

# *U.S. NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS*

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October 12, 2011

From: Executive Director, NSCC

To: All Regional Directors and Unit Commanding Officers

Subj: **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Ref: (a) NSCC Regulations, Chapter 9

1. In an average year, NSCC conducts over 200 training events which account for more than 67,000 cadet training days. Throughout all of these training events, and in the course of all unit drills and local events, we must consistently strive to provide an environment where each and every individual is treated with dignity and respect. Instances of abusive behavior or foul language show a complete lack of respect for fellow members of our Corps, and reflect very poorly upon our entire organization in the eyes of a public that sees us as an extension of our Navy in the local community.
2. Our Cadets look to you, our adult leadership across the organization at the unit and regional level to set the example and be role models as they form their goals and aspirations for adulthood. Who they are now and will become in the future is very much a reflection of the character that you demonstrate to them today. They will most likely see numerous examples of disrespectful and outright obscene behavior in their schools and out in the community, and it is unfortunate that some of our Cadets do not get exposed to an effective role model in their home. That very fact is why we have established the NSCC as a place where teenagers can be taught the core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment in their formative years and then be given the opportunity to live out those values in their schools and communities. It doesn't happen just because someone at Headquarters says so; it happens because our adult leaders choose to teach and demonstrate those values, and because you believe that is what our Cadets need from us.
3. Our Standards of Conduct for the NSCC are established in reference (a), and the articles in that chapter merely form the baseline or framework from which we conduct ourselves in the NSCC. Proper behavior comes from internalizing those principles as a foundation and forming actions that demonstrate them time and time again. Anyone who thinks that they can teach core values to a group of teenagers and then just live and act however they please will soon be seen as a fraud, and their lessons will not hold firm. So, to be clear in our standards of conduct, the following are specific behaviors that will not be tolerated in the NSCC:

a. Obscene or Profane Language: The use of obscenities or profanity has absolutely no place in our Corps, either by the adults or by the Cadets. It is demoralizing, contrary to good order and discipline, and serves absolutely no useful purpose. It is not to be tolerated in the least, and all members of the NSCC, adult leaders and Cadets alike have a duty to call out when it happens and ask the offender for an immediate apology. Likewise, comments of a sexually suggestive nature are

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potentially offensive in nature, and have absolutely no place in a youth organization. While it is recognized that anyone may occasionally slip with a foul utterance, it is still an offense for which an apology should be made, but it ends there. However, repeated intentional use of obscene or profane language will not be tolerated, and is potentially grounds for dismissal.

b. Hazing or Sexual Harassment: Our NSCC policy for both hazing and harassment has been and will continue to be one of zero tolerance. That means that all instances will be dealt with by immediately stopping the offensive behavior and commencing judicial action by the Commanding Officer. This will not lead to dismissal in all cases, however the Commanding Officer has a duty to initiate an investigation into the situation in a timely manner and communicate actions and/or recommendations up the chain of command. While some argue that there is a "gray area" for what constitutes hazing or harassment, the plain truth is that any behavior meeting the criteria for either hazing or sexual harassment is just that and a line has been crossed. For clarity, I will quote here the definitions from Navy directives on both hazing and harassment:

(1) *Hazing*: "any conduct whereby a military member or members, regardless of service or rank, without proper authority causes another military member or members, regardless of service or rank, to suffer or be exposed to any activity which is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful. Soliciting or coercing another to perpetrate any such activity is also considered hazing. Hazing need not involve physical contact among or between military members; it can be verbal or psychological in nature. Actual or implied consent to acts of hazing does not eliminate the culpability of the perpetrator."

(2) *Sexual Harassment*: "A form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career; or,
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person; or,
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. This definition emphasizes that workplace conduct, to be actionable as "abusive work environment" harassment, need not result in concrete psychological harm to the victim, but rather need only be so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the work environment as hostile or offensive."

While it is the duty of the Commanding Officer and Regional Director to make appropriate and timely investigations of suspected instances of hazing or sexual harassment, it is **the duty of all NSCC personnel to immediately take action to stop such behavior**, or at a minimum engage the assistance of others to stop the behavior. To witness any instance of hazing or sexual harassment and do nothing is heinous and fails to live up to our core values.

c. Hostile Training Environment: This involves words and actions that may fall short of the definition for hazing, but do not create the quality of training environment that builds character in our Cadets. We always need to remember that while our training is modeled after that which is provided by the Navy for its Sailors, we are working with young teenagers instead of young adults. Our training should always include elements of discipline, physical fitness, and agility in response to demanding situations. But the purpose must always be to build character and self-esteem, not to tear down or humiliate. Good leaders know the difference and how to do the former vice the latter; Commanding Officers must make sure that all adult leaders and cadets in leadership roles are equipped to discern the difference as well.

d. Financial Accountability and Fiduciary Responsibility: While I could quote several instances of federal law, DoD policy, and our own NSCC policy regarding our responsibilities in these areas, the bottom line comes down to this:

(1) We operate the NSCC and its aggregate units in both the public trust (use of Federal grant funds for training) and many private trusts (funds donated at both the national and local level to defray basic operating costs); it is our duty and responsibility to execute those funds for the maximum benefit of our Cadets and fully account for every dollar received for those purposes.

(2) All funds used for the support of an NSCC unit will be maintained in a bank account established expressly for that purpose; the account will have two signatories, including the RD, and no personal funds will be intermixed with NSCC funds for any reason.

(3) Audits for funds expended in support of training evolutions will be completed by the COTC within 30 days of completion of the training event, unless otherwise directed; it is absolutely essential that the expenditure of all Federal grant funds be accounted for within the fiscal quarter for which they were allocated.

(4) Financial accounting and expenditure reporting will be executed in a completely transparent manner, and all units will maintain a proactive posture with their sponsoring organization for the completion of timely unit audits and inspections.

4. The above matters form only a small percentage of the various situations in which you will find yourselves, and my directive to you is to always gauge your response to each and every situation as forming its foundation in the core values from which we have established these standards of conduct. We cannot dictate your response to each situation, but rather must rely upon your good judgment as rooted in our core values. I know that I can rely upon you to make the right decisions at the right time, for the good of our Cadets. I look forward to working with you as we seek to make the best possible training environment available to them each and every day.



J. E. MONAHAN