



# **Public Affairs Officer**

## **Specialty Track Study Guide**

CIVIL AIR PATROL  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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## Preface

This pamphlet describes the Public Affairs 201 Specialty Track. It will prepare members for the responsibilities of a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Public Affairs Officer (PAO). It also enables a candidate to learn more about CAP's public affairs programs, advance in proficiency, and achieve the next rating. This pamphlet details the training and evaluation requirements that must be met in order to achieve each level. This pamphlet also itemizes the important publications that are used to help the candidate gain knowledge about the PAO function and responsibilities of the public affairs officer. The specialty track is divided into three ratings: technician, senior, and master. The specific requirements for each are discussed in this pamphlet. Training in this specialty track may be ideally accomplished under the guidance of a higher rated PAO mentor or completed independently.

This specialty track study guide has three sections. The first section applies to achievement of the technician rating, the second section is related to attaining the senior rating, and the third section deals with the skills required for the master rating. This progression should prepare members for positions of increasing responsibility as a public affairs officer.

Study each section and apply the information to actual situations on the job. If possible, the unit will assign an on-the-job (OJT) supervisor to assist members through the process. If the unit cannot assign an OJT supervisor, the member must learn the job through self-study and performance. The region PAO should be actively involved in the training of the wing PAO, whenever possible, either as the OJT supervisor or as a mentor during self-study. The wing PAO should assist in the training of group and squadron PAOs.

The member and OJT supervisor will determine the level of competence at each level. When the member reaches the desired level of competency for the completion of a level, the unit commander will then certify proficiency in the member's personnel records and with National Headquarters through eServices. Completion of each rating is a requirement for promotion. Complete promotion criteria is listed in CAPR 35-5, *CAP Officer and Noncommissioned Officer Appointments and Promotions*, and CAPR 50-17, *CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program*.

Feedback on the contents of this study guide should be directed to CAP National Headquarters Public Affairs (NHQ/PA).

### ***Prerequisites Required Before Entry into the Track***

The candidate must have completed Level 1 before entering this specialty track.

## Training Objectives

The objectives for the Public Affairs Officer specialty track are to:

- Develop a highly motivated and trained public affairs officer who will conduct and promote an effective program.

- Perform the duties and tasks association with CAP's squadron, group, wing, and region PAO positions.
- Possess a comprehensive knowledge of Civil Air Patrol and the PAO program.
- Each specialty track level contains Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements as well as Service Requirements that must be completed in order to attain each successive rating. These requirements will vary as the candidate proceeds through the levels. These are completed through self-study, on-the-job training (OJT) experiences, classroom or in-residence coursework and agreement with your assigned OJT supervisor.
- Knowledge Requirements are objectives describing what each candidate is expected to know to attain the rating. An online or paper test is the primary method by which candidates demonstrate their knowledge of the material. The exams are open-book with no time limit and the passing score is 80%.
- Training Requirements are objectives that require the candidate to learn systems and processes.
- Performance Requirements are objectives describing what each candidate is expected to complete through active participation to attain the rating.
- Service Requirements require that candidates serve in a certain area for a specified amount of time to receive the rating. While not limiting the role that candidates may take as public affairs officers, it is suggested that the level of responsibility begin modestly and increase as the candidate advances.

## **Guidance for On-the-Job Training (OJT) Supervisors and Unit Commanders**

The OJT supervisor plays an important role in the success of the PAO in training. These senior member officers, in partnership with the unit's commander, guide the candidate through the knowledge, training, performance, and service requirements for the rating the candidate is pursuing.

Once the OJT supervisor is satisfied that the candidate has met all the requirements for the rating, they and the candidate notify the unit commander.

When the commander is satisfied that the candidate can perform to the level applied for and has met the service requirements, they record award of the rating in the candidate's master record and notify National Headquarters of the rating award through eServices. Unless a waiver has been requested and approved by the wing or region commander, an individual cannot accelerate in a skill level faster than the minimum time requirements per rating or without completing the required performance and training requirements specified in this pamphlet. A waiver is rare, but it can be approved based on documented prior significant experience. Skill level waivers for exceptional circumstances may be submitted, with full justification, to CAP/PA.

### ***Awards, Badges, & Ribbons***

Upon earning a PAO technician rating, a CAP senior member qualifies to wear the Leadership ribbon as well as the basic PAO specialty badge. At the completion of the senior rating, a bronze star is added to the ribbon and the PAO badge with star is awarded, and at the master rating the

bronze star is replaced by a silver star on the ribbon and the PAO badge with wreath and star is awarded.

## **Achieving the Technician Rating**

The technician rating is the entry level into the CAP Public Affairs program. It is designed to encourage those assigned to the PAO track to seek to develop the basic professional skills necessary to implement a beginning program of community relations, media relations, and internal information activities.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives for the technician rating in the Public Affairs Officer specialty track are to:

- Develop a highly motivated and trained PAO who will conduct and promote effective public affairs programs promoting CAP operations and activities primarily at the squadron level.
- Explain the duties and tasks associated with CAP's squadron, group, wing, and region PAO officer positions.
- Possess a working knowledge of the PAO program and be able to describe the PAO mission.
- Possess a fundamental understanding of CAP history, its current missions, unit history, and membership requirements; be familiar with the fundamentals of public relations, journalism and photography.
- Be able to demonstrate and document the ability to perform public affairs tasks as directed.

### ***Position Description***

The public affairs officer trainee (PAO) at the technician level is expected to:

- Act as the advisor to the commander on public affairs matters.
- Implement and manage the public affairs program.
- Conduct internal and external public affairs activities, including, but not limited to news releases (with photos or graphics), event promotions, public website development and maintenance and online presence management, member and member-family outreach, and response to media requests.
- Write pertinent, interesting and timely articles about unit activities, missions and people which reflect CAP locally and nationally in a positive light.
- Assist in the establishment of continuing training programs to help all unit members promote CAP within the community.

### ***Knowledge, Training and Performance Requirements***

Certain publications should be read by all CAP members; others apply directly to the public affairs officer. PAOs should be familiar with those publications that have high relevance for all CAP members and should know those publications that are critical to the Public Affairs program. Below is a list of important publications and PAO programs that PAOs should review and learn. Bolded items are mandatory.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CAP Index 0-2	<i>Numerical Index of CAP Regulations, Manuals, Pamphlets and Visual Aids</i>	Good resource (be familiar with regulations, manuals, pamphlets and visual aids associated with Standardization and Evaluation)
CAP Index 0-9	<i>Numerical Index of CAP Forms, Tests and Certificates</i>	Good resource (be familiar with forms, tests, and certificates that apply to PAO )
<b>CAPR 1-1</b>	<b><i>Ethics Policy</i></b>	<b>Describes what we stand for.</b>
<b>CAPR 20-1</b>	<b><i>Organization of Civil Air Patrol</i></b>	<b>Read job description for this function at the unit level and higher headquarters.</b>
<b>CAPR 36-1</b>	<b><i>CAP Nondiscrimination Program</i></b>	<b>Describes CAP's commitment to inclusive membership.</b>
CAPM 39-1	<i>CAP Uniform Manual</i>	To assist PAOs with presenting the correct image while wearing the CAP uniform.
CAPR 50-17	<i>CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program</i>	
CAPR 52-16	<i>Cadet Program Management</i>	Describes the CAP Cadet Program.
CAPR 110-1	<i>CAP Electronic Systems and Data Administration</i>	Describes website and social media authority and reporting requirements.
<b>CAPR 190-1</b>	<b><i>CAP Public Affairs Program</i></b>	<b>The primary resource for PAOs.</b>
CAPR 900-2	<i>CAP Name, Seal, Logo, Command Emblem and Flag Etiquette</i>	
CAPP 3	<i>Guide to CAP Protocol</i>	
CAPP 50-2	<i>Civil Air Patrol Core Values</i>	

<b>CAPP 50-5</b>	<b><i>Introduction to Civil Air Patrol</i></b>	<b>An excellent resource on CAP's history, program and missions</b>
CAPP 50-7	<i>MENTORING: Building Our Members</i>	
CAPP 151	<i>Respect On Display</i>	Description of CAP Customs and Courtesies
<b>CAPP 201</b>	<i>CAP Public Affairs Officer Specialty Track</i>	This publication
<a href="#"><u>CAP PAO Checklist</u></a>	Quick reference for duties/responsibilities	
<a href="#"><u>CAP Online News Guidelines</u></a>	Template for submitting articles for online news	
<a href="#"><u>CAP Media Policy</u></a>	Guidelines for AFAMs	
<a href="#"><u>CAP Branding Guide</u></a>	Public awareness guide/resources	
<a href="#"><u>CAPP 152</u></a>	Social Media Guidelines	

NOTE: These readings should be mastered throughout the course of members' participation in this specialty track and shall be the material from which the exams are made.

***Knowledge, Training and Performance Requirements***

Complete the items in the attached checklist.

## Technician Level Training Checklist

Knowledge, Training and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
Participate in at least one public affairs planning session quarterly with the unit commander and/or command staff.	
Contact the next higher echelon PAO to introduce yourself; review procedures, policies, and training opportunities; and be assigned a mentor.	
Complete the following CAP online training: General Emergency Services (GES) and Introductory Communications User Training (ICUT).	
<p>Successfully complete the following online FEMA Independent study courses (attach certificates):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IS-42, <i>Social Media in Emergency Management</i></li> <li>2. IS-242, <i>Effective Communication</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Optional/Recommended Courses:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IS-29, <i>Public Information Officer Awareness (or resident G-289 Public Information Awareness)</i></li> <li>2. IS-100, <i>Introduction to Incident Command System</i></li> <li>3. IS-200, <i>ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents</i></li> <li>4. IS-700, <i>National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction</i></li> <li>5. IS-800, <i>National Response Framework, An Introduction</i></li> </ol>	
Describe through specific examples how you successfully fulfilled the duties listed in the position description in the technician section of this pamphlet.	
Attend a minimum of one public affairs workshop/seminar/academy or two (2) non-CAP public affairs training activities.	
Following established guidelines published on the CAP PAO webpage, create (or update if already written by a previous PAO) a unit public relations plan and unit crisis communications plan and have them approved by the unit commander.	
Create (or update) a list of local media (print, broadcast, internet, etc) contacts.	
Serve as lead PAO for two of the following CAP activities: (including, but not limited to a change of command ceremony, dining out, open house, promotion/award ceremony, fundraising activity, training exercise, color guard competition or event, and Spaatz, Earhart, Mitchell or Wright Brothers Award ceremony, etc.)	



## **Achieving the Senior Rating**

The senior rating is the intermediate progressive level of the CAP public affairs program. It is designed to build on previously learned skills and to continue to expand personal and quality performance as a public affairs officer as they relate to community relations, media relations, internal relations, internet communications, online presence management, and mission participation, and as liaison with other organizations and agencies.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives for the senior rating in the Public Affairs Officer specialty track are to:

- Develop as a highly motivated and trained PAO who will conduct and promote effective PAO programs both within the unit and at group/wing activities.
- Act as the primary advisor to the unit commander on public relations matters.
- Obtain working knowledge of the vital role CAP plays in support of our community's youth, emergency services, and aerospace education as its three-faceted mission.
- Develop, manage, and implement a public relations program that promotes CAP's missions, goals and objectives, its members, and its influential partnership within our communities through guidance available from NHQ/PA.
- Become a Public Information Officer (PIO) trainee.

### ***Position Description***

The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at the senior level is expected to:

- Perform the duties of a lead public affairs officer.
- Design public affairs programs and strategies.
- Work with wing, region, and national PA, develop crisis relations strategies.
- Train as Public Information Officer during an actual or training mission.

### ***Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements***

To complete the senior level of this specialty track, the member must demonstrate knowledge of CAP's PAO functions. As a minimum, a senior rated Public Affairs Officer (specialty track 201) should complete the items in the attached checklist.

## Senior Level Training Checklist

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
Complete Level II of the CAP Professional Development Program.	
Demonstrate ability to keep current in knowledge, policies, procedures, and requirements within the PAO specialty, including photography, social media, documentation and internet usage.	
Demonstrate the ability to maintain robust internal information programs.	
Describe through specific examples how they successfully fulfilled the duties listed in the position description located in the senior section of this pamphlet	
<b>IF</b> assigned to an echelon above the squadron, contact subordinate unit PAOs to offer assistance and review procedures, policies, training opportunities, and mentoring.	
Maintain contact with higher echelon PAO and keep current with NHQ, region and wing procedures, policies, training opportunities, and mentoring.	
<p>Complete the following FEMA courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IS-100, Introduction to Incident Command System</li> <li>2. IS-200, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents</li> <li>3. IS-29, Public Information Officer Awareness (or classroom G-289 Public Information Awareness)</li> <li>4. IS-702, NIMS Public Information (online)</li> </ol> <p>Optional/Recommended Courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. G-290, <i>Basic Public Information Officer Course (classroom)</i></li> <li>2. G-291, <i>JIS/JIC Planning for Tribal, State, and Local PIO (classroom)</i></li> <li>3. IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction</li> <li>4. IS-800, National Response Framework, An Introduction</li> <li>5. ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents</li> <li>6. ICS-400 Advanced ICS</li> <li>7. <i>E388: Advanced Public Information Officer (in-residence)</i></li> </ol>	
Become a Public Information Officer trainee	
Attend any two additional PAO workshops/seminar/academy or non-CAP public affairs training activities in addition to the training activities and courses previously completed.	

Following established guidelines published on the CAP PAO webpage, create (or update if already written by a previous PAO) a unit <a href="#">public affairs plan</a> and unit <a href="#">crisis communications plan</a> and have them approved by the unit commander (since being awarded the technician level).	
Demonstrate continued currency of the unit's media contact list.	
Participate in at least one public affairs planning session quarterly with the unit commander and/or command staff (since being awarded the technician level).	
Give a minimum of two CAP presentations to non-CAP groups or organizations.	
Maintain the media kit as described in the How-To-Guide for CAP Public Affairs.	
Reference the National Headquarters website and the PAO Toolkit contents quarterly for updated materials and add to/replace contents of the media kit as necessary.	
Produce four additional news releases, two of which must contain photos taken by the PAO; have them approved by the unit commander and document distribution to the media. Two of these releases will be sent to NHQ/PA for possible inclusion on <i>VolunteerNow</i> using the NHQ submission template (since being awarded the technician rating).	
Arrange and assist in coordination and implementation of one open house or other Civil Air Patrol special event.	
Manage the online presence of the PA section of the unit's website and authorize social media accounts that are publically accessible.	
Successfully serve for a minimum of 12 months as a primary Public Affairs Officer at the technician level.	
Successfully complete the online <a href="#">CAPP 201 test for senior rating</a> .	

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last, First, M.I.)

CAP Grade \_\_\_\_\_ CAPID \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Charter No. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commander's Signature Date

## **Achieving the Master Rating**

The master rating is the highest level of achievement for the CAP Public Affairs Officer. This level is the culmination of the professional skills learned and demonstrated to maximize CAP's public relations strategies as they relate to community relations, media relations, internal relations, internet communications, mission participation, and liaising with partner agencies.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives to complete the master rating in the Public Affairs Officer specialty track are to:

- Explain the duties and tasks associated with CAP's wing and region PAO officer positions.
- Manage CAP Public Affairs programs at wing and/or region levels.
- Develop a highly motivated and trained PAO who will conduct and promote effective PAO programs at the unit level (or higher) through active mentoring of junior PAOs.
  - Take an active leadership role in the public affairs officer program.
  - Act as a mission Public Information Officer (PIO) or supervised trainee for a large-scale mission or exercise.

### ***Position Description***

The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at the master level is expected to:

- Implement PAO activities and duties at the wing, region, or national level.
- Act as the primary advisor to the commander with regard to public relations and crisis management communications.
  - Act as the Public Information Officer or supervised trainee during actual or training mission.
    - Satisfactorily complete PIO training.
    - Mentor junior public affairs officers in their primary training.
    - Share their skills in the training environment.
    - Evaluate the efficacy of public relations/crisis management plans at lower echelons.

### ***Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements***

To complete the master level of this specialty track, the member must have earned the 201 senior rating, demonstrated in-depth knowledge of CAP's PAO programs, and be prepared to recommend Public Affairs policy to commanders. It prepares PAOs for positions from the squadron to the region level. This master rating may fulfill one requirement for completing CAP Level IV, Senior Member Training Program. Complete all the items in the attached checklist.

## Master Level Training Checklist

Knowledge, Training, and Performance Requirements	OJT Initials and Date
Complete Level III of the Professional Development Program.	
Act as PAO at a wing or region conference, OR provide public affairs training at a group or higher activity.	
Demonstrate the ability to maintain robust internal information programs.	
If primarily assigned at an echelon above the squadron level, contact subordinate unit PAOs to offer assistance and review procedures, policies, training opportunities, and mentoring.	
Maintain contact with higher echelon PAO and keep current with NHQ, region and wing procedures, policies training opportunities, and mentoring.	
<p>Complete the following FEMA courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction</li> <li>2. IS-800, National Response Framework, An Introduction</li> <li>3. ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents</li> </ol> <p>Optional FEMA courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. G-290, <i>Basic Public Information Officer Course (classroom)</i></li> <li>2. G-291, <i>JIS/JIC Planning for Tribal, State, and Local PIO (classroom)</i></li> <li>3. <i>ICS-400 Advanced ICS</i></li> <li>4. <i>E388: Advanced Public Information Officer (in-residence)</i></li> </ol>	
Attend any two additional PAO workshop, seminar, academy, or non-CAP public affairs training activities in addition to the training activities and courses previously completed.	
Demonstrate the ability to interpret CAP policies, procedures, and regulations in order to apply them to public relations and crisis communications plans.	
Demonstrate the ability to analyze current events and trends as it relates to CAP and advise the commander as to appropriate public relations actions.	
Demonstrate proficiency in instructing others in public relations and crisis communications by conducting at least three additional workshops/seminars or other related events since being awarded the senior rating.	

Maintain or supervise publication of the annual Public Relations Plan and Crisis Communications Plan and have the plans approved by the commander.	
Maintain or supervise publication of the unit media contact list.	
Lead at least two public affairs planning sessions with the commander and/or command staff (since being awarded the senior rating).	
Plan and conduct (or supervise) a minimum of three public awareness events (such as an open house, TV appearance, fair, air show, etc.) since being awarded the senior rating.	
Maintain or supervise the maintenance of the unit's PA content on the unit's web page and/or social media accounts.	
Localize a nationally-produced news article on CAP for release to the local media.	
Proof two news releases sent to NHQ/PA for publication on VolunteerNow, OR submit two news releases with your byline to NHQ/PA for publication on VolunteerNow (since being awarded the senior rating).	
Mentor a member through the technician or senior rating in the PAO specialty track.	
Successfully serve for a minimum of 18 months as a primary Public Affairs Officer at the senior level.	
Perform as the PIO or supervised trainee for two expanding multi-unit or multi-agency emergency services missions (actual, training or evaluation) since being awarded the senior rating.	
Satisfactorily complete PIO training.	
Successfully complete the online <a href="#">CAPP 201 test for master rating</a> .	

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last, First, M.I.)

CAP Grade \_\_\_\_\_ CAPID \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Charter No. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commander's Signature Date