



PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDBOOK

National Communications Committee 2023



📍 THE AIR CADET LEAGUE OF CANADA
OTTAWA ON



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THE PURPOSE

Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information.

- Steve Jobs

The Public Relations Handbook aims to assist the Air Cadet League of Canada, its Provincial/Territorial Committees and Squadrons with an understanding of Public Relations.

Communication is the foundation of any organization, and the Air Cadet League of Canada is no exception.

While this handbook will be helpful, it is important to remember to keep all of the partners, especially the Canadian Armed Forces, the National League, and the Provincial/Territorial Committee abreast of your public relations activities, in particular if it involves speaking to the media, as it may have the potential to harm the reputation of the Air Cadet League of Canada (ACL) and diminish the trust and goodwill of its supporters and donors.

The Public Relations Handbook is a component of ACL's overall communication strategy.



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WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

The Canadian Public Relations Society defines Public Relations as the **strategic management of relationships between an organization and its diverse publics** through communication to achieve mutual understanding, realize organizational goals and serve the public interest. (Flynn, Gregory & Valin 2008)



Public Relations serves many purposes. It is designed to influence, gain understanding, provide information and obtain feedback. It can also be described as a process which consists of four elements.

R.A.C.E.

R- Research. What information do we want to impart?

A- Action and Planning. What is the issue or topic?
What is the plan?

C- Communication. How and what will the “public” be told? How are we communicating our information?

E- Evaluation. Were we successful in reaching our audience? What was the effect in accomplishing our objective?



ABOUT PUBLICITY



Many people mistakenly equate publicity with public relations. Publicity is generally used to share information about an event, a product, an individual or a group. It is generated through traditional (legacy) media or other channels to attract the public's attention.

Building Relationships with the Media



As with any relationship, **building, growing, and nurturing relationships with the media is essential.** This will take time. It is important to know that media outlets are incredibly busy with fewer staff than in previous years. Becoming an asset to them by being prepared if they wish to work with you will benefit your Squadron.



KEYS TO WRITING A GOOD PRESS RELEASE

Unlike story writing or speech writing, a news story's main points, "**the climax**" - are presented first, and the other points are presented in order of importance. This allows an editor to chop off paragraphs of the story from the bottom up without spoiling the news readability of the story.

The lead paragraph of a good news story should contain information such as **WHO** is involved, **WHAT** is happening, **WHERE** it is happening, **WHEN** it is happening and **WHY**—sometimes adding **HOW**, when applicable.

Use as many of these five W's as possible in the first paragraph or "lead." A familiar axiom is that "a good lead or first paragraph means a good story." A press release should be "dressed up" with a direct quotation whenever possible. And if not a direct quote, the next best thing is indirect.

Remember that anything a media outlet does not have the authority to say must be attributed to someone. (For example: "The Air Cadets contemplate no change in their training program in the foreseeable future," Captain I.M. Proud, Commanding Officer of 46 Squadron, said today.) Always identify the person being quoted using their proper title, including their first and last names, Rank and Post Nominals.

A press release is used to share information to inform the public about something noteworthy or of material significance. Press releases can be shared internally or externally depending on their purpose and are usually written to promote a business or organization.



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For immediate release

The Air Cadet League of Canada Announces 2021 Music Awards for Excellence

OTTAWA, ON (January 24, 2022) – The Air Cadet League of Canada is proud to announce the recipients of the 2021 Music Awards for Excellence.

To promote music in the Air Cadet program, the Air Cadet League of Canada has established annual Music Awards for outstanding air cadet musicians. This year, two awards are presented to outstanding Air Cadet Military Band Musicians. Each of the recipients will be presented with a \$350 cash prize, sponsored by Long & McQuade Musical Instruments and a watch, offered by the RCAF Association and the Air Cadet League of Canada.

One of the Air Cadet Military Band Musician Awards goes to **Warrant Officer (WO) Second Class Sylvie Malo of 176 Squadron** in Manitoba. WO2 Malo excelled as a Music Officer Cadet in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, she participated in the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo. Interestingly, her long-term goal is to incorporate music in medicine to help people.

The other award for best cadet musician in a military band goes to **Flight Sergeant (FSgt) Andrew Wylie of 100 Laval Squadron** in Quebec. In 2020, he achieved his Levels 2 and 3 and his Level 4 in 2021. In addition, he has taken part in various summer camps such as the Flight Operations camp, Build & Fly an Airplane Challenge and advanced aviation. FSgt Wylie is currently working on achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze level.

Congratulations to WO2 Malo and FSgt Wylie!

The Air Cadet League of Canada is a civilian volunteer non-profit organization with a mission to promote and encourage the nation's youth to develop and maintain an interest in aviation, leadership, and citizenship, in partnership with the Canadian Armed Forces and other organizations.

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IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

- Write a **captivating headline** that gives them a reason to keep reading.
- Include the **5 W's** (who, what, where, when and WHY!)
- Tell them **what they need to know**. No more than ONE page.
- **Eliminate industry jargon**, acronyms, or terms they are not familiar with.
- Include **relevant, colourful quotes**, including the name and relationship to the organization.
- Is the **lead paragraph interesting?**
- All **names are spelled correctly, titles, and ranks correct, facts and figures exact**. Were they checked and cleared by CO or Chairman, if necessary?
- **Sign off**, including your contact information, website, and social media links.
- Always have someone **proof read your release**. Then re-read it once more for possible errors.



WHAT TO PUBLICIZE



Stories for the news and social media can cover a multitude of items. The following list will give you some ideas:



- Cadet community activities and projects
- Presentation of awards
- Wings presentations
- Safe Driving Clinics for Air Cadets
- Promotions of Officers or Air Cadets
- Retirements, with or without ceremonies
- Annual Reviews
- Squadron social events
- Results of contests or sports events

Journalists are very busy in understaffed newsrooms. Do not expect to have them attend if you have not given them sufficient time for them to plan for it. The preceding are **“timed” stories** with an expiry date. Other types of stories have no time element attached to them. These are often done as **“features.”**

For example:

- A widely travelled or interesting personality who was a member of the squadron.
- A special feature on one of the training subjects – first aid, gliding, swimming, and photography.
- Any human-interest story.

Always answer the tough question honestly – **WHY would anyone care?** This sounds harsh, but you must create a storyline that resonates.



PHOTO JOURNALISM

There is a saying that one picture is worth a thousand words. This can be true. However, the other extreme is that **a bad photograph can take a thousand words to explain** what it is all about.

A photograph is a press release in pictorial form. It can be about the same subject as one of your news stories, and it should be able to “stand-alone” as a picture story or be used with a more complete written story. The secret of its ability to stand alone lies in how good the picture's composition is and how well the accompanying caption is written. Don't forget; photographs and videos can be sent to television stations. In today's society, photographs and videos can be used as part of the media outlet's social media platforms, and they frequently use them as a backup for a story the on-air person may be discussing.

Always shoot the picture with clarity and composition in mind. Remember to put light subjects against dark backgrounds and vice versa. For example, a blue or green uniform with a blackboard as a background may be difficult to decipher.



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PHOTO JOURNALISM



Consent for Images of Cadets

CJCR Gp imagery and the images of cadets are protected and managed in accordance with the Privacy Act. Images of cadets may be used on public platforms by CJCR Gp personnel only if the cadets' parent/guardian has provided appropriate and informed consent, which must be recorded in Fortress. CJCR Gp personnel have a responsibility to advise league members to ensure any images of cadets published to public platforms by stakeholders that are not provided by CJCR Gp also meet with the requirements of the Privacy Act and hence, have been granted parental/guardian consent.

On the next page is a simple checklist for getting photographs that are suitable for newspaper reproduction.



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PHOTOGRAPH CHECKLIST

- **Compose your photo.** Ensure that your image reflects the story you want to tell.
- Make sure your **subjects are in focus.**
- Take a **horizontal photograph.** Take multiple shots, especially if there is more than one person in the photo. It can be challenging to ensure that all participants have their eyes open and their mouths closed.
- Do not take a group shot of ten people when two will tell the story. **Avoid groups of more than four people** as much as possible.
- Keep the **subjects close together.** Remind the participants that if they cannot see the photographer, there is a good chance they will not be seen in the final photograph.
- **Never cut people off at the knees.** If people in the picture must be cropped, cut them at the waist. If it is necessary to crop a person closely, avoid cutting at a joint, such as a wrist or ankle, because this creates an awkward, disturbing effect. Never cut off the tops of people's heads.
- The **best news picture portrays action**, or something happening, such as people doing things, and it does not appear to be posed. Ensure that you have Air Cadet or squadron identification in the photograph but do not let it intrude or seem incongruous.
- **Don't take pictures of Air Cadets or Service personnel in untidy, improper, or unauthorized uniforms.**



THE CAPTION



This is the most critical aspect when submitting your photograph for publication.

The caption gives the reader **additional information** about the story the picture tells. It directs the reader's eye back into the picture as often as possible by using the caption to connect the picture content. Writing the caption means making up the differences between the amount of information the photo conveys and the total amount desired by the reader.



FOUR STEPS TO CAPTIONING



Study the Photograph

Study the photograph, the people, the expressions on their faces, their hands, and the background.

Prepare an Outline

List all the information needed to produce a complete story on a separate sheet of paper. Ask yourself the questions a reader might ask when he sees the photo. When this outline is done, number the items according to their importance.

Describe the Action

Describe the action in the first sentence of the caption and use the present tense.

Finish the Caption from the Outline

Finish the caption from the outline, trying to place the critical points in prominent positions and using a choice of words that anyone can understand. Edit and tighten.



CAPTION POINTERS



- **Identify** all persons and subjects identifiable and pertinent to the picture.
- **Identify** all persons from left to right, seated and standing.
- **Ensure** that the reader can identify individuals, i.e., Captain R.E. Brown
- **Always write** out the rank in full at the first mention.
- **Don't assume** the reader knows as much about the event as you do.
- **Don't write** a caption that disagrees with the picture.
- **Remember** What, Where, How, When, Why and Who.
- **Be** factual and brief; write in a short, tight, punchy style.

Avoid These Cliches: • Pictured here is... This photo shows... Shown above is... Here is...

- Looking on is...
- The action here depicts...
- Posing for... or posing here is... Smiling happily at...
- Standing by is...
- Snapped in a candid mood is... While Mr... looks on...



IDEAS



THE MEDIA

WHO AND WHAT IS MEDIA?

The term “**media**” has changed over the years, especially with the introduction of the Internet. Media is **the avenue through which information is shared in its various forms**. Understanding how each complements the other in providing and sharing information is essential.

Traditional media, also known as legacy media, operates according to schedule. Generally, it comprises **television, radio and print media**.

New media generally comprises a **digital format** covering anything that uses the internet, such as **social media, news sites, and apps**. The content is often user generated. Digital and social media networks are constantly changing and evolving. It is hard to keep up with the ever-changing landscape as new platforms are being launched continuously. For example, the list provided is only a few examples of new media.



Some examples of this type of media would be:

- Podcasts
- Bloggers
- Influencers
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Vimeo
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- Apps
- AI

It must be recognized that **only some stories will be genuine news items**, and it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference. What is of interest to you may not be of interest to the media source.

When dealing with legacy media, **a lack of space and time** may all contribute to why your story may not receive coverage, regardless of the media type. Local newspapers, especially significantly smaller community papers, often need more staff to cover every story. Consequently, they will often welcome well-presented material from their Air Cadet Squadron.

Here are some tips and tricks to ensure your story is well received.

- **Be conscientious and prepare your stories carefully.**
- **Deadlines:** Know when your local station or paper needs the information and in what format they wish to receive it. Social media is more flexible when it comes to having hard deadlines.



- **Facts:** Ensure you have all the critical information in a concise, easy-to-understand document. Ensure you have the correct spelling of individuals, places, and titles. A good rule is the 5Ws – Who, What, Where, When, and Why.
- **Photographs and video:** Ensure that your photos are well-composed and clear. They should also be high resolution, especially for traditional print media. Videos can be shot vertically or horizontally depending on what they will be used for. It is important to stand firmly to prevent blurred shots.

MEDIA INTERVIEW REQUESTS

It is important to liaise with your Commanding Officer prior to engaging in any media interviews.

As per Government of Canada, Department of National Defence, 2008-1 Public Affairs – Corps and Squadron document, CAF members and DND employees, corps/squadron personnel may, in their official capacity, agree to be interviewed by the media provided it is to speak about their experience, their role at a corps/squadron or an activity or event they coordinate.

Corps/squadron personnel: it is important to seek advice and support from their Public Affairs Officer when desired or in doubt about how to respond. They also may respond or refer the inquiry to their chain of command. It is imperative that you must refer questions that fall outside of their personal experience or expertise to their chain of command in advance of the interview or as soon as possible following the interview.



All other questions or information requests from the media should be referred to the Air Cadet League of Canada.

Cadets may participate in an interview if they and their parents/guardians consent. Parental consent is only required if the cadet has not reached the age of majority. Corps/squadron COs will ensure cadets know they are to respond only to questions related to their personal experience or expertise. Corps/squadron COs are to seek advice from their Public Affairs Officer (PAO) prior to briefing a cadet; this will ensure the PAO is aware in advance. COs must inform their PAO as soon as possible following the interview.

It is important to remember that the Commanding Officer needs to grant permission for any Cadet media interviews prior to commencement of the interview.



RADIO AND TELEVISION

RADIO AND TV NEWS STYLE

By style, we mean how we use words to tell a story. Radio and TV news style is dictated by the need for getting and holding attention. **Factual clarity** is the most important quality. This is emphasized when we consider that even the most straightforward story on the air may be misunderstood when only heard once and when other distractions may divert the listener's attention. Once announced, the news story is gone. Therefore, the report must be evident to avoid being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Since radio and TV news are spoken and not read, long sentences with essential details and modifying clauses must be clarified for listeners and announcers. Experience has shown that everyday radio-TV speech sounds best when sentences average 17 words. This is not an inflexible rule. Vary the length to avoid monotony. Overall, sentences should be detailed but short. The thought or subject of the sentence should be concise and clearly expressed so it is not misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Your words must be carefully chosen for their descriptive and precise meaning. Don't use long words when short ones will do. Common words or everyday language are always preferable to the long fancy ones you must look up in the dictionary.



The total of these points on radio and TV news style is – simplicity. The idea of style is to make the news so clear, easy to say, brief and to the point that it will be immediately understood when the receiver hears the words.



RADIO AND TV NEWS ITEM

As with newspapers, **the first or lead sentence of a radio-TV news item describes the central news facts of the story.** There is no time for non-essential details. The average length of a radio news item is 30 seconds of airtime or 75–80 words. Radio and TV news are written concisely, giving only facts necessary to understand the story's news value.

Tips For Preparing for a Radio Interview:

- **Try to gain the listener's attention in the opening or lead sentence** – but don't start a radio interview with a question, or it could sound like a commercial.
- **Use descriptive sentences.** Radio is “theatre of the mind,” meaning you must create the picture in the listener's mind.
- **Don't mention ages.**
- **Don't exaggerate the facts or get sensational.**
- **Eliminate all unnecessary details and stick to the essential facts.** An interview is generally 3–4 minutes long; time will go by quickly if you are unfocused.



Tips For Preparing for a TV Interview:

- **Ensure that however you look is aligned with how you want to be perceived.** Make sure that your uniform or state of dress is neat. Remember, you only get one chance at a first impression.
- **When sitting during an interview, sit up and lean forward slightly** when you talk to open your diaphragm, increase your air supply, prevent you from slumping and make you look engaged in the discussion. Do not relax or let your back touch the back of your chair. You need to be constantly “on” during the entire interview.
- **You have just a few seconds to sell your story.** Studies have found that the average TV soundbite is around seven seconds long. Practice with a stopwatch in front of your bathroom mirror. By practicing out loud, you can get rid of audible pauses such as "um, "like," and "you know."
- **Brainstorm likely questions as well as worst-case-scenario questions.** If you spend some quality time thinking about it, you should be able to anticipate 85 percent of the questions. Do not evade or answer no comment to questions. Be careful not to get baited into speaking freely by misinformation or misleading questions.
- **Define your key messages.** Be ready to deliver those messages regardless of the questions you're asked. Acknowledge any questions you're asked, but always return to your key messages during an interview. Also, reiterate those messages if you're asked to provide a sound check or a closing thought.
- **Turn off cellphones,** spit out the gum, remove coins from pockets, and don't hold a pen.
- **Recognize that anything can happen** during a TV broadcast, so be prepared and try to accommodate any unexpected changes.



- **Be an active participant.** Television observes everything, especially posture, energy, and facial expression. Watch TV news anchors, and you'll see how much they accentuate what they say with unspoken cues. If possible, take a brisk walk before going on camera to get your blood flowing and wake yourself up.
- **Tailor your message to your audience** –specifically the audience watching that show. Familiarize yourself with the show you are going to be featured/interviewed on and the format its in – breakfast show; news program; lifestyle; business; fitness; etc. and watch beforehand if you can so you can see how they do the interview – even standing up for an interview can change your body language and demeanour, and how long the interview may be.
- **Time goes by fast!** Remember you must account for one Q&A per minute and allow two minutes for introductions/exits. Always try to bring a visual along.



INTERVIEW TIPS

Listen to the questions – listen to what the host is asking you. If you don't like the line of questioning, remember always to respond positively. Here's an example of a NORDIC POLE WALKING OBJECTION: "Can't you just walk? Why pay for poles?" "Of course, you can, and everyone should walk or exercise in any way they can to maintain their health. The poles are an added benefit to help increase the benefit of walking by up to 10x, and for some people, that's a small price to pay for such a big impact" rather than "walking is not as good, and our research can prove it!"



Have a list of questions to share with the producer or reporter – these can be sent in advance, but it doesn't hurt to have 3-5 main questions/points you want to be covered on a cue card or postcard-sized paper.

Let the HOST be your guide – That is their job, and if you ever want to be invited back, don't fight them for airtime – so don't overtake the interview. If you provide the questions, they will more likely get to the points you want to make. One quick point here – with reporters and anchors, there are two things to remember – they may answer the questions for you in their questions to you because a) they want to prove how smart/researched they are, or b) they are trying to hurry the interview to get all the information out. Just go with the flow.

Discuss – if you can tell the host/reporter your main message or top points in the few minutes before you go to air while you are being mic'ed.

Don't get stuck. If you forget what you were saying mid-sentence, keep going or laugh it off with a joke ('not enough coffee this morning') – Don't panic – Keep Calm and Carry on...the conversation!

No one-word answers – No... Yes or No. PROVIDE information as to why.

Arrive early so you can be calm – Make sure you have applied your makeup before arrival. – yes, gentlemen, you get shiny too.

Bring lots of visuals – videos, pictures, props, whatever you have; even a t-shirt works as a giveaway/gift.



The camera becomes your mom/sister/best friend – how would you explain what you are doing to your family or friends? The best way is to think about how you would explain it to your mother or neighbour – they are, in fact, your audience, and that’s who you need to communicate to. This is not a job interview, so there is no need to impress anyone with big words or complex analogies.

Don’t ask the reporter for a copy or ask questions – when the show is still live or taping. Ask the producer or a production assistant.

Remember to end with a Call to Action – Take the opportunity to encourage the viewer to get to know you/your website/event/brand better, e.g. As the reporter winds up the interview, feel free to invite them out to the event or, while thanking them for the interview, say, “If you’re at home and recovering from a heart condition or arthritis, we’d love to see you at our next event/ this weekend/meet you on Sunday.”

Lastly, have your website, contact info, event date, time, and location on hand to provide to the producer immediately upon arrival so they get let graphics input the information correctly.



WHAT TO WEAR

This section applies mainly to those who may be attending and who are not in uniform, such as parents or parent volunteers accompanying the Cadet. If you are in uniform, make sure it is clean and pressed and complies with the standard of dress for your uniform



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Despite what your mother told you, on TV, looks count for a lot. It's not so much about what you look like, but it's all about the clothes you choose to wear and the visual impression you make. *93% of the message a TV audience gets from you is non-verbal, so be aware of your facial expressions, body posture and hand movements.*

Look the Part! If it makes sense, wear logo items, fun event wear or colours that reflect your branding or the seasons. This is your business too. You have competition, so wear the brand and help generate brand recognition.

Stay Away from White, Red and Black. They wreak havoc on the camera's lens and are not complementary to skin tone and under-eye bags.

Stay Away from stripes, bold prints, plaids, and check patterns. DO wear: Gem tones, bold colours, browns, ivories and pastels.

If you wear jewelry, be careful that necklaces and earrings aren't too long, as they will hit the lav mic and cause audio interference. You do not want to wear anything large and visually distracting.

Wear collared, polo or button-up shirts to which the lav mic can easily be attached.

Do wear make-up – much as you may prefer the au natural look if you can make an exception, please put on some foundation or base.

Otherwise, you are likely to look washed out under the studio lights. Don't be afraid to wear lipstick and mascara, especially, and bring your make-up.



Smile – Too often, due to nervousness, we become stone-faced. Remember, this is supposed to be fun; what you do is fun! Always remember to relax your face.

Practice watching your facial expressions – if you have a partner, spouse, or friend that you feel comfortable with and have them do a mock interview to work out any redundant facial expressions or tics.

Sit up Straight, with a slight lean – Never sit back in an armchair or on a couch; it will make you look small and out of place. Keep your back straight, and feel free to lean in at a 10-20-degree angle toward the host. Their body language will mimic you if you appear interested and lean in. Remember, you don't want to be stiff as a board, and you don't want to slouch, either!

Cross Your Ankles – While seated, you can cross at your ankles; it's elegant and forces you to sit up straight. This position will also elongate your legs if you are leaning in on a couch and will help reduce bunching at your thighs.

Be Handy – feel free to move your hands or rest them on each other naturally.

Practice – all of these tips while sitting behind a desk, on a couch, on a stool, standing and in a chair. It is all about preparation.



BE AWARE OF DON'TS

Here is a quick guide to dealing with the press:

- **Don't lie or hypothesize** – If you do not know the answer to the question, advise the reporter that you do not have that information available currently
- **Don't evade** – No comment to a reporter means to dig deeper.
- **Don't let stories based on rumour get by** – Be careful not to get baited into speaking freely by misinformation or misleading questions.
- **Don't ask for a copy of the story** – Reporters do not have time to share the story with you. It is incumbent on you to locate the story, which can often be found online.
- **Don't submit a story lacking in the news or feature interest to the newspaper.** If you have any doubt about a story, query the paper first.
- **Don't deliver news releases at the deadline time.** Know your newspaper's deadlines and go when the pressure is least.
- **Don't send more than one copy of the same release to a news outlet or more than one individual at the same outlet.** Research what types of stories the reporters generally cover. A reporter who covers sports is unlikely to cover a story on food.
- **Breaking news is precisely that ... breaking.** Ensure that you do not waste a reporter's time by suggesting your release is breaking news if it is not.



NEWS VS PUBLIC SERVICE

- Radio and television newscasts are intended to **provide a spot description of the event as soon as possible after it happens.** This means the station wants the news story now – not three days or a week later than the event. **If you think you have a good Air Cadet news story, work on it immediately.** Make sure you have all the facts written down. Your news story should include the answers to “Who, What, Why, When, Where and How.” If you have an Air Cadet event that you feel would make a good news story, inform the News Department of your local media outlets. They may send a reporter or a camera operator to cover the event.
- **What is it meant by public service?** This is non-sponsored radio or TV time devoted to public service announcements and programs. Recruiting, notifications of Air Cadet meetings and spot announcements promoting Air Cadet activities are usually carried as public service time. Some units may be fortunate enough to get anywhere from five to 30 minutes of public service time for special programming such as panel discussions, occasional Air Cadet presentations and special features – all donated by the local station.



- **The Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) encourages radio and television stations to schedule a certain amount of public service announcements and programs.**
However, remember that the broadcasting media is not obligated to grant time to any specific group. The Air Cadets compete for valuable public service time with many other organizations. It would be best to make yourself known to the radio and television Programs.
- **Directors and News Directors if you can successfully get public service time for Air Cadets.** Try to meet these individuals and brief them about the Air Cadet League and its Program. It may help to get your news items, public service spots, videos, and photos on the air.
- **Before approaching the radio or TV station, determine whether your subject matter is a news story or a public service announcement.** If it is an item of public service, send it to the Program Director. If it is news, send it to the News Director.



SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS OR PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSA)

As per Government of Canada, Department of National Defence, 2008-1Public Affairs - Corps and Squadron document, when considering public announcements, Commanding Officers (COs) at all levels shall keep their superiors informed of public announcement plans and activities, in advance and in a timely manner. If necessary, engage the CAF Public Affairs Officer early in the planning process for advice and support.



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It is important to respect the need for Public Affairs Officers to use the Public Affairs technical network as an important channel through which public announcements and media relations activities are coordinated across the CAF and DND.

Most spot announcements are 10, 20, 30 or 60 seconds long. Spots of up to 30 seconds are the most likely to be used. Please speak to your local media outlets to find out about their policy regarding Public Service Announcements. They can be used to announce special events such as Tag Days.

For radio, the copy should be timed to run 10 seconds (approximately 25 words), 20 seconds (50 words), 30 seconds (75 words), or 60 seconds (150 words).

The following suggestions will be helpful guides to writing spot announcements.

- **Introduce the purpose of the Public Service Announcement with a compelling first sentence**, then fill in the details you want the listener to act upon. Try to include the subject matter and a reference to your squadron in the first sentence.
- **The middle portion of the spot is an explanation or continuation of the idea mentioned in the opening sentence.** In the closing sentence, mention your squadron again. (This applies to spots 20 seconds and over.) In 10-second spots, you have time only for your squadron name and the subject matter.



- **Keep sentences short.** Use familiar words and expressions. Choose words that express the exact meaning desired. Take your time writing your spot.
- **Please give it some thought.** Use punctuation marks as “breather” points for the announcer. It is essential to time your spots to ensure they fit into the allotted time. You may have to rewrite your spot many times. This is normal even for trained scriptwriters.
- **If you can read your spot smoothly, without stumbling or gasping for breath, you may expect the same of the announcer who puts it on the air.** If your friends understand your reading of the announcement, you may expect the listening audience to understand the announcer’s rendition.
- **Copy should always be typewritten, double or tripled spaced, using only one side of the paper.** Try to see that each station receives an original document.



SAMPLE PSA

30 seconds

Announcer: Here is a message for all young people thinking about the future. Since 1941, the Air Cadet League of Canada has been offering young people a chance to prepare for future careers in aviation – and in many other walks of life. Air Cadets can qualify for flying, gliding and technical courses and mind-broadening trips to Europe, the United States and elsewhere. These great opportunities are available at your local Air Cadet Squadron.

30 seconds

Sound: In-Flight chatter with aircraft tower

Announcer: You hear pilot talk...the exciting language of aviation...

Announcer: If you are between twelve and eighteen, you can learn this language and earn your pilot's wings by joining Canada's Air Cadets. It might just be the best decision you have ever make.



CADET WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

As per the Government of Canada, Department of National Defence, 2008-1 Public Affairs - Corps and Squadron document, all Official Cadet Websites and Social Media Platforms will conform to Government of Canada (Treasury Board) and DND/CAF policies.



UNOFFICIAL CADET WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

All unofficial cadet websites and social media platforms must have a disclaimer indicating that the pages are not official entities of DND or the CAF. Example statements are as follows:

This is an unofficial cadet website that is not intended to represent in any way the policies or procedures of either the Department of National Defense, the Canadian Armed Forces or the Cadet Leagues of Canada. This is not a Canadian Armed Forces website. The website is maintained on behalf of the Corps/Squadron Local Committee for <<NAME>> Corps/Squadron.

This website is intended for use by the cadets and parents of the Corps/Squadron <<NAME>>, prospective cadets and their parents, staff and Local Committee. The objective is to provide basic information about the function of the corps/squadron and to inform cadets, parents and the local community about the Cadet Program and various events that will be taking place.



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Marketing, including websites and promoted content on social media platforms that may be procured by corps/squadrons through local committee funds, will be coordinated with the local PA teams prior to purchase and will require a disclaimer to be displayed indicating the financial authority for the advertisement/promoted content, in accordance with Gp Order 2008-1, Public Affairs – Corps/Squadron.

Domain and hosting services for unofficial cadet websites are the responsibility of the local committee. All related registration details must clearly indicate local committee responsibility. Domain names and hosting services should not be held in the names of DND/CAF members.

It is strongly recommended that corps/squadron Commanding Officers be granted access to unofficial websites and social media platforms in case issues need to be corrected quickly.

Unofficial cadet social media accounts must be owned and managed through shared responsibilities with the local committee.

Social media platform marketing must be paid for by non-public funds through the local committee. The marketing should be vetted and approved through the RCSU PA office.



ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP ACTIVITIES

According to DAOD 2008-8, Official Use of Social Media, and DAOD 2008-5, Public Affairs Planning and Program Delivery, Corps/squadron personnel will not purchase or accept advertising space.

Corps/squadron COs will ensure that should the local committee purchase or accept advertising space, including as a form of sponsorship, it is clear from the advertising that the purchase or acceptance of advertising was done so by the respective Cadet League.

Corps/squadron COs will ensure that should the local committee seek or accept sponsorship for corps/squadron activities, the sponsorship does not include the use of cadets or cadet images, and it is clear the sponsorship relationship is with the local committee. Corps/squadron COs must ensure that such sponsorships do not present a conflict of interest or imply a relationship between a business and DND/CAF, in accordance with DAOD 7021-4, Solicitations, Sponsorships and Donations.

Community bulletin boards, letters to the editor and news articles are not considered advertising.

Personal letters to the editor will not be signed as a member of the CAF, that is, with rank or position, unless the chain of command has been notified and has approved the interaction. This also applies to members of the League.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

Corps/squadrons may obtain prepared Public Affairs materials through their Zone Training Officer or by visiting Cadet365.

Corps/squadrons may be required to print promotional material using the provided templates and resources. Brochure templates are released via the Regional Public Affairs Office on a regular basis. These products are not considered advertising.

The creation of corps/squadron banners or locally developed promotional material must comply with image and branding policies. It is prudent to ensure the Public Affairs Office review of these materials prior to production.



SOCIAL MEDIA

The rapid growth of social media has provided limitless possibilities for the Air Cadet League. It has created opportunities for squadrons to showcase their impact on their communities, assist in fundraising, and recruit volunteers and new cadets. With all the possibilities social media holds, it also comes with challenges. Clear guidelines that outline the dos and don'ts make it easier to use social media to its full potential.



Too often, unfiltered content, the immediacy of social media, its universal access and its impact on privacy create challenges that must be addressed both at the squadron level and provincially/territorially and nationally.

This section has been prepared to aid the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Committees and Squadrons with social media guidelines that are to be followed to avoid creating potential issues. ● ● ●

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Anything you post on social media is public: We often believe that our privacy settings protect us. Your posts can be shared, copied and reshared regardless of your settings. The internet is forever. That is important to remember.

You cannot speak for the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Bodies or The Department of National Defence: The phrase “the opinions posted are mine and do not represent...” does not matter and means nothing. Always ensure that if you are posting something, it does not contravene any of the guidelines.

Refrain from passing judgment on the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Bodies or The Department of National Defence: The reasoning is the same as the first two points. Regardless of your unintentional comments, avoiding negative comments is essential.



If you weren't there – you don't know: Second-hand, third-hand or “broken telephone” equate to the same outcome. It is speculation at best; at worst, it can be dangerous, spreading misinformation. Don't be or create the problem.

Sometimes humour is NOT funny: Humour is subjective. It is better to err on the side of caution than risk creating an issue. Sexist and racist content is NEVER appropriate or welcome.



SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS

NEVER post anything or respond to comments in the event of a crisis or an incident: There are NO exceptions.

You run the risk of releasing information about aircraft, injuries, or damages before the authorities have formally notified the families.

You run the risk of compromising the privacy and dignity of those involved.

Incorrect or partial information could be shared, resulting in individuals and journalists sharing the misinformation, triggering media inquiries before the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Bodies, or The Department of National Defence are ready to respond.



You risk compromising any official investigation that may occur due to an incident.

Communicating the details of ANY incident or crisis: It is the responsibility of the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Committee or The Department of National Defence to communicate the details. This is often in conjunction with other services, such as local police forces. When in doubt, contact your Provincial/Territorial Office for direction or the National Office for clarification.

It is better to be right than fast: Take your time to double-check your facts and details. A mistake gets amplified when picked up and shared, and it is impossible to correct. Once you hit send, it is forever.

If in doubt, ASK! There is no such thing as a stupid question, but there is such a thing as a stupid outcome. When in doubt, call your Provincial/Territorial Office or National Headquarters.

Navigate around the internet trolls: These are the nameless, faceless critics and pundits who criticize everything. They are everywhere on the internet. If your posts draw criticism from any source, do not respond. This only encourages further comments from the trolls. Don't take the bait. Feel free to remove negative or disparaging comments from your feed. Report any comments to your Provincial/Territorial or National office and your Commanding Officer if they are threatening or abusive.



POSTING INFORMATION ON TRAINING, RECRUITING, FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Photos: Any photos should show Cadets in proper uniform. Look at each photograph to ensure it showcases the Cadet(s) appropriately and not in a perilous situation.

Community-Based Activities: Community-based activities should be identified as such.

Develop clear language to use with your regular posts and other communications.

Acknowledge hard work: Post photos and information about your Cadets, their training, and activities. (With permission from the CO or appropriate Squadron Staff person.)

If recruiting new volunteers or promoting events or activities: Ensure you provide the information and links that prospective Cadets and parents can access. Seamless communication will result in higher success.



Post regularly: Social media is like your toaster. It only works when it is used. Keep your followers and your readers engaged by providing exciting and dynamic information. If you need help creating content, you can share posts from the Air Cadet League of Canada, the Provincial/Territorial Committees, also if you are holding open houses or opportunities for people to join your squadron.

Be respectful. Consider these rules before posting especially surrounding issues of privacy and dignity. Just because you are posting as an individual does not mean you have the right to publish images or stories that can be harmful or damage reputations. During stressful times or emergencies, emotions run high; we often react and not act. Remember, it is easier to post later than to try to undo the damage created in haste.

When in doubt, ASK!



PRIVACY ACT

The protection of personal information under the Privacy Act must be maintained at all times as per CJCR Gp Order 2008-0, Public Affairs.



SQUADRON DISPLAYS

Ordinarily, displays are most effective when planned around a single idea. Don't try to get too much across to the public at one time. The statement must be simple and easily understood.

The best way to get creative and inspiring ways to create your next display, look around at the various consumer displays and advertising signs. You'll find that the most creative and innovative ones do not use tricks, strange words, or designs to detract from the primary message. You'll note that the most striking ones have few words and simple illustrations. For example, Nike - Just Do it!



ASSEMBLING YOUR DISPLAY

There will be occasions when you will want to put together a display for an Open House, exhibitions in your local area, etc. The first step is to muster all the talent you can find in your squadron - talent with a paintbrush and a lettering pen - and if you're lacking such talent around you, get busy and recruit some. Squadrons may have access to CAF developed and owned displays such as teardrop flags, banner, etc. Ensure you are working with your Commanding Officer and Squadron Staff before embarking on the project.



Bear in mind these methods:

Borrowing – Service Bases, merchants and other individuals will frequently loan appropriate materials and exciting objects for displays.

Upcycling – If you've done something for somebody or some business house in the past, they might be willing to help you this time. And don't forget that

Most importantly, make your display appear as crisp and workmanlike and (or professional) as possible. Sloppy or careless work implies carelessness or inefficiency on the part of the Air Cadet Organization and your squadron.



POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR DISPLAYS

Place the display in locations where as many people as possible will see it. Merchants will often donate space in windows, on counters and walls, but don't expect them to offer the space to you – go out and ask for it. Local fairs, airshows and exhibitions are ideal places for Air Cadet displays. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask. You never know unless you do.



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Remember that you are advertising the Air Cadet Organization, so give your display the prestige it deserves. The person who is loaning you the space will appreciate it too. If the display is good, they'll feel they are contributing something worthwhile to the community's welfare.



DISPLAY CHECK LIST

- Do you have one single idea to put across?
- Is your message simple, direct and easy to understand?
- Is it an attention-getter?
- Is it neat?
- Is it in a tidy location?
- Is it placed where people can see it easily?
- Are all facts, names and phone numbers quite legible?
- Does it tie in with other publicity on the same subject?
- Are you changing often enough?



SPEECHES

This is one of the most widely used means of publicizing the aims and objectives of the Air Cadet program. Service Clubs, Home and School associations, cadet and parent banquets, and similar gatherings provide almost unlimited opportunities to speak about Air Cadets.

For the guidance of speakers, League Headquarters has prepared extensive background material which can be obtained for the asking.

You may find that senior cadets will be your most influential speakers, which applies particularly to those who have completed Exchange Visits trips, Flying Scholarships, etc. Offer your speaker's services early, for many program chairpersons make up a whole year's schedule before the season starts – and keep in mind the Ten Commandments of Public Speaking:

- Do not commence your speech with apologies.
- Do not fill your address with statistics.
- Do not exaggerate!
- Do not be dull.
- Do not be sarcastic or unfair.
- Do not murder the English language by using terms your audience won't understand.
- Don't wander from your subject – your audience won't understand what you are discussing.
- Do not be overly sentimental.
- Refrain from disrespecting your audience by going over your allotted time by being long-winded.



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SQUADRON COMMUNICATIONS

We want to encourage squadrons to create innovative ways to interact with their members and the general public.

The surest and most exciting way to present squadron activities to cadets, officers and instructors is by **utilizing squadron communications**. This can take many forms, such as email, newsletters, social media posts and, of course, the old-fashioned way, a printed newsletter, which can be distributed on training nights. The Squadron may wish to create a committee of aspiring Cadet journalists responsible for communications to assume the task.

It must first be realized that a squadron bulletin is one of the essential tools of internal information. Many squadrons today have monthly or bimonthly communique.

Every effort must be made to maintain squadron communications as a primary source of information for the squadron members. It must continue to emphasize local news.



It would be best to **use discretion in your communications when using any materials you did not create** and be careful not to reprint or download subject matter that could result in copyright infringement. If you wish to use photographs or other subject matter, you must seek permission from the creator of the material. Material already printed in other publications is protected by copyright laws. Permission to reprint from a commercial publication is usually easily obtained by writing to the publisher. Any material appearing in League bulletins and publications may be reprinted at any time without written permission. This also applies to Service release materials. No permission is needed.

Although squadron communications are intended primarily for internal use, you should always be aware that they could be distributed to the news media, squadron supporters, civic and school officials, etc. Used in this manner, squadron communications can be one of your most effective public information aids.



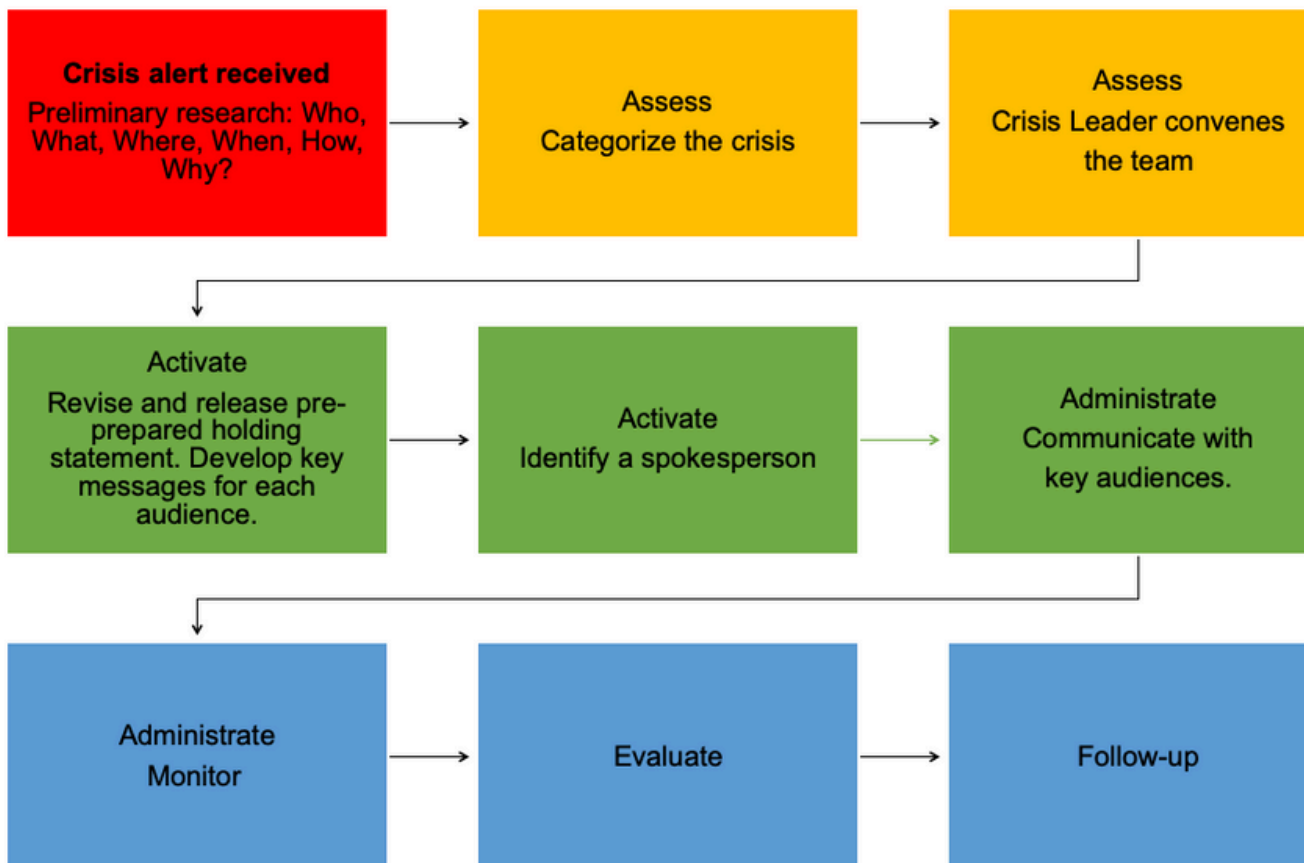
COMMUNICATING IN A CRISIS

The Crisis Communications Plan addresses the communications needs and function during a crisis that may have the potential to harm the reputation of the Air Cadet League of Canada (ACL) and diminish the trust and goodwill of its supporters and donors. The Crisis Communications Plan is a component of ACL's overall emergency preparedness program or crisis management plan.



COMMUNICATING DURING A CRISIS

Tell the truth. Tell it quickly. Tell it often.



While every crisis is different and requires a unique, tailored approach, it is essential to have a crisis communications plan in place to ensure that information reaches key audiences in a timely and effective manner.



ALERT

- Upon receiving the initial alert about the crisis, the Crisis Team Leader (ACL Executive Director) and/or the Team Co-leader (appointed by the ACL ED according to the situational context) will talk with staff, leaders, volunteers any emergency services directly involved with the incident.
- Determine what happened, where it happened, when it happened, how long the situation is likely to last and who knows about it.
- Use the Crisis Incident Fact Sheet in the Crisis Communications Plan.

ASSESS - Categorize the Crisis

The Crisis Team Leader and Co-leader categorize the crisis based on information gathered.

Categorizing crises allows the crisis response team to follow steps tailored for a particular situation.

ASSESS - Build the Crisis Team

The Crisis Team Leader and Co-leader will establish the Crisis Team, which leads and coordinates ACL's response. Members are appointed according to the nature and severity of the crisis.

ASSESS - Point Person

The point person for all crises is the ACL Executive Director. If you become aware of a situation that has the potential to become a crisis (or if you are unsure), please contact them directly and immediately.



ACTIVATE - Revise and Release Pre-prepared Holding Statement and Develop key messages for each audience.

Develop Detailed Plan

- Develop a specific communication plan relevant to the actual circumstances of the crisis. It will include:
 - identifying and prioritizing our audiences.
 - communication mechanisms for each audience (email, phone call, etc.)
 - responsibilities and timelines for each task.
- Notify other leaders/the Greater Response Team to help manage the crisis.
- Update the Crisis Incident Fact Sheet with as much information as you have available.
- Assign a team member to create a timeline of the actual events related to the crisis, including any and all responses given, and actions taken.

Craft Key Messages

- Craft key messages for each audience related to the actual circumstances. Refine and adapt them as needed.
- **See Crisis Communications Plan APPENDIX 1. KEY MESSAGES AND FAQ.**



ACTIVATE - Identify and Prepare Spokesperson

- Identify and prepare the spokesperson who is most appropriate for the situation.
 1. See Crisis Communications Plan APPENDIX 2. SPOKESPERSON GUIDELINES
 2. Develop talking points for the appointed spokesperson.
- Organize refresher media training specific to this crisis for the spokesperson.

ACTIVATE - Update Pre-Written Reactive Holding Statement

- Update the pre-written reactive holding statement, which is to be used if stakeholders or the news media call. Edit the statement so it is appropriate for the crisis, tailoring it for telephone, email, text messages, website, social media and crisis site inquiries using the key messages.
- See:
 1. Crisis Communications APPENDIX 3: HOLDING STATEMENTS,
 2. Crisis Communications APPENDIX 4: DRAFT HOLDING STATEMENTS
 3. Crisis Communications APPENDIX 5: ACL HOLDING STATEMENT/NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE
- Assign responsibility to create and maintain phone and email logs of news organizations/reporters/bloggers/websites covering the crisis and any other key personnel, volunteers, partners, parents, etc., who may be inquiring about the situation.



- Notify key volunteer leaders (national, local) and staff.
 - Use available communication vehicles (email, intranet, etc.) to call leaders/staff to action as needed.
 - Hold a short briefing meeting onsite, or at a predetermined offsite location or via conference call, to reassure leaders/staff members and prepare them for crisis management.
 - Remind leaders/staff of existing media (social and traditional) policies.
 - Set predetermined times for staff members to reconvene to receive regular updates and guidance.
 - Provide staff with key messages to communicate to customers, constituents and vendors as appropriate.

ADMINISTRATE

- Begin contacting those affected by the crisis. Identify best mechanisms to reach each person, including phone, face-to-face meetings, conference calls, email, media briefings, press releases, instant alerts, etc. Make specific assignments and include them on the timeline.
- Post the approved holding statement on the ACL website home page and social media feeds, as appropriate. If the crisis warrants, develop additional online pages to include press releases, photos, etc. Update all as needed.



- Prepare to manage calls from the media in response to the posted holding statement. Make sure all team members understand that only the designated spokesperson speaks on behalf of ACL and that any and all media inquiries are to be forwarded to the Deputy Executive Director who will screen calls and arrange any media interviews for the Executive Director.
- See:
 1. Crisis Communications APPENDIX 6: MEDIA RELATIONS
 2. Crisis Communications APPENDIX 7: MEDIA CALL CHECKLIST
- Set regular times for communicating updates as needed.
- Contact local emergency officials and government officials, as necessary.
- Make sure those affected by the crisis are being kept informed through regular phone updates, email updates, text messages, Intranet messages, etc.
- Keep your timeline updated, documenting all actions taken and team members responsible and make accessible to all crisis management team members to review.



EVALUATE and FOLLOW-UP

- It is important to evaluate the crisis communications plan response one to two weeks after the crisis has been handled. Evaluate how our plan performed during the crisis, correcting errors as it is updated and revised. Evaluate the short- and long-term impacts, and how they will be addressed. This is an opportunity to review and share lessons learned and begin to implement any commitments made to our stakeholders about improving procedures or operations. Treat the crisis as an opportunity for further growth.
- Ask crisis communication and management team members to complete the assessment in the Crisis Communications Plan. Rate the perceived performance for first response and follow up from 1-5, giving reasons for your rankings. Document lessons learned and add any next steps in that column.



IN CONCLUSION

This handbook is meant to assist you with the basics of Public Relations. If you have questions or concerns or need helpful advice, please get in touch with your your Commanding Officer, Squadron Staff, Provincial/Territorial Committee or the CAF for assistance.



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