **TERMINAL COGNITIVE SAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR:**

1. Explain Standards and Discipline concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.
2. Give examples of Standards and Discipline concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.
3. Predict the impact of Standards and Discipline concepts on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

**AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVE:** Value Standards and Discipline concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

## **PART IB**

**ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN:** Topical

**ASSOCIATED LESSONS:** SC01, *Supervisory Communication*

## **PART IC**

### **LESSON OUTLINE**

<b>CONTENT</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION:</b> Attention, Motivation, and Overview
<b>MP 1. Standards and Discipline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Standards</li><li>B. Discipline</li><li>C. Impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness</li></ul>
<b>MP 2. Progressive Discipline Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Counseling, Admonishments, and Reprimands</li><li>B. UIFs and Control Rosters</li><li>C. Nonjudicial Punishment (NJP)</li><li>D. Documentation</li><li>E. Impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness</li><li>F. Scenarios</li></ul>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> Summary, Remotivation, and Closure

## STUDENT READING

### MP 1. STANDARDS AND DISCIPLINE

Discipline is not a term used solely in the military. Olympic athletes, military heroes, and great leaders all possess the discipline to maintain a lifestyle conducive to achieving their goals and self-actualization. They devote themselves to their life's calling, often without ego or a strong need for external influence. Discipline enables them to adhere to their own set standards. Discipline is necessary for a military to function properly and professionally. The ultimate goal is for all Airmen to be self-disciplined to uphold our Core Values, United States Constitution, and bring honor to our Nation. Discipline is necessary to guarantee fairness, accountability and mission success.

#### Standards

Without standards it would be difficult to perform your job. Standards are the foundation for expectations. Standards are "morals, ethics, or habits established by an authority, custom, or an individual as acceptable behavior."<sup>1</sup> Now, take these attributes into consideration of your role as a supervisor. One of the standards your supervisor will likely have for you is your ability to set standards for your subordinates. The *Air Force Instruction 1-1, Air Force Culture, Air Force Standards*, serves as a guide for supervisors on setting appropriate standards for your Airmen. This guide will help you to address and establish standards pertaining to Military Ethics, Dress and Appearance, Duty Performance, Financial Responsibility, Professional and Unprofessional Relationships etc.

You will learn how to write specific standards for your Airmen during the Performance Evaluation Lesson. The Airman Comprehensive Assessment Worksheet (ACA) is a starting point for establishing those standards. You can utilize this form to set standards for your Airmen, as a rating/feedback tool, and as a way to get to know your Airmen on a more personal level.

You can use Air Force instruction AFI-36-2618 *Enlisted Force Structure* as a guide to measure your subordinate against the standards of expected performance commensurate with their appropriate rank. Once you communicate those standards with your airmen, you will then be responsible for holding them accountable to those standards.



When you establish standards, keep the following four attributes in mind:

- ✓ achievable/attainable (yet possible to exceed)
- ✓ specific (clearly defined, expressed without vagueness, unambiguous)
- ✓ observable (behavior and results of the behavior can be seen)
- ✓ measurable (using elements of timeliness, quality, quantity- TQ<sup>2</sup>)

How do you know your standards are effective? In addition to the attributes above, effective standards are not set too high (i.e. volunteer for ten fundraisers a quarter) or too low (pay some of your bills on time). Standards at the appropriate levels ensure each standard is attainable and inspires excellence.

When you establish a standard, make sure you have the authority to do so. You can gauge your level of authority by checking the standard against some other authority (AF Instructions, commander policy, etc.) to ensure your standard is not already in place and that it won't contradict previously established guidance. In other words, you can't establish a standard that violates one that is already established.

Last but not least, remember that you must "exceed the standards and expectations levied upon airmen, epitomize excellence, and lead by example through exhibiting professional behavior, military bearing, respect for authority, and the highest standards of dress and appearance."<sup>2</sup> Your ability to demonstrate strict adherence to standards will likely reduce the amount of discipline you must administer. Once you've decided the standard is necessary, proper, and effective, you can rely on Articles 91 and 92 of the UCMJ to back up your authority to ensure compliance with the standard, as these articles provide authority to noncommissioned officers in the US military.

### **NCO Authority**

NCO Authority is defined as "the right to act and command."<sup>3</sup> One of the two legal sources of your NCO Authority is Article 91 of the UCMJ, "Insubordinate conduct toward a warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, or petty officer." This article ensures others obey NCOs' orders and protects NCOs from assault, insult, or disrespect. For example, if you are the NCOIC of a section, and an airman is rude, vulgar, or makes inappropriate comments to you or about you, he or she may have violated Article 91.

The second source of your legal authority from the UCMJ is Article 92 is entitled, "Failure to obey an order or regulation." This article covers anyone who 1) has a duty to obey an order; 2) has knowledge of the order and 3) violates or fails to obey the lawful order or regulation. Before flexing this "muscle" of the UCMJ, consider that if the accused attempted the task, but was unable to complete it due to lack of training or ability, you should not pursue disciplinary or punitive actions. Also, if the order was unlawful (Go make me a sandwich) the airman is not guilty of Article 92. Remember that your spoken directions are orders, even if you don't say "This is a direct order."



One more article that will provide you legal authority as an NCO is Article 7, "Apprehension." As an NCO, the UCMJ authorizes you to apprehend individuals in certain situations. If you truly believe a crime is about to happen, (drinking and driving, fighting, sexual assault, etc.) try and stop it from happening without placing yourself into jeopardy. Using your rank/authority, order the individual to turn over the keys, go back to his or her room, or separate the Airmen quarreling. If the

Airmen disobey your direct order, you have the authority to “quell quarrels, frays, and disorders among persons subject to [the UCMJ] and to apprehend persons subject to [the UCMJ] who take part therein.”<sup>4</sup> To apprehend someone, you must verbally inform the person you are apprehending him or her, and clearly inform the individual why you are doing so.

Earned authority is another source of NCO authority. While legal authority holds airmen accountable when they fail to meet standards, earned authority encourages airmen to trust you and *want* to follow you, based on your referent power. Some of your earned authority will come as you progress through the ranks; some of it will come when you build a solid reputation with your subordinates. While this type of authority takes time to build, you will find its benefits outweigh the amount of dedication, integrity, excellence, and sincerity you must display to earn it.

### **Discipline**

Discipline comes from the word “disciplinare”, which means to teach or instruct. Your job as a supervisor is to create and maintain good order and discipline. Unfortunately, most people hear the word discipline and immediately think “trouble” or “punishment.” Discipline is different from these terms because discipline is not just redirecting someone; when effective, discipline involves correcting, training, nurturing, and advising. Proper discipline shows a person where they failed, how to correct the behavior and encourages them to retry with success. Sometimes, this does involve administrative action or punishment; however, most often it is a lower level of correction.

Although it can be uncomfortable and difficult, you must discipline your airmen to ensure they comply with set standards. Remember that when someone does not meet a standard, it is not always because they are unwilling. Sometimes people are unable to perform a task or provide a product. This is one of the reasons why it is imperative that you always gather background information before jumping right to discipline.

Sometimes you may be one of the first true examples of discipline for your Airmen. Your adherence to standards will light the way for your subordinates, especially for those whose home environment may have been one where their role models did not practice or enforce discipline. Recognize that you cannot control the skills, knowledge, or ethics your airmen bring through the workcenter door. You can, however, influence their skills, knowledge, and ethics once they are under your supervision. Create a work environment that encourages self-discipline. If your subordinates truly comprehend that no one is responsible for their actions except themselves, they are more likely to enter self-discipline mode. However, if self-discipline fails, you have two options available to you as a supervisor: preventive and rehabilitative (also known as corrective).

**Preventive discipline** stops a problem from happening before it starts. Examples of preventive discipline are: safety briefings before three-day weekends, rewards, and training/education. Preventive measures emphasize communication of standards, two-way communication, and encouraging each person to do his or her best. They promote an environment of understanding and allow for clarification of standards, as needed. You must be professionally familiar with your subordinates to establish this type of environment.



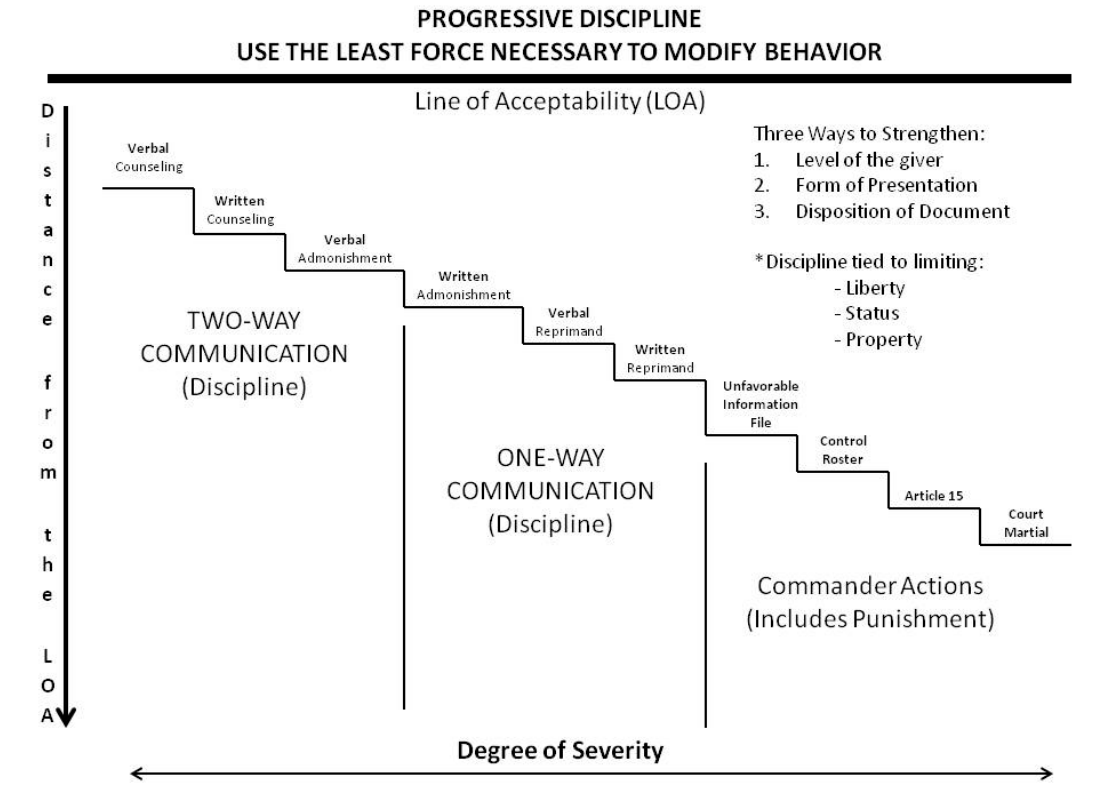
You need to know how he or she is motivated, how he or she learns best, and how he or she best takes guidance and direction. However, despite your best efforts to promote an environment of self-discipline, sometimes your airmen will fail to meet standards and make mistakes you must correct. This is where corrective discipline becomes necessary.

**Corrective (or rehabilitative) discipline** restores discipline and/or improves performance. These are the measures you take once someone falls below standards and you must return him or her to the level of acceptability (the standard.) Some of your options for corrective discipline are: counseling, admonishment, and reprimand. Remember the reason for discipline is to bring behavior back within acceptable measures, so only take the amount of force necessary to correct the behavior without breaking the airman's will to improve. Different situations, different personalities, and different past experiences will influence which measure of correction is most suitable for your airman. Remember, the more effective your early disciplinary measures are, the less likely you'll have discipline issues in the future. If and when you have discipline problems, the best way to tackle them is using the Progressive Discipline Process, or the PDP.

## **MP 2. THE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS**

As the name implies, the PDP is a progressive approach to discipline. The PDP is a foundational tool to use with wisdom and discretion. When an airman's performance falls below the standard/line of acceptability (LOA) you must apply the PDP (see figure 1. The Progressive Discipline Process) to ensure compliance and maintain discipline. Progressive discipline is the goal; however, there may be times when an Airman's behavior indicates the need for more severe action. For example, an alcohol related incident, assault, DUI, etc. may lead directly to an Article 15, UIF or a punishment (loss of rank, pay, etc.)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** AFGM 4 to AFI 36-2406, 8 November 2016 states: For the purpose of documenting sex-related offense(s), a punitive administrative action is defined as a Letter of Reprimand. This is a new update and all other concepts of the PDP remain unchanged.



**Figure 1. Progressive Discipline Process**

The line of acceptability is your ruler for expected behavior and performance. Remember, your supervisory line of acceptability consists of the standards that AFIs, commanders, leaders, and you have set for your airmen.

The level of discipline you select should be an informed choice using what you know about your Airman, why they failed, and how to best bring him or her back within standards. Two of the main factors that will help you determine which level of discipline is appropriate are the nature of the incident and the individual's previous disciplinary record. Once you have applied a level of discipline (for example, you issue a letter of counseling (LOC) for an infraction), the next time you discipline the airman for the same violation you should take a more severe form of discipline, or "step down" the discipline staircase. Also, remember that the degree of severity is not only determined by the number of times the airman has failed to meet standards; the other determining factor to guide you to the appropriate level of discipline is how far your airman departed from the line of acceptability. For example, if your subordinate tells you she assaulted her spouse last night, even though it may have been her first offense, you certainly would not issue a letter of counseling for this severe of an infraction.

### **Counseling, Admonishments, and Reprimands**

Counseling (whether verbal or written) is the first step in the PDP because it encourages two-way communication. This two-way communication is vital to effective discipline, because it allows you to explain to the airman what he or she did wrong and quickly correct the behavior before it deteriorates further. It allows the subordinate to explain his



or her perception of the standard, explain why he or she failed to meet it, and recommend a rehabilitative course of action to ensure future success.

According to AFI 36-2907, the purpose of individual counseling is to help people use good judgment, assume responsibility, and solve their own problems. Remember when you use counseling, the goal is to help the individual, not make him or her feel worse about failing. When you counsel, show genuine concern for your Airman and his or her development. Be specific, honest, and as tactful/sensitive as needed.

If you are counseling a subordinate on an issue you lack experience in dealing with or you are uncomfortable discussing it then you should consider referring your Airman to the appropriate outside agency who can assist him or her. Remember, you are not a licensed counselor. If your Airman requires specific help (Mental Health, Family Advocacy, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Legal office, Equal Opportunity, Inspector General, Chaplain, Area Defense Council, or Airman and Family Readiness Center just to name a few) work with your First Sergeant to get your Airman the appropriate help/resources. If you determine that counseling is not effective or it is not the proper level of discipline to administer based on your Airman's behavior(s) you may need to administer an admonishment or reprimand. Quite often a letter of counseling, admonishment or reprimand will be enough to change your Airman's behavior and get them on the right track. If you're not sure which method is best in a particular situation, consult your supervisor, other experienced NCOs, or your First Sergeant for advice. Remember to administer Progressive Discipline fairly amongst your Airmen. Your Airmen pay attention to how you enforce discipline in the work center and you will lose their trust if you are inconsistent with progressive discipline.

### **UIFs and Control Rosters**

If discipline (counseling, admonishment, and reprimand) has failed to correct an individual, or the behavior is severe enough to warrant increased actions, four additional options are available to the Airman's Commander. Only the last two options of the PDP are considered punishment, so enlisted personnel may not administer them; they are reserved for commissioned officer/commander use only. However, as a supervisor, the First Sergeant and Commander will usually ask you to meet with them when they are considering punishment actions. This is because your voice as the first-line supervisor carries significant weight, and assists the Commander with his or her decision when administering punishment. The Unfavorable Information File, or UIF, is the first of these options. Since UIFs are the Commander's tool, only he or she can establish one. The Commander is also the only person authorized to add or remove UIF information; however, other authorized individuals in the unit and on the base have access. These include, but are not limited to, the individual who has the UIF, unit First Sergeant and Commander, Legal Office personnel, Office of Special Investigations (OSI) personnel, and Military Personnel Flight personnel.

If establishing a UIF fails to yield results, the last stop before nonjudicial punishment is the control roster. It is a listing, maintained by the MPF, showing base personnel who, due to their on-and/or off-base conduct, require special attention or observation. Placing a member on a control roster is a rehabilitative tool, giving the member a chance to improve his or her conduct. Immediate Commanders have authority to place an Airman on the control roster, but there is never a requirement to do so. Control Roster actions are purely at Commander discretion, and the observation period is six months. Hopefully, the Airman

will realize he or she is in desperate need of correction and will turn oneself around before nonjudicial punishment becomes necessary.

### **Nonjudicial Punishment**

Nonjudicial punishment, or NJP, works in conjunction with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) to allow an individual to accept punishment in lieu of trial by courts martial. As such, it is one of the Commander's most valuable tools for maintaining good order and discipline. While you are not expected or required to know each article of the UCMJ, you should be very familiar with the legal process and military justice system. Prior to offering nonjudicial punishment (also known as Article 15), Commanders should consider factors such as the nature of the offense, the circumstances, the offender's age, rank, record, and the maximum sentence that a courts-martial could impose for the infraction.



Figure 2. Throwing the Book

Although it falls in the “punishment” range, NJP is a rehabilitative tool because it promotes positive behavior changes without the disgrace of a courts-martial conviction. Punishment usually consists of removal of liberties, pay, or privileges. While enlisted personnel are not authorized to punish, we can (and likely will) be expected to provide input to the Commander on an Airman's behalf to help ensure the Commander makes an appropriate decision for the Airman when he or she is considering NJP. Once the Commander meets with the Airman and offers him or her nonjudicial punishment, the Airman has three duty days to accept or decline the NJP. If he or she declines the Article 15, the next action may be through military courts.

### **Documentation**

In accordance with AFI 36-2907, *Unfavorable Information File (UIF) Program*, you can document LOCs on an AF Form 174, *Record of Individual Counseling*, or using letterhead stationery. There is no specific format for LOCs, but they (and all other written discipline) should accurately reflect the dates, facts, recommended improvements, and any other significant data. When writing LOCs, LOAs and LORs, consult with your unit First Sergeant and/or base Legal Office, as there are particular comments and formats for these documents that include Privacy Act and usage statements. (If you fail to include all the mandatory verbiage, your documentation may be useless if further corrective measures occur.) Also, if an Airman continues to have disciplinary problems, you must coordinate through your chain of command to the Commander so he or she can ensure certain documents are filed in the UIF, if it is already established.

Whether an Airman has a UIF or not, **ensure that you include your Commander support staff and First Sergeant when you administer discipline to ensure it becomes part of the Airman's official record.** The Air Force does not consider discipline actions filed in your desk as “official communication” because they are not part of a file plan. Therefore, they will not be valid evidence if the Airman's Commander recommends him or her for NJP or other punishment. If your unit does not keep Personnel Information Files (PIFs) on the file plan, you may want to discuss building a file for the Airman as part of the

Commander Support Staff's official file plan.

We've already covered quite a bit of formal documentation with LOCs, LOAs, LORs, and Article 15s, but remember you always have the option to verbally counsel your Airmen. If you use verbal counseling, ensure you document it using a memorandum for record (MFR). Both you and the Airman receiving the discipline should sign the MFR.

Sometimes, you will have Airmen who are resistant to your corrective efforts. If you need to send a stronger message, you can have your supervisor or someone else higher in your chain of command sign and administer the letter of counseling, admonishment, or reprimand.

Regardless of who issues the disciplinary action, ensure the following details are stated:

- ✓ What the member did or failed to do, citing specific incidents and respective dates
- ✓ The expected improvement
- ✓ That further deviations may result in more severe actions
- ✓ The individual has three duty days to submit documents to the initiator for his/her consideration (due process). This ensures fairness to the Airman, and also gives the initiator the "full story" to help him/her make an informed decision for the document's disposition
- ✓ That all supporting documents from the individual will become part of the official record.

Also, ensure you have a place on the letter for the individual to acknowledge receipt, such as "I acknowledge receipt of this document on \_xx Jan xx\_ at xxxx hours. I do/do not intend to submit comments on my behalf. If I submit comments, I understand I have three duty days to provide them to the initiator of this document."

### **Conclusion**

You've read about standards, discipline, the progressive discipline process (PDP), counseling/admonishments/ reprimands, UIFs, NJP, and documentation. As a supervisor in the United States Air Force, you will be responsible for another Airman's career progression, development and growth. This is not a responsibility to be taken lightly, and you should always make sure to properly establish standards and enforce them consistently using discipline. The discipline you provide to your Airmen may be just what they need to sharpen their self-discipline and achieve or exceed standards.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The American Heritage College Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> AFI 36-2618, paragraph 4.1.5.

<sup>3</sup> MCM, 2012

<sup>4</sup> UCMJ