United States Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

COAST GUARD OMBUDSMAN TRAINING

Student Guide

U.S. Coast Guard
Health, Safety & Work-Life Service Center
June 2016

THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

Welcome to Coast Guard Ombudsman Training

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a Coast Guard Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is a vital component of every Coast Guard unit, and one I believe to be critical to our missions and success. My guiding principles for the Service are Service to Nation, Duty to People and Commitment to Excellence. You play an active part in achieving each of these.

You fill an important position within the Command and your participation is very important to our Coast Guard Family. Our Coast Guard is geographically dispersed, often deployed away from home and operating at a high tempo. The need for robust family support programs is high, as the demands placed on our people and families reflect this dynamic environment in which we operate. Your role in keeping families informed and connected is more important than ever.

Ombudsmen are instrumental in assisting with the efforts of Commanding Officers and Officers-in-Charge to maintain a mission-ready force. The Ombudsman is critical in optimizing military family preparedness by preventing, identifying and addressing family readiness challenges. The communication of timely, accurate and relevant information to service members and families is a fundamental duty of the Ombudsman.

This manual reflects important provisions from the Coast Guard Ombudsman Instruction, COMDTINST 1750.4 (series), and will provide you with a wealth of information about the Coast Guard's Ombudsman Program. It is an important reference to aid you in building your proficiency as an Ombudsman.

The most important ingredient for the success of our Service is our people. I am committed to the well-being of our Coast Guard Family. Thank you for being a part of this process.
Semper Paratus!

Sincerely,

Paul F. Zukunft
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

Contents

Unit 1 Ombudsman Program Overview 1-1
Overview 1-1
History, Mission, and Organizational Structure 1-2
Role and Responsibilites of the Ombudsman 1-8
Becoming an Ombudsman 1-10
Unit 1 Check-on-Learning 1-12

Unit 2 Ethical Standards 2-1
Overview 2-1
Code of Conduct 2-2
Confidentiality 2-4
Conflict of Interest 2-6
Unit 2 Check-on-Learning 2-7

Unit 3 Program Management 3-1
Overview 3-1
Appointment, Expectations, and Resignation 3-2
Administrative Responsibilities 3-6
Unit 3 Check-on-Learning 3-12

Unit 4 Representing the Command 4-1
Overview 4-1
Command Representative 4-2
Command Liaison 4-6
Unit 4 Check-on-Learning 4-9

Unit 5 Communications Link 5-1
Overview 5-1
Communication Fundamentals 5-2
Communication Formats and Use 5-6
Command Communications 5-16
Unit 5 Check-on-Learning 5-22

Unit 6 Resource and Referral 6-1
Overview 6-1
Resource and Services 6-2
Referrals 6-7
Customer Service 6-11
Outreach 6-13
Unit 6 Check-on-Learning 6-16

Unit 7 Crisis Response 7-1
Introduction 7-1
Individual and Familiy Crisis 7-2

Command Crisis 7-17
Self-care 7-24
Unit 7 Check-on-Learning 7-25

Enclosures

Ranks and Insignias ..... ENCL 1
Volunteer Agreement ..... ENCL 2
Appointment Letter ..... ENCL 3
Claim for Reimbursement of Expenditures ..... ENCL 4
Daily Contact Log ..... ENCL 5
Individual Contact Form ..... ENCL 6
Newsletter ..... ENCL 7
Phone Tree ..... ENCL 8
Resource List ..... ENCL 9
Crisis Checklist ..... ENCL 10

UNIT 1

OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Overview

Introduction

The Coast Guard Ombudsman Program is a command program intended to improve communication between the command and the Coast Guard family members. Coast Guard ombudsmen are communication links, providing information and referral resources and acting as advocates for family members.

This unit provides a brief history and overview of the Coast Guard and the CG Ombudsman Program and identifies the basic role and major responsibilities of the ombudsman.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **RECOGNIZE** the importance of using the chain of command.
- **DESCRIBE** the mission of the Ombudsman program.
- **IDENTIFY** the roles and associated responsibilities within the organizational structure of the CG Ombudsman Program.
- **RECOGNIZE** the contents of COMDTINST 1750.4(series).
- **DESCRIBE** the role of an ombudsman.
- **LIST** the major responsibilities of an ombudsman.
- **SPECIFY** the services not provided by an ombudsman.
- **IDENTIFY** who may volunteer to be an ombudsman.
- **IDENTIFY** the major components of the appointment process.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Coast Guard Civilian Orientation
- Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) Program, COMDTINST 1306.1(Series)

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

CG History

Five federal agencies , the Revenue Cutter Service, the Lighthouse Service, the Steamboat Inspection Service, the Bureau of Navigation, and the Lifesaving Service, merged to form today's Coast Guard.

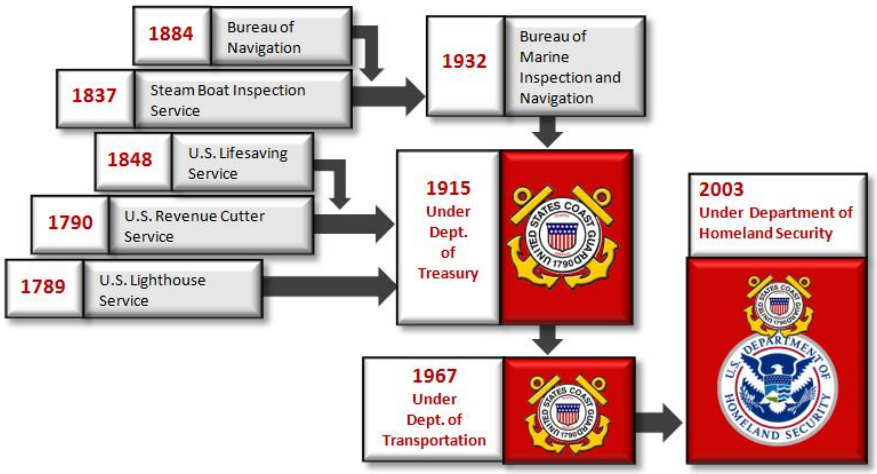


Figure 1.1- Coast Guard History

The multiple missions and responsibilities of these agencies make the Coast Guard what it is today, a multi-mission agency with both military and humanitarian responsibilities.

On 1 March 2003, the Coast Guard moved from the Department of Transportation to the new Department of Homeland Security. The Coast Guard is one of the five armed forces; however, it is the only armed force operating outside of the Department of Defense.

Throughout its history, the Coast Guard has had a unique relationship with the Navy. By statute, the Coast Guard is an armed force, operating in the joint arena at any time and functioning as a specialized service under the Navy in time of war or when directed by the President.

CG Roles and Missions

Since 1915, when the Coast Guard was established by law as an armed service, it has been a military, multi-mission, maritime force offering a unique blend of humanitarian, law-enforcement, regulatory, diplomatic, and military capabilities. The CG performs its missions under five major roles.

Maritime Security. Maritime law enforcement and border control are the oldest of the Coast Guard is numerous responsibilities. CG missions fulfilled under this role include:

- Illegal drug interdiction.
- Undocumented migrant interdiction.

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

CG Roles and Missions

- Other law enforcement.
- Ports, waterways, and coastal security.

Maritime Safety. The Coast Guard enhances the safety of maritime trade, transportation, and recreational boating through focused programs of mishap prevention, search-and-rescue, and accident investigation. CG missions fulfilled under this role include:

- Search and rescue.
- Marine safety.

Protection of Natural Resources. Protecting our natural resources and marine environment is vital to the health, wellbeing, and economy of the United States. CG missions fulfilled under this role include:

- Marine environmental protection.
- Living marine resources protection.

Maritime Mobility. The Coast Guard is a leading force for providing a safe and efficient marine transportation system. This system includes the waterways and ports used to move more than two billion tons of foreign and domestic freight and 3.3 billion barrels of oil each year. It also includes international and domestic passenger services, commercial and recreational fisheries, and recreational boating. CG missions fulfilled under this role include:

- Aids to navigation.
- Ice operations.

National Defense. The Coast Guard is one of the five armed services of the United States. As such, it is an important element of the U.S. national security strategy. The Coast Guard has several key defense missions that support the unified combatant commanders. These operations require the Coast Guard to execute essential military functions in peacetime, crisis, and war. The CG mission fulfilled under this role is defense readiness.

Our People

It takes a large number of people (more than 90,000) to achieve the Coast Guard's missions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

The Coast Guard is supported by five different types of employees, who together make up Team Coast Guard:

- 43,000 active duty personnel.
- 8, 900 civilian personnel.
- 7,800 reserve personnel.

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

Our People (Cont'd)

- 30,000 auxiliary personnel.
- Variable number of contractors.

Chain of Command

A chain of command is a reporting and leadership structure running from the most senior officer in the command to junior enlisted person. Chains of command exist throughout the Coast Guard and in the civilian workforce. Using the chain of command means accessing or reporting to a lower level in the command before moving to a higher level. Knowing the chain of command:

- Enables everyone in the command to identify the individual senior to them whom they must report.
- Means bringing concerns to the attention of the right person at the lowest level first, in order to give that person a chance to address the concerns before going up the chain to a higher level.
- Is essential for an ombudsman who is an officially appointed representative of the command.
- Allows you to use the systems in place to assist families in the command.

In the Coast Guard, a command is typically comprised of command cadre (i.e., commanding officer/officer in charge, executive officer/executive petty officer, and command senior enlisted leader), officers, chief warrant officers (CWOs), and enlisted personnel.

- **Commanding Officer (CO)/Officer-in-Charge (OIC).** The CO/OIC is responsible for everything that happens within the command.
- **Executive Officer (XO)/Executive Petty Officer (XPO).** The XO/XPO is responsible for implementing the policies of the CO/OIC, and carrying out the mission of and meeting the goals of the command.
- **Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL).** The CSEL refers to all Command Master Chiefs (CMC), Rating Force Master Chiefs (RFMC), Command Senior Chiefs (CSC), and Collateral Duty Unit Command Chiefs (may be a Master Chief Petty Officer, Senior Chief Petty Officer, or Chief Petty Officer). Although not in the chain of command, the CSEL works within the chain of command, acting as a liaison between the command and the enlisted personnel and resolving issues using the chain of command.

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

Chain of Command (Cont'd)

The CO generally appoints the XO or CSEL as the command's point of contact (POC) for the ombudsman.

The ombudsman should keep their POC informed. If an ombudsman determines that something must be reported to the CO, they should make sure the POC also knows. Telling the POC respects the chain of command, keeps the POC informed, and ultimately keeps the ombudsman from appearing to usurp the POC's authority.

Whenever acting in your official capacity as an ombudsman, you must use the chain of command and use appropriate rank/rate titles. The rank is always clearly identifiable on their sleeve, their shoulder, or their collar device. Refer to enclosure 1 for CG ranks and insignias.

Establishment and Mission of the CG Ombudsman Program

The commanding officer is responsible for the wellbeing of all personnel in the command. The morale and mission readiness of Coast Guard personnel relates directly to the health and wellbeing of their families.

On 26 March 1986, Admiral Gracey formally instituted the Coast Guard Command Family Representative program, the precursor to today's CG Ombudsman Program. The program allows the Coast Guard to tap one of its greatest resources, Coast Guard spouses, and establish a link between the command and families necessary to:

- Provide the command with a better understanding of the welfare of the command/unit's families.
- Ensure Coast Guard families have the information needed to meet the challenges of a military lifestyle and better prepare for emergencies.
- Help families when issues or emergent situations arise and ease the sacrifices families must make in order to allow personnel to carry out Coast Guard missions.

The program is modeled after the Navy's program. In early 2011, the program experienced renewed interest and increased funding. The CG has officially designated 26 March as Coast Guard Ombudsman Appreciation Day to recognize publicly the dedicated service of these selfless volunteers.

CG Ombudsman Program Structure

The Coast Guard Ombudsman Program is comprised of the following roles and responsibilities:

Ombudsman Program Manager. A member of the Office of Work-Life (CG-111) assigned overall responsibility for the CG Ombudsman Program, establishing policy, functioning as the subject matter expert, and providing guidance and support to all program personnel.

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

CG Ombudsman Program Structure (Cont'd)

Commandant Ombudsmen-at-Large (OALs). Appointed by the Commandant to represent all ombudsmen and improve family readiness by reporting on active duty and reserve family concerns and advising the Commandant on matters affecting Coast Guardsmen and their families.

Health, Safety, and Work-life Service Center (HSWL SC). The Work-Life Division of the HSWL SC provides program oversight and is responsible for implementation of the program Coast Guard-wide.

Regional Ombudsman Coordinator (ROC). A member of the Area (Atlantic and Pacific) command staff responsible for addressing Ombudsman program service delivery and implementation issues in their respective Area. The ROC plans, consults, trains, networks and publicizes program components and services in cooperation with the Ombudsman Program Manager, HSWL SC, and the ombudsman coordinators.

Ombudsman Coordinator. A member of the work-life staff assigned responsibility for ombudsman program administration within their AOR. Ombudsman coordinators provide guidance, advice, and support to commands and local ombudsmen.

Ombudsman. A volunteer spouse of an active duty or reserve unit member designated by and responsible to the command. The ombudsman assists families by providing information and resources, informing them about Coast Guard and command policies, and providing information about activities of interest. The ombudsman also serves as an advisor to the commanding officer, keeping him or her informed of the concerns of the families.

Ombudsman Program Policy

COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series) governs the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, providing program policy and guidance, and specifying program roles and responsibilities.

The instruction guides all personnel with responsibility for the program's successful implementation in the performance of their duties and outlines their specific requirements in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the document. Specific guidance contained in this section includes:

- Requirements for appointing ombudsmen.
- Training requirements.
- Use of the command roster.
- Personal protections afforded ombudsmen.
- Participation in events, boards and committees.

History, Mission, and Organizational Structure

Ombudsman Program Policy (Cont'd)

- Prohibited actions.
- Communication requirements.
- Official correspondence.
- Service delivery requirements.
- Data collection requirements.
- Confidentiality.
- Reportable issues.

Enclosures to the instruction contain specific guidance on the following:

- Procedures for policy waivers (enclosure 1).
- Ombudsman-at-Large duties (enclosures 2).
- District Ombudsman Community of Practice (enclosure 3).
- Program support such as funding requirements to include identification of funded and reimbursable items (enclosure 4).
- Social media guidance for ombudsmen (enclosure 5).

Although this training covers the CG Ombudsman Program in detail, it is the instruction that contains the official program guidance, requirements, and responsibilities of the program.

Role and Responsibilities of the Ombudsman

An ombudsman is…

The ombudsman is an official member of the unit's command staff, a resource for the unit's families, and the primary link and communicator of information between families and the command. The Coast Guard has a variety of commands, each with its own mission, unit size, and geographic location. These factors influence the tasks assigned to the ombudsman by the command; however, all ombudsmen have these major responsibilities in common:

- Acting as an official representative of the command.
- Functioning as a communications link between the command and families.
- Providing resource and referral to assist unit families.
- Responding to crisis within and/or affecting the command.

These responsibilities are described here briefly, but each responsibility will be covered in more detail over the course of this training.

Command Representative

The ombudsman functions as an official representative of the command at events or by participating as a consultant on boards, committees, or groups that may affect the wellbeing of CG families. In this capacity, the ombudsman must be confident, trustworthy, and possess the ability to relate professionally and positively with members of the command as well as others they encounter as an official representative of the command.

Communications Link

One of the most critical responsibilities is that of a communications link between the command and the families. In addition to keeping the commanding officer informed about the concerns of the families, the ombudsman transmits information to the families about the command, current programs, CG resources, general information concerning the CG community, and acts as an advocate for command families as appropriate.

Resource and Referral Specialist

The ombudsman is the person in the command who serves as a source of accurate information about helping resources. They can point a family member in the right direction to obtain needed services or to resolve a problem.

Crisis Response

Although most calls ombudsmen handle are routine, they must also handle emergencies and crisis situations such as suicide, intimate partner maltreatment, or disasters. Ombudsmen may have specific roles in command disaster preparedness and are often called upon to provide information to command families during a crisis.

Role and Responsibilities of the Ombudsman

An ombudsman is not...

The ombudsman position is often attributed responsibilities that are not assigned to the position. Unit families should have a clear understanding of the ombudsman's role. The following are NOT responsibilities of the ombudsman:

- Organizing social events for the unit.
- Loaning money.
- Providing temporary lodging in their home.
- Providing transportation in their privately owned vehicle.
- Providing child care.
- Providing counseling.
- Giving recommendations to business or service companies (e.g., car repair, babysitter, hairdresser, etc).
- Acting as the sponsor to every incoming family.
- Making Red Cross contact for families or passing messages for families.

Becoming an Ombudsman

Who may volunteer?

Voluntary service as an ombudsman is most often the spouse of a unit member. The appointed ombudsman normally should not be the spouse or family member of the command cadre. The ombudsman candidate must:

- Have no record of family violence. A records check with the servicing work-life office will be required once the ombudsman is selected. The records check may prevent a candidate from being appointed.
- Have time to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including participating in required training.
- Have the ability to be confidential and impartial when referring families to appropriate resources.
- Hold a positive view of the Coast Guard and the command while understanding and supporting policy decisions, traditions, and missions.

Preferred Attributes and Qualifications

Ombudsmen should possess the following attributes and/or qualifications:

- Positive attitude.
- Ability to work closely with the command and ALL families.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to voice clearly the concerns of families to the command.
- Personality characteristics of maturity, flexibility, friendliness, assertiveness, stability, and empathy.
- Be a good role model who will be credible with spouses and the command.
- Personal knowledge of work-life resources, permanent change of station, deployments, and TRICARE.
- Working knowledge of computers and e-mail.
- Support and cooperation of his or her family for the time commitment needed for this position and required training.
- Prior ombudsman and/or other volunteer experience.

Becoming an Ombudsman

Appointment

The appointment process for an ombudsman consists of the following components:

Application to Volunteer. The ombudsman must complete a CG Form 6078, Application to Volunteer as a Coast Guard Ombudsman and initial item 14 of the application, which stipulates the ombudsman's services are voluntary and without compensation. The unit shall retain the original CG Form 6078 and provide a copy to the ombudsman coordinator at the supporting work-life office to maintain in the ombudsman's administrative record.

Family Advocacy Central Registry Check. Ombudsmen shall not be appointed before notification that a central registry check has been completed. Commands shall initiate a family advocacy check by submitting the application to the servicing work-life office. Potential ombudsmen with a previously substantiated case of child or spouse abuse shall not be appointed as an ombudsman.

Appointment Letter. The command shall present an appointment letter to the newly selected ombudsman stating the duration of duty and responsibilities, and specifying the level of administrative and financial support. If circumstances allow, the presentation of the appointment letter will take place in front of command personnel. For ombudsmen serving more than one unit, each supported commanding officer shall provide appointment letters. The unit shall retain the original appointment letter and provide a copy to the ombudsman coordinator at the supporting work-life office to maintain in the ombudsman's administrative record.

Training. It is essential that the new ombudsman receive training in the skills needed for the position. The ombudsman, with guidance from the ombudsman coordinator, shall complete Ombudsman Online Core training within four weeks of receiving a Learning Management System (LMS) account and attend Coast Guard Ombudsman Training within 3 months of appointment.

Ombudsman Nametag and Pin. Once training has been completed, the ombudsman will receive an ombudsman nametag and pin (round with blue Ombudsman Program logo), and the ombudsman will wear the nametag and pin to all official unit functions, making the ombudsman easy to recognize by crew and family members.

Unit 1 Check-on-Learning

1. Which of the following statements about the chain of command is true? (Circle all that apply)
   A. It is a reporting and leadership structure running from the most senior officer in the command to the most junior enlisted person.
   B. It means bringing concerns to the attention of the right person at the highest level first.
   C. It enables everyone in the command to identify the individual senior to them whom they must report.
   D. It is essential for an ombudsman who is an officially appointed representative of the command to know their chain of command.

2. Describe the mission of the CG Ombudsman Program.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Match the roles in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. Ombudsman Program Manager	a. A member of the work-life staff assigned responsibility for CG Ombudsman Program administration.
_____ 2. Ombudsmen-at-Large	b. A volunteer who assists families and serves as an advisor to the commanding officer.
_____ 3. Regional Ombudsman Coordinators	c. Assigned overall responsibility for the CG Ombudsman Program.
_____ 4. Ombudsman Coordinators	d. A member of the Area (Atlantic and Pacific) command staff responsible for addressing CG Ombudsman Program service delivery and implementation issues.
_____ 5. Ombudsman	e. Report on active duty and reserve family concerns and advise the Commandant on matters affecting Coast Guardsmen and their families.

Unit 1 Check-on-Learning

4. List the major responsibilities all ombudsmen have in common.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

5. Which of the following services is not a responsibility of the ombudsman? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Providing child care.
   B. Organizing social events for the unit.
   C. Referring families to needed services.
   D. Providing transportation in their vehicle.
   E. Providing information about the command.

6. The appointed ombudsman normally should not be the spouse or family member of the command cadre.

   A. True.
   B. False.

7. Match the appointment components in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

	Column A		Column B
_____	1. Application to Volunteer	a.	Initiated when the command submits the application to the servicing work-life office.
_____	2. Family Advocacy Central Registry Check	b.	States the duration of duty and responsibilities.
_____	3. Appointment Letter	c.	Must be completed within 3 months of appointment.
_____	4. Ombudsman Pin	d.	Received upon completion of training.
_____	5. Ombudsman Training	e.	Stipulates the ombudsman's services are voluntary and without compensation.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

UNIT 2

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Overview

Introduction

Ethics and confidentiality are essential elements of the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program. It is vital that all Ombudsmen know and understand the value of ethics and confidentiality to their success as a command ombudsman. The commitment and responsibility to these values is required throughout the term of service.

This unit emphasizes ethical standards for an ombudsman in the performance of their duties by describing the code of conduct, explaining the importance of confidentiality, and providing guidance on conflicts of interest.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **DESCRIBE** the code of conduct and its importance in carrying out the roles and responsibilities of an ombudsman.
- **IDENTIFY** the difference between confidentiality and reportable information.
- **LIST** ways the ombudsman can promote confidentiality.
- **IDENTIFY** consequences of a breach in confidentiality.
- **RECOGNIZE** conflicts of interest.
- **DESCRIBE** how to avoid conflicts of interest.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994

Code of Conduct

Description and Importance

The Ombudsman Code of Conduct is the essential foundation upon which an ombudsman's credibility is established and maintained. Violations of this code will not be tolerated. Each ombudsman shall:

- Support the command's mission;
- Respect the command and family members;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Avoid conflicts of interest; and
- Maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Support the Command's Mission

The Commanding Officer/Officer-In-Charge is responsible for the command and everything that happens within the command. He or she has specific ideas as to how they will operate their command.

Sometimes your ideas may be in conflict with or are not in the best interest of the command, but as the ombudsman you will not speak or act against the policies set by the command or act independently outside the scope of your appointed responsibilities and CG policy.

The ombudsman is a part of the command and is an important element in dealing with family issues; however, there are other elements that must also be considered in making decisions for unit families such as regulations and budget constraints. These issues impact all decisions for the unit and the command must operate within these constraints and in compliance with CG policy. Your support of the command to the families is essential.

Respect the Command and Families

At times, you may feel unsupported by the command because of demands placed on your spouse by the command or lack of responsiveness by the command to your needs as an ombudsman, but you should not reveal any negative feelings to the families you serve.

Ombudsmen will bring any disagreement and all matters affecting the unit directly to the command and follow the chain of command to the conclusion of the matter. If a matter can be handled more effectively elsewhere, the command will direct that action.

Maintain Confidentiality

One of the most crucial aspects of developing trust and establishing professionalism as an ombudsman is maintaining confidentiality as defined by the command.

Code of Conduct

Maintain Confidentiality (Cont'd)

Any personal or family situation discussed with an ombudsman will stay between the ombudsman and that person unless it meets the reporting instances set by law, policy, or the command. See "Confidentiality" on page 2-4 for more detail.

Avoid Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest can occur between an individual's personal interests and their official duty as an ombudsman. Ombudsmen may not use their public position for personal gain. See "Conflict of Interest" on page 2-6 for more detail.

Maintain Highest Standards of Professionalism

The ombudsman's effectiveness in the job will depend largely on how professionally the duties are performed. You must have credibility with both the command and the families if you are to be trusted and taken seriously.

You will be judged according to the overall image you project. If you are perceived to be competent, organized, discreet, and confident, the command will be more likely to provide you the support and cooperation needed and family members will be more likely to call on you for assistance.

Ombudsmen will act in a skillful, businesslike manner and dress in clothing appropriate to the occasion. The ombudsman's effectiveness depends on their credibility with both the families and the Command.

Confidentiality

Confidential Information

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION is sensitive information about a service member or family member, kept within the commanding officer's designated network, and is for official use only. The commanding officer determines which individuals in their command have a "need to know" and under what circumstances that "need to know" applies. The executive officer (XO), command master chief (CMC), and chaplain are normally designated under most circumstances, and depending on the situation additional personnel such as the victim advocate (VA) or command drug and alcohol representative (CDAR) may also be informed.

Parameters of Confidentiality

CONFIDENTIALITY means that a person may talk to an ombudsman about a problem or family matter and be sure the conversation will remain private between the ombudsman and that person; however, confidentiality applies only to information not designated as reportable by law, CG policy, or the commanding officer.

Confidentiality DOES NOT MEAN withholding information from the CO and those in the chain of command who have a "need to know".

Reportable Information

All information disclosed to the ombudsman is confidential; however, confidentiality does not apply to all communications with the ombudsman; some information requires disclosure to the proper authority. This type of information is "reportable", and involves situations where someone's "safety" and "wellbeing" are at stake.

An ombudsman MUST report:

- All suspected or known child abuse and/or neglect.
- Alleged intimate partner maltreatment.
- Suspected or potential homicides and violent or life threatening situations.
- All suspected or potential suicide risks.
- Alleged sexual assault.
- Any other issues identified by the CO as reportable.

Types of Confidential Information

Family members may contact the ombudsman to ask for information, guidance, and referrals, or they may just want to discuss their concerns.

Types of confidential information ombudsmen may encounter include:

- Work performance issues.
- Substance abuse issues.

Confidentiality

Types of Confidential Information (Cont'd)

- Marital problems.
- Financial difficulties.
- Parenting challenges.
- Infidelity.
- Violations of law.
- Child neglect/abuse (reportable).
- Medical issues.
- Suicidal or homicidal behaviors (reportable).
- Sexual assault (reportable).
- Intimate partner maltreatment (reportable).

Promoting Confidentiality

Given the sensitive nature of the information ombudsmen encounter, it is crucial to adhere to the strictest code of confidentiality to protect the privacy of individuals and to maintain the credibility of the CG Ombudsman Program; therefore, an ombudsman should take the following actions to promote and maintain confidentiality:

- Inform anyone wishing to discuss a personal matter of the expectations to confidentiality and mandated reporting.
- Not share sensitive information about a service member or family member with anyone, including their spouse, other members of the command, or other CG agencies such as work-life or legal without the approval of the CO or the service and/or family member.
- Keep the command roster in a secure location.
- Protect electronic rosters with a password.
- Answer calls in a private area.
- Discussing trends rather than specific calls or e-mails received.
- Maintain call logs in a secure place.

Consequences for Breaching Confidentiality

A failure to maintain confidentiality results in a lack of confidence in the ombudsman by the CO and the affected individual, and can cause severe and irreparable harm to individuals; therefore, any breach in confidentiality may be cause for removal from the ombudsman position.

Conflict of Interest

Recognizing Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest can exist whether or not money is involved and whether or not the conflict is actual or perceived. Ombudsmen may not use their position to solicit individuals they come into contact with as a result of their volunteer work. Examples of soliciting that are not permitted include:

- Selling baskets, scrapbooking supplies, kitchen products, insurance, real estate, or other items or services to command personnel and their family members.
- Taking orders for products.
- Distributing business cards with the exception of their ombudsman business card.
- Providing information about private businesses during a presentation.

- Hanging posters or information about private businesses at the unit.
- Advertising personal businesses in a command sponsored newsletter.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Great care must be taken to assure that there is no potential for a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Ombudsmen shall not:

- Use their public position or resources to solicit unit personnel, families, or others for personal gain.
- Take any action or make recommendations inconsistent with law, CG policy, or the command.
- Coerce or attempt to coerce unit personnel and/or their families to implement their recommendations.

Unit 2 Check-on-Learning

1. Match the items in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

	Column A		Column B
_____	1. Support the command's mission	a.	Ombudsmen will act in a skillful, businesslike manner and dress in clothing appropriate to the occasion.
_____	2. Respect the command and family members	b.	Ombudsmen will not speak or act against the policies set by the command.
_____	3. Maintain confidentiality	c.	Ombudsmen may not use their public position for personal gain.
_____	4. Avoid conflicts of interest	d.	Ombudsmen will bring any disagreement and all matters affecting the unit directly to the command.
_____	5. Maintain the highest standards of professionalism	e.	Ombudsmen will not disclose any personal or family situation discussed unless it meets the reporting instances set by law, policy, or the command.

2. List the actions an ombudsman should take to promote and maintain confidentiality.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

Unit 2 Check-on-Learning

3. Below is a list of confidential information that a person may disclose to an ombudsman. Indicate which information in column B has confidentiality (C) and which information is reportable (R) by placing C or R in the blank corresponding to the item.

Column A	Column B
_____	Financial difficulties
_____	Work performance issues
_____	Infidelity
_____	Violations of law
_____	Child neglect or abuse
_____	Medical issues
_____	Intimate Partner Maltreatment
_____	Suicidal or homicidal behaviors

4. Which of the following is a potential consequence for breaching confidentiality? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Removal from the ombudsman position.
   B. Lack of confidence in the ombudsman by the CO.
   C. Legal action against you by the affected individual.
   D. Severe and irreparable harm to individuals.

5. Which of the following is a conflict of interest? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Taking orders for products.
   B. Distributing ombudsman business cards.
   C. Providing information about private businesses during a presentation.
   D. Hanging posters or information about private businesses at the unit.

6. Describe how ombudsmen can avoid a conflict of interest.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

UNIT 3

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Overview

Introduction

To function effectively as an ombudsman, you are required to perform a certain amount of administrative duties. Theses duties require you to organize and plan your work; the systems that you establish do not have to be complex or very time consuming, but it is necessary to establish procedures and follow them regularly so the work does not become overwhelming.

This unit focuses on meetings, documentation, and information and data management required by you to perform your duties successfully as an ombudsman.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **IDENTIFY** the purpose and contents of the Volunteer Agreement and the Appointment Letter from the Command.
- **IDENTIFY** the purpose and outcomes of the command meeting and the meeting with the ombudsman coordinator.
- **LIST** the actions for resigning.
- **DESCRIBE** items funded and reimbursed by the command.
- **DESCRIBE** the purpose of the Ombudsman Registry.
- **IDENTIFY** the purpose and contents of the monthly report.
- **DOCUMENT** ombudsman activities on a monthly report.
- **IDENTIFY** how to obtain and maintain the command roster.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994
- Ombudsman Registry Guide for Ombudsmen, Aug 2012

Appointment, Expectations, and Resignation

Volunteer Agreement

Ombudsmen perform their duties as volunteers; therefore, prior to performing ombudsman duties, you are required to complete part I and II of DD Form 2793, Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Activities or Non-appropriated Fund Instrumentalities, available in electronic form online at www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2793.pdf. Refer to enclosure 2 to see a copy of this form.

As an official volunteer of the Coast Guard, ombudsmen have certain protections in the performance of their duties and the volunteer agreement ensures the ombudsman's eligibility for these protections. Protections and the conditions under which ombudsmen receive compensation include:

1. Disability or death compensation paid by the United States government resulting from personal injury sustained while in the performance of their duty except when the:
    - Injury or death resulted from misconduct.
    - Ombudsman inflicted harm upon himself or herself.
    - Ombudsman was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. Claims for damages or losses for property while in the performance of their duty.
3. Protection from personal liability should another person be injured during the performance of their duties; however, this does not prevent an ombudsman from being charged with a crime.

Ombudsmen should obtain a signed copy of the volunteer agreement prior to performing any ombudsman duties to ensure eligibility for protections.

Upon termination of volunteer service by the ombudsman or the command, the command completes part IV of the volunteer and provides a copy to the ombudsman; thereby, officially terminating eligibility for protections.

Letter of Appointment

The command uses the appointment letter to officially appoint and welcome an ombudsman to the command. In general, the appointment letter outlines the responsibilities, appointment duration, administrative and financial support, and regular command meetings. More specifically, the letter may contain points of contact, reportable incidents, and expectations with regard to confidentiality. Refer to enclosure 3 for an example appointment letter.

The appointment letter is a valuable tool for the ombudsman, offering a basic understanding of the command's expectations and providing a springboard for further discussion and clarification of roles and responsibilities when meeting with the commanding officer (CO).

Appointment, Expectations, and Resignation

Command Meeting

Once appointed, the ombudsman meets with the CO to complete required paperwork such as the volunteer agreement and clarify roles and expectations. This meeting may include guidance on:

- Priorities and expectations for the program and job performance.
- Program implementation.
- Confidentiality.
- Continuing education.
- Attendance at District Community of Practice meetings.
- Schedule for future meetings.
- Key personnel within the command.

Meeting with Ombudsman Coordinator

The ombudsman coordinator is a member of the work-life staff and serves as the CG Ombudsman Program point of contact and consultant for local ombudsmen, the District Ombudsman Community of Practice, and commands. The ombudsman coordinator's duties include:

- Maintaining a current roster of local ombudsmen.
- Providing information, guidance, resources, policy clarification and updates, and helpful information for CG families to the local ombudsmen.
- Coordinating ombudsman trainings.
- Referring CG families to their ombudsman.

Upon appointment, ombudsmen should contact their ombudsman coordinator to arrange training if they have not already attended and a meeting. At the meeting, the ombudsman will provide the coordinator with the following:

- A copy of the appointment letter.
- Contact information.
- A copy of their training certificate, if they have completed training.

Appointment Duration

The appointment duration may be limited to a three or six month trial period. At the end of the stated trial period, the appointment can be renewed with the consent of both parties. Resignation or dismissal is possible at any time with an agreed procedure, which protects both sides should either find it necessary to terminate the agreement. The ombudsman's term of appointment automatically expires when the ombudsman's spouse transfers from the command, is discharged, or retires.

Appointment, Expectations, and Resignation

Appointment Duration (Cont'd)

The command will terminate the ombudsman appointment if the ombudsman:

- Violates the code of conduct.
- Knowingly fails to execute their reportable duties.
- Knowingly submits an unauthorized reimbursement claim.
- Knowingly misuses command issued property.
- Exhibits behavior that is considered detrimental to the command and/or command families.

Resigning

When an ombudsman can no longer fulfill the duties or no longer desires to fulfill the duties of the position they may resign. The ombudsman will automatically resign the position upon:

- Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders.
- Resignation, retirement, or discharge of the sponsor.
- Change of command.

In cases where resignation resulted from a change of command, the incoming commanding officer may decline the resignation and request the current ombudsman remain until a new ombudsman is appointed, or the CO may offer to reappoint the incumbent, if the incumbent is the spouse of an active duty or reserve unit member. The following actions should be taken when resigning the ombudsman position.

Notify the command. If the ombudsman is making a permanent change of station (PCS) and has a departure date, he or she should plan to turn things over at least one month prior to his or her move. Notify the command of your tentative departure date. This gives the command a chance to start the search for a replacement before you leave. If personnel conflict or grievances with the command are the cause of the resignation, notify the command as soon as possible.

Submit a letter of resignation. The letter should be addressed to the commanding officer or officer-in-charge and include the reason for resigning, the last day of ombudsman service and (when appropriate) some expression of appreciation for being part of the Coast Guard tradition and the opportunity to serve the unit families. Keep the letter brief, maintain a copy of the letter for your records, and send a copy to the ombudsman coordinator.

Appointment, Expectations, and Resignation

Resigning (Cont'd)

Aid in the search for a new ombudsman. The command may ask the ombudsman for recommendations. They may also have interested people contact the ombudsman for information. While the ombudsman may offer recommendations and provide information, the appointment of the new ombudsman belongs solely with the command officer.

Turn over resource files. If possible, complete a face-to-face handoff of the resource files. This is the best time to provide the new ombudsman with all information about the job to include newsletter editing, how to tips, and community points of contact. DO NOT turn over the phone log sheets; shred all log sheets to maintain confidentiality.

Request a letter of recommendation. This is a great letter to add to a career folder for future employment or as a character reference for another ombudsman position.

Administrative Responsibilities

Budget and Funding

COMDTINST 1750.4 (series) requires every unit to establish specific funding resources for support of the unit's ombudsman program. Commands may use appropriated funds or non-appropriated funds in support of the ombudsman program. The ombudsman and the CO should discuss the program's budget and determine the level of support the command can provide. Items that a command can fund include:

Incidental expenses. Expenses in support of the ombudsman program may be paid for with appropriated or non-appropriated funds when incurred by the command only. This is at the discretion of the CO and can be used for individual ombudsman appreciation recognition. Cash awards are not authorized for ombudsmen.

Administrative support. Equipment, supplies, and services such as, paper, envelops, pens, copier service, use of government mail and government vehicle transportation should be budgeted and may be provided from appropriated fund or non-appropriated funds, as command resources permit.

Newsletters. The command assumes all costs for the production and delivery of ombudsman newsletters. The command must approve newsletter content before distribution. The command is responsible for providing technical and administrative support, paper, printer access and delivery costs (stamps/bulk mail, etc).

Local unit morale funds may be authorized to support certain functions of the ombudsman. Local ombudsmen are encouraged to work closely with the unit morale officer and their command POC to identify needs, determine if they are eligible for morale fund support, and identify funding through the morale fund budget process.

Reimbursement

Ombudsmen must be acting in an official capacity, as directed by the CO, to receive reimbursement. For reimbursement, the ombudsman must document expenses and provide receipts as well as a Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, SF 1164 (enclosure 4). The following items may be reimbursed:

Childcare. Reimbursement may not exceed the local rate of the local Child Development Center (CDC). If there is no local CDC the Family Resource Specialist (FRS) at the servicing Work-Life Office will provide the local rate.

Mileage, parking, and tolls. Mileage will be paid at the current government reimbursement rate for privately owned vehicles. Mileage must be documented, and receipts are required for parking and toll reimbursement.

Administrative Responsibilities

Reimbursement (Cont'd)

Travel expenses. Expenses incurred during participation in training, conferences and other approved events are authorized. Travel must be approved in advance, invitational travel orders must be used, and reimbursement must be in accordance with Joint Federal Travel Regulations. If the reimbursement of expenses will cause a hardship for an ombudsman's family, the command may provide a travel advance. The ombudsman will need to file a travel voucher with receipts upon completion of travel. The ombudsman's command POC or administrative personnel can advise on the necessary procedures and forms.

Communication equipment. Equipment such as a computer, cell phone, or other electronic devices, long distance calling cards or plans, or Internet service are authorized. Command pre-authorization and approval of equipment expenditures is required for reimbursements.

- Command-owned equipment may be issued to the ombudsman at the discretion of the CO if they decide the ombudsman program will function more effectively. This equipment must be used for official duties only and returned when the ombudsman resigns.
- The issuance and installation of communication equipment, telephone service, or other electronic equipment in the home of an ombudsman is at the discretion of the CO. Installation of such equipment is NOT ROUTINE and is done only after careful consideration and approval by the CO as necessary for the ombudsman program to function effectively.

Data Collection and the Privacy Act of 1974

Ombudsmen are required to maintain a daily contact log and submit a monthly report. In the performance of these tasks and other tasks required to perform their duties, an ombudsman should try to maintain as little personal data as possible about individuals under the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974.

Congress enacted the Privacy Act of 1974 to safeguard individuals against the invasion of personal privacy; limit the government's collection, use, and disclosure of personal information; and to allow individuals access to any government records pertaining to them. The privacy act was updated in 1988 with the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act and again in 1995 with Privacy Principles.

Administrative Responsibilities

Daily Activity Log

To gather data for reports, most ombudsmen document their activities on a log (see enclosure 5).

An activity log helps the ombudsman:

- See trends in types of calls, such as a number of requests for financial counseling, childcare resources or spouse employment issues.
- Follow up with people who contacted the ombudsman for information and resources that needed research.
- To see if the ombudsman is continually providing the same information to the same people.
- To track workload and hours spent working on the program.

Ombudsman Activity Log Month & Year: _____

Contacts *(i.e., Incoming and outgoing contacts)*:

Date	Name Incoming (I)/Outgoing (O)	Sp/FM/SO, SM, CG/DoD Civ, Comm, Other*	E-mail/Phone Number	Type of I&Rs	Time Spent	Follow-Up**

Other Activities *(i.e., Newsletters, meetings, presentations, trainings, outreach, and administrative duties)*:

Date	Activity	Time Spent	Description

Figure 3.1 – Ombudsman Activity Log

The contact portion of the activity log normally contains the following data:

- Name
- Date and time spent
- E-mail address or phone number
- Type of information and referral
- Follow-up (i.e., date)

For in-depth calls that require research or multiple referrals, ombudsmen can use a separate document (e.g., Ombudsman Individual Contact Form – enclosure 6) to record information about the contact.

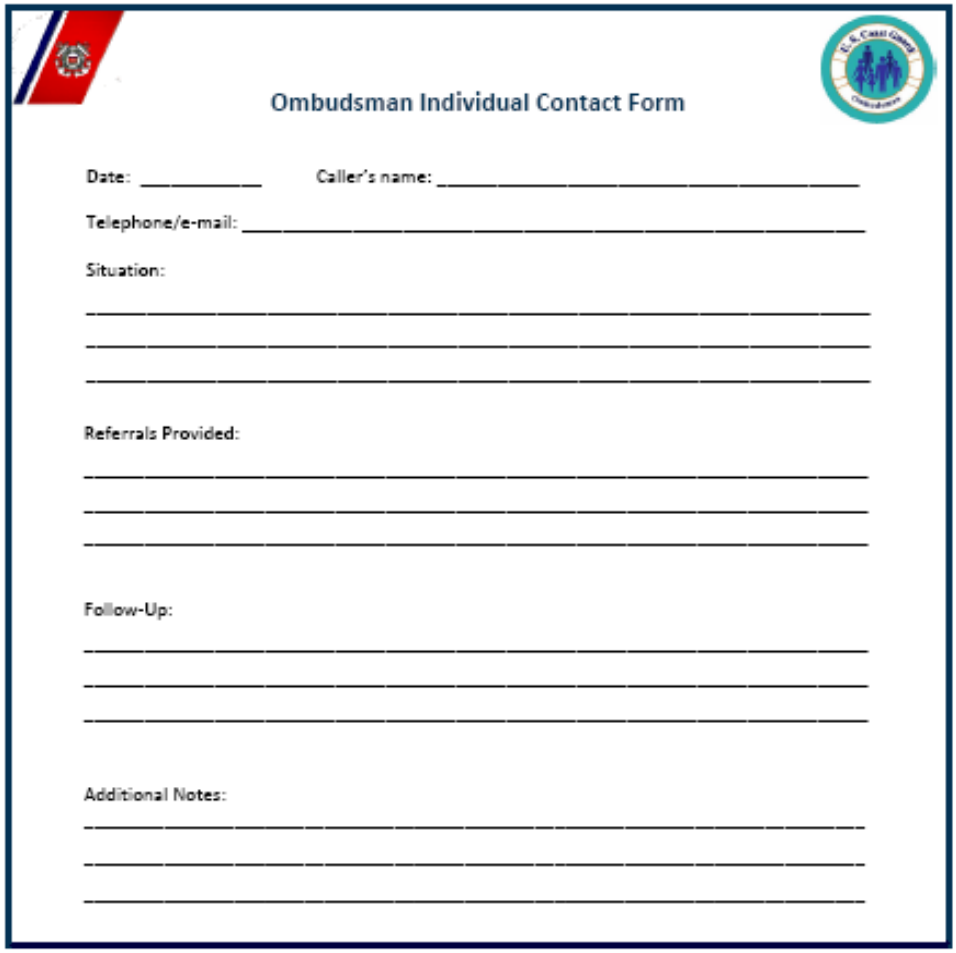
The individual contact form normally contains the following data:

- Situation

Administrative Responsibilities

Daily Contact Log (Cont'd)

- Referrals provided
- Follow-up conducted
- Additional Notes



Ombudsman Individual Contact Form

Date: _____ Caller's name: _____

Telephone/e-mail: _____

Situation:

_____
_____
_____

Referrals Provided:

_____
_____
_____

Follow-Up:

_____
_____
_____

Additional Notes:

_____
_____
_____

Figure 3.2 – Ombudsman Individual Contact Form

No one, including the ombudsman's spouse or children, should have access to information about families who contact their ombudsman in an official capacity. At the end of the month, ombudsmen should destroy (i.e., shred) any copies of individual contact forms, contact logs, and any other personal notes for that reporting month.

Ombudsman Registry and Monthly Reporting

The Coast Guard Ombudsman Registry is an online data collection and information sharing system for the CG Ombudsman Program. Each ombudsman will be registered by their ombudsman coordinator or command designee and provided a login.

Administrative Responsibilities

Ombudsman Registry and Monthly Reporting (Cont'd)

Ombudsmen are required to complete a worksheet (figure 3.3) monthly via the Coast Guard Ombudsman Registry. Data documented on the worksheet includes total and type of contacts made, services provided, and time spent performing ombudsman duties.

Incoming Contacts:		Outgoing Contacts:	
Spouse/Family Mbr/Significant Other, etc		Total Contacts Made	
Service Member			
CG/DOD Civilian Personnel			
Community			
Other			

Type of I&Rs	Total I&Rs Provided	Time Spent (1h 30 m = 1 hr 30 min)	
Childcare			duration
Deployment			duration
Education/Scholarship			duration
Spouse Clubs/Associations			duration
Financial			duration
Housing			duration
Legal (Divorce, Wills, POAs)			duration
MWR/ITT			duration
ID Cards			duration
Relocation/Sponsor			duration
Reportables (Abuse, Sexual Assault Suicide, Homicide)			duration

Figure 3.3 – Coast Guard Worksheet Detail

Ombudsmen must submit their monthly worksheets no later than the10th of each month following the report month (i.e., June worksheets will be submitted no later than 10 July).

Worksheets are archived by calendar year and all worksheets must be entered no later than 1 Feb of the following year. After 1 Feb no further worksheets can be entered (i.e., Dec 2012 worksheets must be entered by 1 Feb 2013).

No personal identifying information will be included in the monthly report, only the number of referrals and services requested or used. See the Ombudsman Registry Guide for more details about the registry and specific guidance on completing the monthly worksheet.

Administrative Responsibilities

Command Roster

The official command roster is a list of all personnel at a command and contains pertinent, protected information needed for ombudsmen to perform their official duties such as contacting families of both single and married members in an emergency.

Ombudsmen obtain the roster from the commanding officer. The extent of the information to be provided is at the CO's discretion, and can include CG member's name, employee identification number, home address, telephone numbers, as well as the name, address, and number of the member's spouse or point of contact.

Ombudsmen must maintain the confidentiality of information in the roster as described in the Privacy Act of 1974. The personal information on the official command roster can make individuals particularly vulnerable; therefore, the ombudsman will not provide or make the roster available to anyone outside the immediate command structure without permission from the commanding officer.

Training Record

Ombudsmen should maintain a record of education and training received during their tenure as an ombudsman. This information will be useful in updating a resume and applying for jobs. The ombudsman will provide a copy of their Coast Guard Ombudsman Training certificate or certificate of training from a suitable alternative (i.e., Navy Ombudsman Basic Training) to their ombudsman coordinator.

Unit 3 Check-on-Learning

1. Match the items in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

	Column A		Column B
_____	1. Volunteer Agreement	a.	Used to officially appoint and welcome an ombudsman to the command.
_____	2. Letter of Appointment	b.	Ombudsman provides a copy of the appointment letter, contact information, and copy of the training certificate, if they have completed training.
_____	3. Command Meeting	c.	Ensures eligibility for certain protections in the performance of ombudsman duties.
_____	4. Ombudsman Coordinator Meeting	d.	Ombudsman completes required paperwork and has their role and expectations clarified.

2. List the actions an ombudsman should take when resigning their position.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

3. Below is a list of items funded directly by the command or reimbursed to the ombudsman by the command. Indicate which item in column B is funded (F) and which item is reimbursed (R) by placing F or R in the blank corresponding to the item.

Column A	Column B
_____	Paper, envelops, pens
_____	Mileage, parking, tolls
_____	Internet service

Unit 3 Check-on-Learning

Column A	Column B
_____	Travel expenses
_____	Ombudsman appreciation recognition
_____	Childcare
_____	Cell phone
_____	Ombudsman newsletters

4. Describe the purpose of the Ombudsman Registry.

_____

_____

_____

5. Which of the following is required for the monthly report? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Total contacts.
   B. Type of contacts.
   C. Time spent.
   D. Travel expenses.
   E. Services provided.

6. Ombudsmen must submit the monthly report by the the10th of each month.

   A. True.
   B. False.

7. Which of the following statements about the command roster is true? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Obtained from the CO and the extent of the information provided is at the COs discretion.
   B. Ombudsman may provide to others as requested without permission from the command.
   C. Can include name, address, and number of the member's spouse or point of contact.
   D. Needed for ombudsmen to perform their official duties.
   E. Must be maintained as described in the Privacy Act of 1974.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

UNIT 4

REPRESENTING THE COMMAND

Overview

Introduction

An ombudsman represents the command internally as a liaison between the command and its families and externally at events or by participating as a consultant on boards, committees, or groups that may affect the wellbeing of CG families. You may become a highly visible representative and your actions and behavior will reflect on the command.

This unit will look at the ombudsman's duty as a command representative and provide guidance on gaining credibility with the command and families, establishing effective command relationships, and projecting confidence and professionalism to others encountered in the performance of ombudsman duties.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **RECOGNIZE** the ombudsman's role and responsibilities as a command representative and as a liaison between the command and families.
- **IDENTIFY** how to establish working relationships and credibility with the command and families.
- **IDENTIFY** the people and groups the ombudsman must establish effective relationships with and their role in supporting command families.
- **IDENTIFY** function and frequency of the District Ombudsman Community of Practice.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Coast Guard Ombudsman Handbook 2010
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994

Command Representative

Command Representative Role

Commanding officers carefully choose ombudsmen with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to fulfill the associated roles and responsibilities. Above all, they seek confident, trustworthy command representatives who possess the ability to relate professionally and positively with every member of their command and with persons encountered as an official representative of the command.

Establishing a Working Relationship with the CO

The commanding officer/officer-in-charge enters a relationship of trust with the ombudsman. The command sets parameters for emergency contacts, routine meetings, administrative support, problem solving, and policy setting. The ombudsman program belongs to the command; therefore, the type of working relationship that you establish with your commanding officer will be a major factor in determining how effective you can be as an ombudsman. To maintain credibility, you must have the commanding officer's support. Below are some guidelines on how to have a good working relationship with the CO:

- Be businesslike.
- Always be on time and well prepared.
- Represent your position. Your commanding officer wants you to offer ideas and suggestions. Even when he or she might disagree, it is important that you are not intimidated. Present and defend your views, but realize that the final decision is the commanding officer's and you must support their decision.
- Become familiar with and learn to work with the commanding officer. Understand that commanding officers possess different personality attributes and leadership styles, and try to adapt your interaction to the CO's style.
- Don't abuse your privileges.
- Be respectful of the commanding officer's position.
- Don't refer to how the former commanding officer used to do things.
- Request assistance when needed.

Establishing Effective Relationships

In addition to the commanding officer, ombudsmen have to work with a number of different people and groups in a variety of positions to obtain the most support for their unit families. Having a positive working relationship with the following people and groups is essential to being an effective ombudsman.

Command Representative

Establishing Effective Relationships (Cont'd)

Executive Officer/Executive Petty Officer (XO/XPO). The XO/XPO is often designated as a point of contact for routine issues. As the XO/XPO oversees the administrative and personnel matters of the unit, he or she is a good choice to give and receive information on unit members and family concerns.

Command Master Chief (CMC). The CMC is a natural for giving advice and information and may be designated as the point of contact for the ombudsman program. The background and experience of this individual often brings a very effective way of dealing with members and families.

Command Cadre Spouses. These senior spouses have the opportunity to be involved with the support of unit families at whatever degree suits their time and desire. They may take up the unit social activities or turn them over to a committee. These spouses usually have access to resources and senior personnel. It should be made clear to unit members and families what the role of these spouses and the ombudsman are to each other and to the families.

Mutual Assistance Officer (MAO). The MAO administers financial assistance to unit members and families under a variety of circumstances. During emergencies, this person may have the ability to loan needed funds. It is important to understand the regulations and policies that govern this program in order to utilize it to its full potential.

Command Drug and Alcohol Representative (CDAR). The CDAR is a resource for identifying and assisting with referrals for treatment for addictions related conditions. This individual receives specialized training and is aware of Coast Guard policies concerning treatment, referrals and reporting requirements associated with drug and/or alcohol use.

Work-Life Staff. Work-life specialists provide timely work-life guidance and information to commands, CG members, and family members, as needed to strike a reasonable balance between the needs of the Coast Guard and the needs of CG members and their families.

Ombudsman Coordinator. This person is a member of the work-life staff and is the primary point of contact for ombudsmen within the AOR. They provide timely information and updates to ombudsmen, schedule and carry out training and have a vast wealth of information available to assist ombudsmen at the local units.

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). The SARC is a member of the work-life staff trained to ensure appropriate care is coordinated and provided to victims of sexual assault. The SARC tracks the services given to a victim from the initial report through final disposition and resolution.

Command Representative

Establishing Effective Relationships (Cont'd)

Victim Advocate. The victim advocate is a person who can provide emotional support to the victim during interviews, medical procedures and legal proceedings. The victim advocate is not a counselor, therapist, or investigator, but an advocate for the victim whose sole interest is to ensure the victim's needs are met.

Chaplain. The chaplain is responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the members and families of the command and keeps all conversations confidential. The chaplain is a great advisor and resource, and is well acquainted with family life in the military.

Housing Officer. The housing officer is the key person with regard to the Coast Guard leased or owned family housing. Often they may also assist with locator or referral resources, transient accommodations, housing referrals and as a liaison with Department of Defense housing.

Education Services Officer (ESO). This person is available to work with military members and spouses concerning education and degrees. The ESO also administers College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) free to Coast Guard Spouses. There is a full time ESO at each District and in many Sectors.

Public Affairs Officer (PAO). The PAO will be involved within a short time after any significant incident. If there are any injuries or deaths, the names will not be released to the press before the next of kin are notified. All media inquiries should be addressed to the command or PAO.

Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO). This CACO helps families dealing with the death or fatal injury of a military member. The CACO is responsible for completing paperwork and assisting the family in applying for benefits and making funeral arrangements. It is never appropriate for the ombudsman to accompany the CACO when making a notification of death; however, the ombudsman may offer support and resources after the notification.

In addition to establishing these effective relationships, the ombudsman should also work closely with the Spouses' clubs and the District Ombudsman Community of Practice to ensure optimal support for families.

Spouses' Club

Spouses' clubs are private associations, but commanding officers can sanction the development of local clubs at their command. Spouses' clubs seek to improve the quality of life of their members, while promoting the feeling of belonging to the Coast Guard community by:

- Contributing to improved awareness of and access to reliable and useful information, resources, and services that support and enrich the lives of Coast Guard families and service members.

Command Representative

Spouses' Club (Cont'd)

- Providing important community outreach for newcomers.
- Supporting Coast Guard Work-Life programs by participating in selected family-related initiatives and sponsoring workshops or other training opportunities related to service benefits.

Clubs may support the ombudsman, assist with sponsor or orientation programs, conduct or coordinate community service projects, update relocation packages, provide community support in emergencies, and provide other types of support based on the unique needs of their local community.

Ombudsmen may collaborate with spouse clubs or associations on behalf of the command and may participate in spouse clubs or associations in a personal capacity. Ombudsmen cannot:

- Serve as a spouse club or association officer.
- Use his or her title, position, or status to solicit any non-federal source for any cash or non-cash donations for a spouse club/association.

District Ombudsman Community of Practice

The District Ombudsman Community of Practice (CoP) is an important component of the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program. The CoP exists to support the appointed ombudsmen; it is not a policy-making or supervisory entity, but a forum for sharing and exchanging successful ombudsman practices and issues and/or concerns, and may serve as a venue for ongoing training.

A CoP may meet monthly, quarterly or bi-annually. All ombudsmen within the district should attend to represent their unit and their families' interests. Command cadre and their spouses are also encouraged to attend.

The CoP is a collaborative environment where ombudsmen within the district can share information, provide peer support, and receive program and policy updates. As with all informational exchanges, ombudsmen will maintain confidentiality during these meetings. One or more CoPs may be established by and operate under the supervision and guidance of the District Commander.

Command Liaison

Command Liaison Role

The ombudsman is primarily a liaison between the command and the unit families. In this capacity, the information through the ombudsman flows in two directions, information from the command to the families and from the families to the command. The ombudsman is a valuable advisor for the command and a source of information for the families. As the liaison, the ombudsman's responsibilities include:

- Communicating official information from the command to the unit families.
- Informing the command of common concerns of the unit families.
- Serving as a resource and referral source for families.
- Promoting family readiness as a factor in unit operational success.

Communicate Official Information

Ombudsmen are responsible for communicating official information from the command to the families. No information is official unless it comes from the command. The ombudsman will stay in close communication with the command at all times.

When the unit deploys, the ombudsman will be the primary point of contact for all unit families and supply information from the command.

Ombudsmen must pass all information coming from the command to the families in a timely manner through phone tree, e-mail distribution lists, newsletters, and informational briefs. Effective communications and communication formats to include social media will be discussed in detail in unit 5 of this training.

Inform the Command of Concerns

Ombudsmen are the vehicle by which unit families access the command and voice their complaints and concerns. Ombudsmen shall take issues facing unit families directly to the command. The ombudsman can correct wrong information and suggest alternative methods for coping to unit families, but must remain neutral on these issues unless the command requests their opinion.

Provide Resources and Referrals

Ombudsmen will maintain a resource file for families with information on the most appropriate sources for services or assistance with problems. It is necessary for ombudsmen to be knowledgeable of Coast Guard and other government resources as well as local resources. Ombudsmen providing resources to families should guide them toward family readiness and self-sufficiency so they may learn to solve problems and navigate through the military system.

Command Liaison

Promote Family Readiness

In addition to promoting self-sufficiency, the ombudsman will also promote disaster preparedness to families and may help families to prepare for potential disasters by:

- Helping families new to the area become familiar with the types of disasters most likely to occur and how to best prepare for each type of disaster.
- Suggesting families develop an emergency communications and care plan.
- Providing a list of items to include in a disaster supply kit.
- Publicizing evacuation routes, emergency public shelters, caring for animals and information specific to people with disabilities before a disaster occurs or is imminent.

Establish Working Relationship with Families

Command families are the most important group with whom ombudsmen will be working; therefore, it is critical that you establish an effective working relationship with them by:

- Establishing your credibility.
- Setting expectations about services and availability.

Throughout this training we use the term “command families,” it should not be forgotten that single CG members have families, parents, and siblings back home, and significant others, who are also concerned about them. Ombudsmen can be very helpful to single CG members and their families. Discuss with your commanding officer how he or she would like you to interact with these family members. One possibility may be sending them copies of the newsletter, providing a source of information about the command as well as a point of contact for questions and/or emergencies.

Establishing Credibility

Ombudsmen begin establishing credibility from their first meeting with families. Most families will have some questions during this initial contact and it is with this first encounter where you can start to build trust by keeping your word and delivering helpful information. Any failure to follow through with either decreases trust and credibility.

When offering assistance, avoid making any promises. It is better to say you will try than to promise results. Also, never make promises on behalf of the command, breach confidentiality, or become involved in rumors.

Command Liaison

Establishing Credibility (Cont'd)

There are certain characteristics and behaviors (figure 4.1) that when exhibited by the ombudsman, will foster credibility with the unit command and families and can improve overall effectiveness.

CHARACTERISTICS

* Friendly *Honest
*Approachable
*Cheerful *Confident
*Dependable *Helpful
*Trusting *Professional

BEHAVIORS

- ✓ Maintain confidentiality
- ✓ Keep your word
- ✓ Keep command informed
- ✓ Smile and talk to others
- ✓ Clarify expectations
- ✓ Be cooperative
- ✓ Be empathetic
- ✓ Share credit
- ✓ Accept blame
- ✓ Continue to improve

Figure 4.1 – Characteristics and Behaviors

Setting Expectations

Everyone with whom you work will have different ideas about what an ombudsman is and what an ombudsman should do; it's important that families know from the beginning what services you can provide, when you are available to assist them, and what you cannot or will not do.

Services. When you assume the position of ombudsman and you are introduced to the command that is an excellent opportunity to remind command families in general about the ombudsman program and inform them of the assistance that you will be able to provide. If there is no opportunity for a formal introduction by the command, you can introduce yourself and provide this information via newsletter, email, or phone call. In addition, you should talk with the previous ombudsman to learn what services they provided and determine what expectations the families will have of you. If your predecessor provided services you don't feel comfortable doing or are not able to do, communicate that to the families in order to avoid disappointment and frustration later.

Availability. You need to set the hours that you will be routinely available. Although part of the obligation that you assume in becoming an ombudsman is to be on call 24 hours a day for emergencies, this does not prohibit you from setting specific calling hours for handling routine matters. You should communicate these hours to the families along with a general sense of what constitutes an emergency and warrants a call anytime day or night.

Limits. Along with letting the families know what you do, it's important to let them know what you don't do. It is highly recommended that you set these boundaries and exclude such things as being a babysitter or taxi service. You may wish to make exceptions for this in emergencies, but even that could prove to be a real drain on your time, availability, and energy. An alternative is to arrange to have a call list of other spouses to be available to provide this assistance on an emergency or as needed basis.

Unit 4 Check-on-Learning

1. As the liaison, the ombudsman's responsibilities include which of the following? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Communicating official information from the command to the unit families.
   B. Informing the command of common concerns of the unit families.
   C. Serving as a resource and referral source for families.
   D. Counseling families and providing solutions to their problems.

2. Ombudsmen function as official representatives of the command at events or as consultants on boards, committees, or groups that may affect the wellbeing of CG families.

   A. True.
   B. False.

3. Match the people or groups in column A with their description in column B. Use each description only once.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. Executive Officer	a. Responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the members and families of the command and keeps all conversations confidential.
_____ 2. Command Master Chief	b. Often designated as the POC, and is a good choice to give and receive information on unit members and family concerns.
_____ 3. Mutual Assistance Officer	c. The primary point of contact for the ombudsmen within the AOR.
_____ 4. Ombudsman Coordinator	d. Involved within a short time after any significant incident and may address media inquiries.
_____ 5. Work-Life Staff	e. During emergencies, this person may have the ability to loan needed funds.
_____ 6. Chaplain	f. Assist with striking a reasonable balance between the needs of the Coast Guard and the needs of CG members and their families.
_____ 7. Public Affairs Officer	g. May be designated as the POC and their background and experience brings a very effective way of dealing with members and families.

Unit 4 Check-on-Learning

4. One way to establish a good working relationship with the CO is to represent your position by presenting and defending your views even when he or she might disagree. It is important that you are not intimidated.

   A. True.
   B. False.

5. Which of the following actions helps ombudsmen to establish a working relationship with families? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Keeping your word and delivering helpful information.
   B. Breaching confidentiality or becoming involved in rumors.
   C. Being honest, confident, dependable, and professional.
   D. Setting expectations on services, availability, and limitations.

6. How frequently should the District CoP meet and who should attend?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Which of the following statements about the District CoP is true? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Ombudsmen can share information and provide peer support.
   B. Confidentiality must be maintained.
   C. CoPs operate under the supervision and guidance of the District Commander.
   D. More than one CoP can be established within a district.

UNIT 5

COMMUNICATIONS LINK

Overview

Introduction

Ombudsmen are the communication link between the command and families, and as such must be effective communicators to build strong and collaborative relations between the command and families. Much of your work as an ombudsman requires communicating with someone, whether that is a family member seeking help or a commanding officer from whom you are asking support; you must know how to communicate effectively for your message to have the greatest impact.

This unit will look at the components and formats of communication, how an ombudsman communicates within the command as an official representative, and the use of social media.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **DEFINE** the purpose and components of effective communication.
- **IDENTIFY** the types of communication.
- **RECOGNIZE** how to mitigate barriers to effective communications.
- **IDENTIFY** key tenants of active listening.
- **RECOGNIZE** communication formats and the proper use of each.
- **IDENTIFY** information to convey in and exclude from communications.
- **LIST** questions to ask the command to determine expectations for communication.
- **IDENTIFY** how to establish and activate the phone tree.
- **DESCRIBE** what to do if contacted by the media.
- **IDENTIFY** ways to control rumors.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Coast Guard Ombudsman Handbook 2010
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994

Communication Fundamentals

Purpose of Effective Communication

On a daily basis we work with people who have different opinions, values, beliefs, and needs other than our own. Our ability to exchange ideas with others, understand their perspectives, and solve problems depends significantly on how effectively we are able to communicate.

To be an effective ombudsman you must be an effective communicator, and your communications must be clear and accurate. Clarity and accuracy in your communication with others can:

- Reduce miscommunication.
- Ensure relevant and appropriate support is provided.

Miscommunication and confusion can impact your credibility and impede your ability to provide support to the command and families.

Components of Communication

To be an effective communicator, you must understand the three components that comprise communication, the sender, the message, and the receiver and the affect of each on communication.

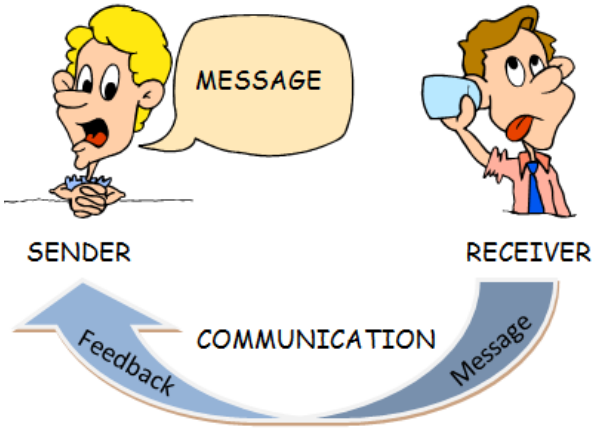


Figure 5.1 – Communication Components

Sender. The sender is the conveyor of the message and affects the message they are sending by their choice and arrangement of words, and when communicating in person, tone of voice (i.e., low or excited) and body language (i.e., facial gestures or posture) they use.

Message. The message is the thought, idea, or information the sender is conveying.

Receiver. The receiver is the recipient of the message and affects receipt of the message by how effectively he or she is listening.

Communication. When the receiver becomes the sender by returning a message and providing feedback, you have communication.

Communication Fundamentals

Types of Communication

There are three types of communication, written, verbal, and non-verbal/visual.

Written. Most written communication allows us to edit our messages until we are satisfied with how they read. We can correct punctuation, change words, and run spell check; however, the intended tone or meaning of the message can still be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

Verbal. With verbal communication, it can be more challenging to communicate your message perfectly the first time, but you can get immediate verbal and non-verbal feedback from the receiver as to how the message was interpreted, allowing you to modify or clarify your message to convey the intended meaning.

Non-verbal. Much of our communication is non-verbal such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Non-verbal messages can have a significant impact on how we communicate with others and how our verbal messages are interpreted.

Barriers to Communication

There are many barriers that can impede effective communication and prevent the receiver from understanding the true intent of the sender's message or prevent communication completely.

Language differences. Sender and reciever are unable to communicate in the same language (i.e., English as a second language, sign language, vision impairment).

Environment. Environmental factors such as the television or radio, children, pets, or spouse can cause distractions.

Background. Varying education levels, communications skills, age, life experience, or social status may prevent common understanding. For example, an older person's ability to communicate may be limited by technology or understanding of current jargon.

Psychological state. Sender or receiver are stressed or preoccupied. An ombudsman may be experiencing personal problems that affect their ability to concentrate on another's concerns, or a unit family member may be experiencing such strong emotions that they are unable to clearly communicate their concerns.

Communication Fundamentals

Barriers to Communication (Cont'd)

Self-perception. Lack of confidence can be a barrier if a person does not believe he or she is worthy of assistance or if a person feels too proud to ask for assistance.

Stereotypes. Biases and perceptions regarding race, gender, or culture lead to misperceptions (e.g., all spouses are women, new wives don't know anything about the CG).

To mitigate these barriers and minimize their impact on communication:

- Keep an open mind. Make an effort not to assume something about a person based on past experiences or rumors you have heard.
- Avoid going off on tangents that only confuse the issue.
- Avoid communication with people at times when you are distracted by other activities or preoccupied by other issues.
- Try not to let the way you view the world influence your communications with others.

Inadequate listening skills often get in the way of successful communication. Listening and hearing what the other person is saying takes effort that is not always put forth in daily conversations.

Active Listening

Listening and actually hearing a person's words and their meaning takes full attention. Active listening:

- Helps you to focus and understand what another person is really saying.
- Allows you to clarify and understand complex or significant information.
- Helps build trust and positive relationships.
- Encourages a person to share, or continue to share, information.

When listening to someone, try to identify the emotions associated with and factual content of the message to discern the importance of the matter to the sender and determine his or her true intent. Don't assume you understand what is meant, instead, provide feedback and clarify the meaning with the sender. Active listening requires you to:

- **Listen for key words.** This is what will identify the issue, concern, and factual content of the message, the rest is usually details.
- **Listen for emotions.** This will help you understand the importance of the matter to the sender.

Communication Fundamentals

Active Listening (Cont'd)

- **Observe body language.** When talking face to face with someone watch the facial expressions, hand motions, and posture. This type of non-verbal communication helps to convey the sender's feelings about the message.
- **Paraphrase.** Summarize and restate the situation in your own words without judgment. This will clarify the situation. If you are wrong, it will encourage the speaker to further explain the issue. Lead with phrases such as "What I hear you saying" or "It sounds like."
- **Use reflective listening.** Unlike paraphrasing, reflective listening or mirroring is saying back to the sender what they said to you. Like paraphrasing, this encourages the sender to expand on what he or she is saying.
- **Not talk about yourself or offer advice.** Avoid telling stories about your life or saying what you would do in that person's situation. Do not use phrases like "you should" or "you never." Let the individual come up with solutions to his or her problems.
- **Use open-ended questions.** Open-ended questions allow you to gather more information. Open questions require an explanation and begin with words such as what and how (e.g., "How do you feel about that?", "What does that mean to you?", "How can I help you?") Closed questions require only a yes or no answer.
- **Not use leading questions.** Remain neutral. Leading questions (e.g., "You understand all that, right?", "You totally agree with me, don't you?"), put pressure on the person to conform to your views.
- **Use Silence.** Unlike a casual conversation when silence can be awkward, when listening in a helping conversation, silence can be valuable. It allows the sender time to compose their thoughts. It also allows both the receiver and sender an opportunity to hear and understand a message.

Active listening helps you to separate what you think are the person's needs, versus their wants. By listening carefully, you may be able to make this differentiation and better support those seeking your assistance.

Communication Formats and Use

Communication Formats

Generally, you will use the following communication formats to perform your ombudsman duties:

- Telephone
- E-mail
- Internet and social networking
- Newsletters
- Briefings and presentations

Telephone

Most service provided by the ombudsman is over the phone. Because there is no face-to-face contact, tone of voice and word choice become more important. It is critical that your tone be pleasant, concerned, patient, informed, and caring.

When responding to phone calls, follow these basic procedures to ensure the caller's needs are addressed and that the call is properly documented.

Greeting. When answering the telephone ombudsmen should identify themselves or answer anonymously.

"Johnson residence." or "Hello, this is Ann." OR "Hello."

Identification. The caller will usually ask to speak to the ombudsman. At that point, you should give your full name and title.

"This is Ann Johnson, ombudsman for USCGC ALWAYSGONE."

If the caller does not immediately identify himself or herself, ask for their name and any additional identifying information. This is especially important if the command limits ombudsman services only to individuals identified on the command roster.

Business. Determine the reason for the call by asking, "How may I help you?"

- If the call is an emergency, get the caller's telephone number immediately in case the call is disconnected. It may be necessary to calm the caller in order to get information. If at any time, the ombudsman feels that the life, health, or safety of an individual is in imminent danger, the ombudsman will tell the caller to dial 911.
- If the call is not an emergency, but a request for information, provide the information.

Communication Formats and Use

Telephone (Cont'd)

- If the caller is not clear about their request, use the Problem, Access, Choose, Try (PACT) model discussed later in unit 6 of this training.
- If the caller just wants to talk with someone, the ombudsman should determine how much time, if any, he or she has available to talk and then inform the caller so he or she is aware of your time constraints.

Record. Document calls using the daily contact log (enclosure 5). Consider gathering the information for the log at the beginning of the call in case the call ends suddenly or unexpectedly.

Close. Close the call with a summary of the discussion. Indicate actions to be taken by whom and when. Reassure the caller they can call again if necessary. If the call was complex, contact the caller in a day or two to see if they got the help they needed.

Voicemail Message. If you are unable to answer the phone, provide a detailed message on your voicemail with the following information:

- Full name.
- Unit assigned.
- Hours of operation.
- Emergency contact information.

"Hello, you have reached Ann Johnson, ombudsman for USCGC ALWAYSGONE. My normal hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If this is an emergency, please call XXX-XXXX or dial 911; otherwise, please leave a message with your name, number, and reason for your call, and I will return your call as soon as I can. Thank you."

Remember to check your voicemail messages regularly and follow up with a return call within 24 hours.

Communication Formats and Use

Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

E-mail is a quick and easy way to communicate with anyone, especially families and deployed units; however, e-mail messages in the Coast Guard system need to follow policy and regulations.

Deployed Units. E-mail is a non-secure system that can be intercepted and forwarded to anyone and everyone. E-mailing to deployed units requires short messages without attachments, without mentions of unit location, and without dates of movements.

Families. E-mail to unit families is a quick way to update information between or in place of newsletters. Families must first give their permission to be included on your e-mail distribution list. Everyone on the distribution list must understand this list is for official business purposes only and families may not use it for social, religious, or business purposes (i.e. chain letters, invitations to home business parties, jokes, daily devotions, etc.).

Follow these basic guidelines when communicating via e-mail:

- Proof read your message twice for mistakes before sending.
- Keep a copy for your files, printed or in a computer file. If the message contains sensitive/important information you may ask for a return message verifying it was received and read.
- Create an e-mail address strictly for ombudsman issues (e.g., ALWAYSGONEombudsman@mail.com).
- Use the blind carbon copy (Bcc) field to send e-mail. Bcc protects the privacy of recipients by preventing disclosure of names and e-mail addresses to other recipients, thereby protecting the privacy of those on the distribution list.
- Write a meaningful subject line.
- Keep e-mails short and to the point, but remember to answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions.
- Include a proper signature.
- Limit use of acronyms.
- Never try to talk around classified information.
- Avoid discussing ship movements, port calls, TAD locations, etc.
- Never attach classified or sensitive documents.

Communication Formats and Use

Social Media and Networking

Social networking sites like Facebook have become very popular ways to keep in touch as has blogging and vlogging (video blogs). Ombudsmen and family members must keep in mind that these types of internet postings make it possible for adversaries to compile sensitive information about unit morale, location, organization, personnel, and family members.

Do not use your personal social networking page to communicate in an official capacity as an ombudsman. When communicating on your personal social networking page, remember to practice safe information sharing. Safe information sharing includes:

- Keeping personal information to yourself.
- Not posting your full name, address or phone number.
- Limiting who can view your profile or postings.
- Not posting your photograph online.
- Updating your status messages with caution.
- Not using a countdown for deployments.
- Not posting plans to visit a liberty port.
- Limiting the information you share about yourself and others.

Coast Guard's Social Media Program

On September 4, 2012, the Coast Guard released specific guidance on the use of social media by ombudsmen. This guidance is based primarily on the U.S. Coast Guard External Affairs Manual, COMDTINST M5700.13 (Series), chapter 6, and the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) is the point of contact for social media inquiries.

The U.S. Coast Guard's social media program presents unit commanding officers with a unique opportunity to leverage their unit ombudsman to communicate command messages to, and solicit feedback from, Coast Guard families. Ombudsmen use of social media for Coast Guard communication can be official, unofficial, and personal.

Official communication. Occurs when an ombudsman is speaking on behalf of the command (e.g., announcing a unit-sponsored town hall meeting to discuss a change in Veterans Affairs education benefits for military dependents via the unit's official Facebook page or on a non-official site).

Unofficial communication. Occurs when an ombudsman is speaking about official duties, but not on behalf of or at the request of the command (e.g., leaving a comment on a non-official site correcting the record on a change in VA benefits for military dependents).

Communication Formats and Use

Coast Guard's Social Media Program (Cont'd)

Personal communication. Occurs when an ombudsman is speaking about the Coast Guard but not speaking about or in reference to official duties (e.g., leaving a comment on an official or non-official site or social network regarding his or her personal experiences with the VA education benefits program). Ombudsmen shall identify themselves, their affiliation with the CG, and use the approved Unofficial Posts Disclaimer, "The views expressed herein are those of the blogger and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the Commandant or of the U. S. Coast Guard", whenever the content could be construed to relate to the publisher's official CG capacity or directly concerns the Coast Guard.

Facebook is the only approved social media tool authorized for official online communication by the U.S. Coast Guard at the unit level. Units can maintain one official Facebook page. Ombudsmen may not create a standalone Facebook page to discuss Coast Guard families or issues. Ombudsmen should establish and/or serve as the administrator of an official Facebook page for the unit if one does not already exist to ensure information is passed to families.

Ombudsmen shall not create additional Facebook pages to communicate about or on behalf of the unit, but can represent the unit in an official or unofficial capacity on a non-official site. When engaging in official or unofficial communication on non-official sites the ombudsman is required to identify him or herself by name and position and must use the approved Official Postings on a Non-official Site disclaimer, "This is an official United States Coast Guard posting for the public's information. Our posting does not endorse this site or anything on it, including links to other sites, and we disclaim responsibility and liability for the site and its content", located in Chapter 6 of the U.S. Coast Guard External Affairs Manual, COMDTINST M5700.13 (series). This is to avoid any perception of endorsement by the U.S. Coast Guard of third-party sites or tools.

Newsletters

Newsletters (see enclosure 7 for an example) are excellent communication tools for ombudsmen to disseminate information and give families a sense of belonging. You can use the newsletter to:

- Communicate information from the command to the families.
- Inform and educate families.
- Help families feel connected to the command and Coast Guard.
- Convey encouragement, inspiration, with focus on common interests.
- Remind family members of the role of and/or services provided by the ombudsman.

Communication Formats and Use

Newsletters (Cont'd)

The newsletter benefits the ombudsman and command by:

- Reducing the number of phone calls received.
- Reducing rumors by providing all families with firsthand, accurate information.
- Providing the widest dissemination of information to unit families.
- Establishing the ombudsman as a source of credible information.

Ombudsmen should discuss their ideas for the newsletter with their commanding officer. Ask about established guidelines, requirements, restrictions (length, content, frequency, command administrative support, etc.), potential contributors, and need for review and approval prior to publication. Also, ask about needed supplies, computer access, mailing deadlines, and procedures.

When developing a newsletter, the ombudsman will:

- Select a newsletter style.
- Determine format and content.
- Distribute the newsletter.

Newsletter Styles

There are three main newsletter styles to choose from when developing a newsletter: letter, newspaper, and combination.

Letter. Letter style is the quickest and easiest to produce. Command letterhead stationery is usually used. Short paragraphs and the occasional use of emphasis type (boldface, italics) helps readers remain interested. The length is usually one to two pages.

Newspaper. Newspaper style is the most time-consuming style to produce. This style most closely resembles a professional publication. It contains bold headlines, artwork, calendars, news stories, special columns, and has a specially prepared banner. It is visually appealing and is capable of holding the reader's attention. Most importantly, it is reader friendly (easy to scan for items of interest). The usual length is four to eight pages.

Combination. Combination style is a combination of the letter style and newspaper style. It may be on letterhead stationery or have a special newsletter banner, and is usually typed in six-inch paragraph widths with bold headlines separating stories to catch the reader's attention. Occasional pieces of artwork may be added to emphasize a special theme or to give a seasonal flair. Length is usually two to four pages.

Communication Formats and Use

Newsletter Format and Content

The newsletter should be eye-catching and meaningful to the reader. The following table contains basic guidelines and/or tips for creating newsletters.

Component	Guidelines/Tips
Banner	The banner typically includes the newsletter's title and subtitle indentifying the publisher or intended audience.
Logo/Name	The logo and/or name should convey some sense of the unit or its geographic area (e.g., The Cimarron Sentinel – USCGC CIMARRON or Rush Ramble – USCGC RUSH).
Headlines	Choose short, concise words for headlines. Express one thought only that captures the key words and main idea of the story. Avoid standard, repeating headlines. Be impartial, don't be cute, and leave out puns and rhymes.
Article	Get to know your unit and families to select subjects that are right for your unit. Ask: **who** is the reader, **what** does the reader need to know, **where** can I find the information, **when** does the reader need the information, **why** is this subject important, and **how** much information does the reader need. Keep sentences short and clear, and check spelling, punctuation, grammar, and facts. CONTENT SHOULD BE CONSERVATIVE AND MUST BE SCREENED CAREFULLY BY THE COMMAND before publication. Consult with the command or PAO for guidance on use of COPYRIGHTED materials.
Clipart/ Graphics	Match the picture with the content of the article or announcement. Use clipart sparingly. Use clip art software instead of copying a picture, copyright laws apply.
Layout	The layout of the articles with the headlines and clipart should have balance and lead the eye to flow through the newsletter. Watch out for too much blank space, too many font styles and sizes, article blocks off center/balance, and uneven margins.
Ombudsman Letter	This should follow regular letter writing guidelines: greeting, body, closing, and signature. The ombudsman letter should be warm and personal in tone. Limit it to a few paragraphs.
Command Letter	Occasionally, commands like to write informative letters about the unit to the families.

Ombudsmen may use newsletters to communicate official or unofficial information. Official information relates to mission and readiness and includes general command information, educational information, items that strengthen morale and unit cohesion, and dates of events or meetings. Unofficial information includes non-mission related items such as childcare, area activities, family news, etc.

Communication Formats and Use

Newsletter Format and Content (Cont'd)

Newsletter content varies depending on available information, content and space restrictions, unit status (i.e., deployed, in port, or shipyard), and requests from readers, but generally relates to the following subject areas:

- Seasonal features (e.g., holidays, vacation ideas, and winter and summer safety tips).
- Command activities (e.g., pre-deployment briefings, Coast Guard day, family nights, and charitable activities).
- Morale events (e.g., picnics, homecomings, and holiday parties).
- Informational needs (e.g., clinic policy or hours, childcare resources, agency news such as Red Cross or Coast Guard Mutual Assistance).
- Command messages from the CO, XO, or chaplain.
- Military monthly themes (e.g., Month of the Military Child in April or Military Family Appreciation Month in November).

The following table identifies some of the specific content to include or exclude from newsletters.

Include	Exclude
✓ Message from the CO ✓ Unit event announcements ✓ Information on rights and benefits ✓ Information on local military services available ✓ Volunteer opportunities ✓ Ombudsman contact information ✓ Unit contact information ✓ Educational articles (relocation, parenting, finances, preparedness) ✓ List of frequently called numbers ✓ Awards and achievements of unit members ✓ Work-life articles/programs ✓ For deploying units: pre-deployment checklist, what to expect, mail drops, phone tree	× Announcements for local churches – Only Coast Guard and Dept. of Defense chaplain/chapel programs × Advertisements for home businesses run by unit members/families × Endorsements of any for profit businesses or organization × Babysitter referrals other than the CG Child Development Center or regulated home care providers × Movement schedule and locations (or other classified information) × Political announcements of any kind – Only reminders to vote

Communication Formats and Use

Newsletter Format and Content (Cont'd)

An ombudsman, with permission from the command, may have another spouse or family member act as newsletter editor. In this event, notify the unit members and families that this person is strictly the newsletter editor, and does not act in any way as the ombudsman. In addition, notify the ombudsman coordinator that someone other than the ombudsman is acting editor of the newsletter.

Newsletter Distribution

Ombudsmen need to discuss distribution of the newsletter with the command. The command may direct you to send it electronically to save money or have you reproduce and distribute hardcopy newsletters.

Electronic. E-mail is a quick way to convey information and the families can choose to print out information they would like to keep for future reference or just allow it to remain in its electronic form. You can also distribute newsletters via the unit Facebook page.

Hardcopy. The command may allow you to use the copy machine to run off the newsletter, or if you are at a remote location, the unit may need to setup an account at a copy service.

The following table contains guidance on mailing newsletters. Remember to include the ombudsman coordinator on the mailing list.

If newsletters are…	Then…
Two pages or less.	Use envelops to mail the newsletters.
Three pages or more.	Fold in half, staple, address on the outside page, and mail. If using this method, make sure the back page of the newsletter contains space for the mailing address.
Ready to mail.	Take them to the unit to mail as official mail. For units located at a base, station, sector, or district, take them directly to the mailroom.

Briefings and Presentations

The command may call upon you to give a briefing or presentation to the unit and/or the unit families. This will probably include welcome to new families after the transfer season, pre-deployment briefs, Yellow Ribbon program events, family nights, or unit trainings. This is your opportunity to explain your program including the resource and referral process. Here are some topics to include:

Brief biographical information. Biographical information can help establish your credibility, especially if you have had a long association with the military, and the Coast Guard in particular.

Communication Formats and Use

Briefings and Presentations (Cont'd)

Ombudsman program information. Explain the general framework of the program and how each command shapes its own program, and identify how and where you fit in the organization. Stress that you are there as a liaison between the families and the command, and that any problems unit members have will be handled through the chain of command, not you. You are there for the families.

Ombudsman responsibilities. Give a list of services you will provide, and a list of things you will not provide. These lists will set limitations and expectations. Stress your role as an information and referral resource, not as a trained counselor.

Confidentiality/Reportable Incidents. Reassure your listeners that what they tell you is confidential except for reportable situations. Review the reportables with your audience and explain your role in reporting.

Contact information. Provide your phone number and e-mail address (i.e., your business card), and discuss the telephone tree and newsletter distribution. This is the time to stress gathering family contact information. Family members in other locations will not be included in communications unless the unit members provide the contact information.

Family preparedness. Provide information and resources such as disaster preparedness checklists and evacuation routes. Always work toward family self-sufficiency. Families that are ready to take care of themselves are happier and make your job easier. Their ability to cope directly relates to their quality of life.

Command and community involvement. Feelings of belonging are important to your unit families' adjustment to the Coast Guard life style. Participating in unit events, spouses' association, and Coast Guard community events are avenues to belonging to the community.

Relationship with work-life and the chaplain. Your listeners need to know that you are part of a support team there to help them.

Whether presenting to an audience of more than a 1,000 or facilitating a group of five, follow these general rules and tips for delivery of an effective presentation:

- Practice your presentation.
- Arrive early.
- Involve your audience.
- Leave time for questions.
- Use appropriate/varied volume.
- Articulate and use correct pronunciation.
- Keep your eyes on the audience.
- Be animated, enthusiastic, and approachable.
- Avoid using vocalized pauses (e.g., Ummm).
- Repeat important information.

Command Communications

Command's Expectations

Ombudsmen need to have a clear understanding of what the commanding officer expects. During the initial meeting with the commanding officer, you can establish expectations by asking the following questions:

- Who is your POC? Naming a POC for routine matters allows you to conduct business without having to disturb the CO except for those matters of special concern.
- How often will you meet with the command? It is necessary that you establish a pattern of regular meetings.
- What is the standard frequency of communication? Regular contact allows you to report back on the status of the program and to give feedback on the morale of the crew and families.
- Are there certain issues, programs, or activities that are of more interest or more urgent to the commanding officer than others? You need to know this so that your efforts reflect these priorities.
- What is deemed an emergency? It is important to know what constitutes an emergency and how to communicate emergencies to the command.
- How and what do you communicate when the unit is deployed? Establish how you will communicate during deployments for both routine and emergency matters.

The ombudsman should follow standard Operational Security (OPSEC) practices for all communications with the command and command families.

Operational Security

Operational Security (OPSEC) is based on the idea that the accumulation of many sensitive or unclassified pieces of information could compromise security by revealing classified information. OPSEC is an analytic process used to deny adversaries pieces of information that, while unclassified, are still valuable.

Collecting intelligence is much like completing a puzzle, where bits of information can be pieced together to form a complete whole. Predictable behavior, casual conversations, and discarded documents can all be indicators associated with planning processes or operations; and indicators can give away valuable information about an organization's missions or activities.

Even though information may not be secret, it can be critical information. Critical information deals with facts about military intentions, capabilities, operations, or activities.

Command Communications

Operational Security (Cont'd)

Applying OPSEC counters the efforts of an organization's adversaries. Effective OPSEC minimizes the risk that critical information might be inadvertently given away.

The following are some ways to practice OPSEC:

- Shred excess paper involving information on operations.
- Do not discuss classified or sensitive information in open areas like the exchange, commissary, restrooms, libraries, and other public places.
- Be aware of established routines that could allow an adversary to predict future actions.
- Eliminate or reduce the amount of operational information posted on unclassified web sites.
- Never try to talk around classified information – it is extremely difficult to outsmart experienced intelligence analysts.
- Avoid discussing ship movements, port calls, TAD locations, and installation activities.
- Be aware that email sent over non-secure systems can be intercepted.
- Never attach classified or sensitive documents to unclassified email.
- When using cell phones and fax machines always assume they are being monitored. Equipment to monitor these devices illegally can be readily obtained on the open market.

Phone Tree

A phone tree (see enclosure 8) is a comprehensive listing or roster of contact numbers often used by commands to pass information to family members. They are also extremely useful to facilitate communication during or after a crisis such as a hurricane or a command accident.

Establishing a phone tree requires the permission of those listed on the command roster. To establish the phone tree the ombudsman must:

- Create and maintain a list of current contact information of people that wish to receive phone messages.
- Solicit for volunteers to call other family members.
- Provide each volunteer with a list of people to call.

Command Communications

Phone Tree (Cont'd)

The commanding officer should outline for you the times and circumstances that warrant activating the phone tree. To "activate" the phone tree:

- Contact your volunteer callers.
- Provide callers with a written and/or scripted message to relay.
- Instruct callers to contact everyone on their list.
- Have volunteers report back to you with results of their outreach.

Dealing with the Media

As an official representative of the command, ombudsmen may be approached by the media for interviews, especially during a crisis situation. This can be a very intense situation and participating in media interviews warrants some forethought and preparation on your part.

You have the same right as every other family member to accept or decline an interview with the press, but because of the degree of confidentiality and trust that the command and the command families have in you as the ombudsman, you should either decline or consult with the command and PAO prior to participating in an interview. As the ombudsman:

- You are strongly encouraged to decline all contact with the media and refer all requests to the designated PAO for action or response.
- Notify the command of all requests or inquiries.
- You MUST refuse all requests for contact information for unit families. You are bound by the Privacy Act not to disclose roster information of any kind.
- If an answer is essential, give a positive generalized one.

You should also be aware during times of crisis that the media tend to interview those who are most visibly distressed. Look out for family members that appear distressed and ask if they need help. If they accept your assistance, intervene and refer the media to the PAO for any comments.

In cases of high national interest, the media have been known to camp out in front of homes on the chance a family member will make a comment. If you see this happening, contact the PAO. Outside of normal business hours, call the Command Duty Officer (CDO) to contact the PAO.

Command Communications

Dealing with the Media (Cont'd)

If you decide to respond to and/or interview with the media:

- Contact the command and PAO for guidance.
- Decide what you are going to say. Remember, a lot of people will hear and see what you say. This can work to your benefit if you have thought out your responses thoroughly.
- Stick to the facts; avoid speculation about what might be happening or you think might happen.

When talking with the media have a clear message. Ombudsmen should have no more than three points they want to communicate. One of the three points should be a telephone number for individuals to contact for more information.

Ombudsmen should prepare for a television appearance so that the audience is focused on their message and not their physical appearance. The PAO should be able to help. Consider the following tips.

- Know the color of the set background. If not, take two different color jackets. For example, if the set background is royal blue and the ombudsman wears royal blue clothing, their body will fade into the background.
- Remove large, gaudy, and shiny jewelry, as it is distracting to the audience.
- Keep answers short. Have two or three main points and talk in sound bites, not long- winded sentences.
- Remove eyeglasses unless the lenses are non-reflective.
- Look at the interviewer. Do not let eyes wander around the set or shift back and forth to the camera.
- Powder nose, cheeks, and forehead; even males need a matte finish so they do not look like they are sweating.
- Use gestures if this is normal behavior, but keep them more contained.
- Manage facial expressions all the time so as not to be caught off guard when the camera starts rolling. Smile as appropriate and assume a live microphone unless told otherwise. Smiling makes a speaker seem more approachable and believable, and helps the interviewee feel confident and in control.

Command Communications

Dealing with the Media (Cont'd)

- Ask the interviewer to post contact information on the screen during the interview.

Unlike television, appearance is relatively unimportant on the radio. A radio interview is often done via the telephone. The interviewer will typically ask the interviewee their name and the command they represent. The interviewer will ask a series of questions and finally they will ask for contact information. Consider the message that needs to be conveyed and:

- Remember to talk slowly and clearly.
- Try to delete the annoying filler words such as "um" and "you know".
- Have water handy to prevent dry mouth.
- Talk in short sentences.
- Sound confident and calm.

Controlling Rumors

Rumors can be extremely destructive to a command, undermining the command and destroying morale of command personnel and families. With phone calls e-mails, and internet, rumors can spread very rapidly. The following guidelines can help mitigate or eliminate the spread of rumors.

Don't contribute to the problem. Do not repeat or pass on a rumor even if you label it as such. Messages can distort over time, and it could sound as if you were the original source of the information. Since you are the ombudsman, many would assume it is official. Squelch rumors when you can and encourage others not to spread rumors.

Stay with what you know. When someone calls you with a question or information they wish you to verify, tell them what you know to be the official word (what you have received from the commanding officer or your POC), when you received it, and then offer to call them once you have an official update.

If you have no information. If asked to confirm a rumor, but you have received no official word from the command, tell them that there is no official information, that you will be glad to update them as soon as you hear, and ask them to please not spread the rumor because that could be harmful to the command. Let people know that as the ombudsman you will receive the information first. Anything they hear elsewhere is speculation and rumor.

Command Communications

Controlling Rumors (Cont'd)

Inform the commanding officer. When there are rumors circulating and the command is at home, let the commanding officer, the executive officer, and the command master chief know about them. This gives them feedback about what is circulating among the families (and command personnel) and allows them to take the appropriate action.

Be informed. Rumor-control depends on ombudsmen receiving information in a timely manner about what is happening with the command, especially during deployment. Ombudsmen should emphasize the importance of regular, informative communications.

Practice prevention. Periodically put out word in the newsletter concerning the danger and negative consequences of rumors.

Unit 5 Check-on-Learning

1. Which of the following actions by the sender can affect the message? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Choice of words.
   B. Arrangement of words.
   C. Tone of voice.
   D. Body language.

2. Which of the following statements BEST defines communication?

   A. Choice and arrangement of words.
   B. Information the sender is conveying.
   C. When the receiver hears the message.
   D. When the receiver provides feedback.

3. Much of communication is non-verbal.

   A. True.
   B. False.

4. You met the new family yesterday at the command picnic. They are very young and have only been married a few months. You heard that young couples like these have a lot of problems and put a strain on the ombudsman's time and energy.

   Which barrier to effective communication are you challenged with in this scenario?

   A. Environment.
   B. Background.
   C. Psychological state.
   D. Stereotypes.

5. Which mitigation technique would be most effective against the communication barrier you are facing with the new family?

   A. Keep an open mind.
   B. Avoid going off on tangents.
   C. Avoid communication.
   D. Tell them how your feel.

Unit 5 Check-on-Learning

6. Caller: "My husband is deployed and I haven't heard from him in a week. Our daughter is so young and she cries a lot. She really misses her daddy. I need to talk to my husband." Ombudsman: You need to talk to your husband. Caller: Yes, my daughter got kicked out of daycare for biting and I'm going to get fired if I can't find someone we can afford to watch her. I'm just so tired and we have so many bills. Can you ask the command to bring my husband home?" Ombudsman: It sounds like you and your daughter miss your husband very much. It also sounds like you need some assistance finding daycare for your daughter, and you are concerned about the cost of daycare and paying your bills. Can you tell me more about that?

   What active listening skills did the ombudsman apply in this scenario and how?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Which of the following statements about telephone protocol are not true? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Document the call.
   B. Answer calls anonymously.
   C. Inform the caller of your time constraints.
   D. Return calls within 48 hours.

8. List the information you should provide on your voicemail message.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

9. When sending emails, how can you protect the privacy of recipients on your distribution list?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Unit 5 Check-on-Learning

10. A unit can have two official Facebook pages, one for command cadre and one for the ombudsman and command families.

    A. True
    B. False

11. Indicate which information in column B can be included in newsletters (I), and which information must be excluded (E), by placing I or E in the blank corresponding to the item.

Column A	Column B
_____	Unit event announcements
_____	Announcements for local churches
_____	Advertisements for home businesses
_____	Unit contact information
_____	CG regulated home care providers
_____	Political announcements
_____	Pre-deployment checklists
_____	Movement schedule
_____	Volunteer opportunities

12. List four questions you should ask the command when establishing expectations for communication.

    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____

Unit 5 Check-on-Learning

13. When activating the phone tree what can the ombudsman do to ensure that a consistent message is provided to all family members?

    _____

    _____

    _____

14. Your unit responded to a high profile search and rescue. Your spouse is a rescue swimmer for the unit and a local reporter wants to interview you about the incident.

    What is BEST way for you to handle the request?

    A. Decline the interview and refer the reporter to the PAO.
    B. Agree to the interview and consult with the command and PAO.
    C. Interview with the reporter and inform the command.
    D. Decline and give the reporter the name and number of another spouse.

15. You were contacted by Richard, one of the unit spouses, and he told you that his wife said that the unit was relocating to Alaska. You haven't heard anything from the command.

    Which of the following is the BEST response?

    A. I haven't heard anything, but if I do I'll let you know.
    B. I haven't heard anything official, but Maria told me that she heard the same thing; so it seems like it may be true.
    C. I haven't heard anything from the CO. When I hear something official, I'll let you know. Until then, please don't share this information with anyone else.
    D. Of course it's not true. Nothing is official unless you hear it from me.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

UNIT 6

RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Overview

Introduction

Ombudsmen are frequently called upon to identify resources and make referrals. This involves answering questions about what services are available, provider's hours and location, and eligibility for services. The ombudsman's ability to clarify the needs of families, identify appropriate resources, and make effective referrals are important skills to develop.

Resource and referral is the backbone of the ombudsman program. Customer service, knowledge of resources, and the ability to problem-solve are skills needed to do this function. Topics covered in this unit include making appropriate referrals, managing resource information, and referral sources.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **IDENTIFY** how to compile and organize resources for families.
- **RECOGNIZE** the basic guidelines for making referrals.
- **RECOGNIZE** how to determine customer needs and make referrals using the PACT model.
- **MATCH** resources and services to customer needs.
- **RECOGNIZE** the key elements and skills of customer service.
- **IDENTIFY** tools and strategies for marketing the ombudsman program to commands and families.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Coast Guard Ombudsman Handbook 2010
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994

Resources and Services

Common Resources and Services

Resources needed depend on the needs of the families in your geographic location. Ombudsmen need to be familiar with commonly used resources within their community. This allows them to provide basic information and referrals quickly and efficiently.

Start with the work-life (WL) office. The staff works with several government and local agencies. Each WL specialist will have specialized information on his or her area of responsibility. For example, the family resource specialist will have information on childcare, special education, adoptions, elder care, and scholarships. Your ombudsman coordinator will also be able to give you resources or problem solving suggestions.

Consult with other ombudsmen. They will have been through the same resource building process and will have information to share.

In addtion to WL and fellow ombudsmen, you can identify resources in a variety of other ways:

- CG SUPRT (www.cgsuprt.com).
- Reviewing the Combined Federal Champaign (CFC) donor brochure.
- Reading local and military publications.
- Searching the Internet.
- Contacting the local Chamber of Commerce or United Way.
- Listening to public service announcements on television and radio.
- Networking with other armed services family support programs.
- Participating in your District Community of Practice meetings and other relevant meetings.
- Reviewing the local telephone book and newspaper.
- Taking advance training.

Information needed about the identified resources again depends on the needs of the unit families. What information would be useful to them? When gathering information about an organization, ask:

- Who is the contact person?
- What services and/or programs are offered?
- Is the agency a non-profit organization?
- Are there eligibility requirements? (i.e. income, residency)
- Is documentation required? (i.e. birth certificate, lease agreement, copy of orders, leave and earning statement)
- How much do the services cost?

Resources and Services

Common Resources and Services (Cont'd)

- Are services confidential?
- Are the staff members licensed or certified?
- Are appointments necessary and/or available in a timely manner?
- What are the business hours?
- Does the agency have experience working with military families?
- Does the agency have a good record with the Better Business Bureau?

Although it may seem daunting at first, there will be many resources referred to so often that you will have the telephone number or web address memorized.

National and CG Resources

National resources can be obtained by dialing 211or at www.211.org. Callers are connected with information about critical health and human services available in their community. 211 can provide information on basic needs (food banks, shelters, rental assistance, etc.), physical and mental health resources, employment support, support for older individuals or individuals with disabilities, support for children and families and volunteer opportunities.

Coast Guard resources are essential (see the Resource List, enclosure 9). Ombudsmen should gather and maintan contact information for:

- Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) for all pay questions.
- Command Center office is staffed 24 hours a day and can help you find Coast Guard personnel in service and/or support positions.
- Legal is located at the District level and can offer advice and referrals on such concerns as landlord tenant issues, family law issues, wills, and powers of attorney.
- Health Benefits Advisor (HBA) provides information on health and dental programs (1-800 9HBA HBA).
- TRICARE provides plan information for your geographical area.
- Officer of the Day (OOD)/Command Duty Officer (CDO) is on duty during and after working hours.
- Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) offers financial assistance for emergencies, educational loans and grants, and new baby layette.
- Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) for use of facilities and information on recreational programs.
- WL for assistance balancing family needs with CG responsibilities.
- Command Financial Specialist (CFS) for financial guidance.

NOTE: CG members and their families may also use Navy resources such as Navy Legal Service Office (NLSO) and Navy-Marine Corp Relief Society.

Resources and Services

Information and Referral Services

The local WL office is required to provide resource and referral as well. Rather than trying to keep up with the whole community, contact or refer individuals to the appropriate WL specialist. The WL specialists include:

- **Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (EAPC).** The EAPC is a CONFIDENTIAL point of contact for work, personal and family issues. The EAPC provides assistance and information and referral for suicide awareness and prevention, critical incident stress management, workplace violence prevention, sexual assault awareness, prevention, and response, and financial assistance.
- **Family Advocacy Specialist (FAS).** The FAS helps members and their families prevent and resolve domestic violence. This includes but is not limited to providing referrals, overseeing treatment, and advising commands.
- **Family Resource Specialist (FRS).** The FRS manages the Special Needs Program, providing guidance about the program and support to the familes. The FRS also provides information and referral for childcare and childcare subsidies, adoption reimbursement, elder care, and family member scholarships, grants, and loans.
- **Transiton and Relocation Manager (TRM).** The TRM assists CG members and families during the relocation process with local area information including spousal employment assistance. The TRM also manages the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), assisting CG memebrs and their families with the transition from military to civilian life.
- **Personal Financial Manager (PFM).** Coordinate and/or facilitate financial education and training, information, and referreal assistance to Coast Guard personnel and their families.
- **Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC).** A civilian employee, who is trained to ensure appropriate care is coordinated and provided to victims of sexual assault; in addition, tracks the services provided to a victim of sexual assault from the initial report through final disposition and resolution.
- **Child Development Services Specialists (CDSS).** A member of the Work-Life staff responsible for Family Child Care (FCC) program management, school related information and referral, and childcare information and referral.
- **Ombudsman Coordinator.** Provides direct assistance to ombusmen, commands, and families for the ombudsman program.

Resources and Services

Information and Referral Services (Cont'd)

You can increase your knowledge and improve your credibility by visiting local centers and agencies that you anticipate referring to most frequently and meeting the people who provide the services, taking notes on the services provided, and making a personal evaluation.

Referral services are available online through CG SUPRT at www.cgsuprt.com or by phone at 1-855-247-8778. CG SUPRT provides referrals for a variety of areas ranging from childcare to eldercare and legal support to financial management. Contact your local work-life office for information on services avaialble via CG SUPRT.

Organizing Information and Materials

Once resources are compiled, ombudsmen must decide how to organize the information and materials. Since resource and referral is one of the most important functions of an ombudsman, your system must be designed to keep the information and materials readily available.

Cross-referencing alphabetically and by subject-matter classification improves your ability to retrieve the informatin and material quickly. The classification system might include general service areas (e.g., childcare, intimate partner maltreatment, employment, recreation, and resources for the disabled), specific services (e.g., shelters for battered women, swimming pools), and alphabetical listings of the agencies that provide these services.

Physically organize the information and materials into a filing system. Start with a large binder (i.e., resource binder) with dividers and pocket inserts or page protectors to store pamphlets, business cards, flyers, ads, and articles from local, CG, and national resources.

Once you outgrow your binder, maintain the most frequently used resources in the binder and move the other resources to a file drawer or small filing cabinet.

Most frequently used numbers, hotlines, and emergency contacts should be maintained by the phone (e.g., rolodex, address book, contact list) for immediate accessibility.

Resources and Services

Maintaining Resources

To be of any value, resource files must be updated on a continuous basis, and the surrounding community must be monitored constantly for information on new services.

Keep resources current by reviewing them at least every six months. Any time an ombudsman makes a referral they should ask the caller to contact them back if any of the information provided is no longer current. Also, ombudsmen should make follow up calls to ensure callers got the information they needed. Follow-up provides ombudsmen with the opportunity to ensure resource accuracy, demonstrate they care about the caller, and offers an opportunity to provide additional information, if needed. Place a reminder on your calendar to follow-up one week after making a referral.

Referrals

Basic Guidelines

Ombudsmen, serving as information resources, receive a variety of requests. Your ability to help people is defined by how well you listen. Do not take their problems upon yourself or give advice. Offer suggestions and referrals and help families to make informed decisions.

Follow these basic guidelines when making referrals:

- Make sure the individual has the correct information and procedure. Have them repeat it back to you.
- Give no more than three referrals at a time. Too many referrals can confuse the issue.
- If you do not have a referral to offer, tell the individual you need to research the issue and get back to them. Give them an approximate time you will follow up. If the search takes longer than expected, call at the appointed time, and let them know your progress.
- Follow up with the individual to make sure they were able to access the service needed.
- For individuals requesting or needing counseling, make referrals ONLY to work-life, the chaplain, CG SUPRT, or medical.
- DO NOT give referrals to any “for profit” business or organization (e.g., car repairs, babysitters, hairdresser, and tax service).

Determining Customer Needs

Information and referral involves determining the caller’s needs and finding ways to meet those needs. It can be complicated, especially when the caller is not certain what is needed or is hesitant to seek help.

Ombudsmen can use the PACT model to help clarify the problem or issue, and determine the customer’s needs and appropriate resource or referral. PACT is an acronym that represents the four steps of the model:

- Problem identification.
- Assess options.
- Choose an option.
- Try referral.

Problem Identification

To determine a caller’s needs or problem, apply active listening techniques to hear what he or she is really saying and clarify the following:

- Is this urgent?
- Does the caller have enough money for food and other necessities?

Referrals

Problem Identification (Cont'd)

- Is the caller being evicted or are their utilities being cut off?
- What has the caller already done to try to solve the problem?
- What resources does the caller have?

Determine what the caller wants to accomplish. Ask:

- How can I help you today?
- What have you already done to try to resolve this situation?

Realize the real reason for the problem may not be the presenting problem. The presenting problem may only be a symptom of a bigger issue that the caller may or may not be willing to address.

Assess Options

A person experiencing a problem often gets stuck in their ability to see potential solutions. Ombudsmen can help an individual think of other possible solutions. This is the problem-solving part of the telephone call. The focus is on options and solutions to the situation.

- Realistically exploring available options and solutions. Ask the caller to brainstorm solutions to their problem without evaluating them at first. The ombudsman may have to provide a few suggestions. Ask open-ended questions and encourage the individual not to immediately dismiss suggestions.
- Focusing on the exceptions to the problem. What is going on when the caller is not experiencing the problem? This provides hope and builds confidence that a solution can be found.
- Determining the caller's thoughts and feelings about each option. What are the benefits and risks of implementing each option?
- To resolve the problem may require an interruption or a substitution of a behavior pattern. Help change the caller's interpretation of the situation and their behavior or response may change.
- Only a small change is necessary. This small change can have a ripple effect. Help the caller take ownership of the problem and begin to act.

There are some problems that cannot be solved, death, serious illness, possibly divorce. Ombudsmen can still help an individual by being supportive, empathetic, and by providing resources for additional support.

Referrals

Choose an Option

After thoroughly evaluating a caller's needs and determining that a referral is the most appropriate response, take the following steps to make a successful referral:

- Explain why a referral is necessary. For example, ombudsmen are not counselors; therefore, individuals needing counseling services are referred to the appropriate resource.
- Indicate organizations capable of meeting the caller's needs. Provide enough information about the organizations so that the caller can make an informed choice. Do not provide so much information or the names of so many organizations that the information is overwhelming.
- Link the caller to the service. Let them know what to expect and how the agency works. Also, let the caller know there are other resources and they can call back for more names if necessary.
- Give the caller specific name(s) and number(s) to call. Ensure that the caller writes down the information.
- In certain instances, and with the caller's permission, it may be necessary to make the contact for them. If it appears that the caller does not have the capacity to follow through to resolve his or her problem, but wants help, it may be in their best interest for the ombudsman to make the contact. If the ombudsman has conference calling they can offer to make the call with the caller and do a "warm handoff" to the agency respondent after identifying the reason for the call.
- If appropriate referral sources are not known, contact WL or assist the caller to contact CG SUPRT for information or referral.

The following factors influence the success of a referral.

- The manner in which the information is given. A warm, caring manner should be used. Be patient, tactful, and remain neutral. Ask questions to clarify and to understand the caller's feelings as well as the situation. Get enough information so that an appropriate referral can be made.
- Whether the referral is timely and accurate. Return a call within the same day, or sooner, for emergencies. For example, if someone needs assistance with food, waiting to return their call until the end of the day can mean another night without food for a family. Likewise, referring them to an organization that does not provide emergency food assistance can be frustrating for the family.

Referrals

Choose an Option (Cont'd)

- The caller's willingness to accept help. If someone calls, but is unwilling to accept assistance, explore the reasons. What is the real reason for the call?
- The presenting problem. The initial question may be a presenting problem while the actual problem has not been addressed. Is the need for food assistance due to a substance abuse problem? Lack of knowledge or skill in budgeting? Due to a money problem?
- An understanding of what services a resource can provide. It is critical for ombudsmen to have a basic understanding of services provided by frequently used resources within the community. Knowledge of services allows an ombudsman to accurately match family members' needs to organizations that provide the needed services.

Try Referral

A plan may be as simple as making a phone call or multi-faceted with a number of steps. If a plan has many steps, it is helpful to prioritize. Perhaps the caller can do step one and two, and then get back to the ombudsman to discuss additional steps.

Be careful not to overload a caller with too much information. Callers in crisis or overly stressed may only be able to handle one piece of information at a time. Rarely should more than three resources be provided. It is too easy for a caller to get confused or overwhelmed, and then they may do nothing.

Follow-up can help a caller implement their plan as the ombudsman acts as a reminder and a clarifier. A follow-up contact helps to ensure families receive needed services and helps to update the ombudsman's referral list if there are changes. Ask:

- Were you able to make contact with the resource?
- Were they able to help?
- What assistance was given?

Customer Service

Customer Service Techniques

Ombudsmen are in the business of providing information and referral services to command families who are their customers. Everyone likes to be the recipient of good customer service and ombudsmen want to provide the best possible service to their customers. Whether in person, over the phone or e-mail, an ombudsman should possess basic customer service skills and apply these techniques to ensure good customer service:

- Be credible. Provide current and relevant information and resources.
- Do not make promises. Reliability is key to good customer service. If you say you are going to do something, keep your word.
- Listen to customers. Answer the phone only when full attention can be directed towards the caller. Take the time to identify customer needs by asking questions, concentrating on what the customer is really saying, and applying active listening techniques.
- Take a few brief notes. Document important details, including dates, names, and situation; do not try to write down everything the caller says.
- Deal with complaints. No one likes hearing complaints, but complaints are an opportunity to better understand the customers concerns and learn why or how assistance and services fell short of the customer's needs and/or expectations. Listen, even if the caller curses or says unpleasant things. Many people use unpleasant language when they are under stress.
- Get regular feedback. Encourage and welcome suggestions about how you could improve. Provide many avenues for your customers to communicate with you including in person, e-mail, telephone, and talks with family members. Ask how you are doing or how you could improve your services.
- Pay attention to details. Smile, be courteous, respect your customer, and use the customer's name.
- Be empathetic especially when there is nothing that can be done to solve a problem.
- Leave a message when you are not available. Provide a detailed voicemail with your name, hours, and contact information for emergencies.

Good customer service reflects positively upon the command and the command ombudsman and is in keeping with the Ombudsman Code of Conduct requirement to be professional.

Customer Service

Dealing with Difficult Customers

Some customers that ombudsmen deal with may be angry or upset. These customers deserve assistance as much as any other, but it can be more difficult to get to the root of their concerns because the customer is masking them with their anger and frustration. Follow these basic tips to mitigate the situation and assist the customer:

- Remain calm. Do not meet the customer's anger with anger. This will only escalate the situation.
- Put yourself in the customer's shoes. Try to see things from their perspective and understand why they are so upset.
- Let the customer know that you appreciate them bringing the issue to your attention and that you truly want to resolve the issue and provide the assistance they need.
- Listen to the customer and really hear what they are telling you, even if you are unable to help them.
- Ask questions to clarify the facts of the situation and understand their feelings. Listen to learn rather than just preparing your response. Don't respond too quickly.
- Look for common ground. Find points in their concerns with which you share their view.
- Be friendly and thoughtful. Respond as a person, not as an employee of the organization focused on policy and procedure.
- Be firm but understanding with your answers.

Difficult Customer

Ombudsman

Satisfied Customer

Outreach

Market Services

Ombudsmen can compile relevant resources and develop their customer service skills, but the key to effective resource and referral is a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan to educate service and family members on the ombudsman program. To increase awareness of the program and services available:

- Identify target audiences.
- Develop outreach messages.
- Apply outreach tools and strategy.

Target Audiences

Outreach is simply extending services to those who may be unaware of the functions of an ombudsman. Young military spouses, family members of single members, or childcare providers of single parent service members may not be familiar with the military structure, resources, and communication techniques. Service members and their families may be unsure of ombudsman functions. A call to the ombudsman might prevent or reduce the severity of a problem, so it is important to educate family members about the program.

Ombudsmen should have the CO's concurrence as to who is served by the program. Once it is determined who the target audiences are, there are a variety of techniques that can used to reach them. Potential target audiences include:

- Command personnel.
- Spouses.
- Fiancés/fiancées, girl/boyfriends, and significant others.
- Parents and family members of service members attached to the command.
- Childcare providers for children of single parents.

There are a variety of ways to get the word out about services to each of these different groups.

Command Personnel. When command personnel and their families are doing well, the service member is able to concentrate efforts on achieving the command's mission. A well accomplished mission reflects well on command leadership. Try the following methods to reach this group:

- Invite leadership to attend ombudsman training.
- Provide information on ombudsman accomplishments via in-person meetings with command leadership.

Outreach

Target Audiences (Cont'd)

- Give a brief on goals and accomplishments of the ombudsman at leadership meetings.
- Make yourself available to problem-solve or provide information.
- Attend unit trainings to introduce yourself, explain the program, provide contact information, and get contact information from new arrivals.
- Have a description of the ombudsman program as well as tips and items of interest to active duty personnel included in the plan of the week.

Spouses. Information directed to the active duty service member may or may not reach the spouse at home. Ombudsmen can provide information to spouses through the newsletter, phone trees, or email. Attending and providing presentations or briefings at spouses' club meetings and family nights are another effective way to outreach to spouses. In addition, a letter from the ombudsman should be included in the sponsor packet sent by the command to each member prior to arrival.

Fiancés/fiancées, girl/boyfriends, and significant others. Guidance from the CO and permission from the service member is needed before serving fiancé, fiancées, girlfriends, boyfriends, or significant others. This group may not have military ID cards and therefore may be unable to access military resources; however, community resources or referral information can be given if available. Contact information for significant others may or may not be included on the official command roster; the service member would need to provide the ombudsman with the information and give permission for their significant other to be contacted.

Parents and family members of single service members. Seek guidance from the CO or command and permission from the service member about working with parents and non-dependent family members. Most commands are fine with them receiving the ombudsman newsletter and being invited to command functions if the member gives permission. It is the member's responsibility to provide the ombudsman with contact information.

Childcare providers for children of single parents. Active duty single parents should be encouraged to provide ombudsman contact information to their childcare providers as well as give a brief explanation of the command ombudsman's role. This is especially true for deploying commands. Civilian childcare providers often do not understand CG structure, mission, resources, etc. They need a POC to address questions should the need arise.

Outreach

Outreach Message

When communicating with others, it is important to have a clear message. Messages may be very simple such as providing the ombudsman's telephone number and telling people to call if they need assistance. Ombudsmen may want to send a message to define their role or to advertise a community program or service. When developing the message, it is important to address **WIIFM** the question of, **"What's in it for me?"** People are more likely to listen to a message when they feel it specifically targets them and their needs.

Tools and Strategy

Ombudsmen can use a variety of tools and tactics to provide information about the ombudsman program, but remember that today's consumers are inundated with messages everywhere they go. Select tools and tactics that are appropriate for the message and the audience. For example, a great deal of detailed information works better in a brochure than on a flyer, and emails are ineffective if the target audience lacks Internet access. Fact sheets offer more detail than a flyer, but are less detail than a brochure.

The range of tools is as unlimited as the imagination; but there are constraints to consider. Among these are:

- Budget.
- Return on investment.
- Ease of implementation.

Choose tools that can be accommodated within a budget. Also, choose tools and activities that are practical, and require minimum time and energy to put into place.

Some ideas may be relatively inexpensive, but may not reach target audiences with the necessary consistency or impact. Marketing tools fall into three broad categories:

- **Electronic media.** Includes videos, webinars, emails, internet web pages (e.g., unit web page) and social networking (e.g., Facebook, blogs) to market the program and/or create a forum for discussion to raise awareness.
- **Print media.** Includes newsletters, flyers, brochures, and other printed material promoting the program and available services.
- **In person.** Includes briefing and presentations, networking (e.g., lunches and meetings), and outreach (e.g. information table with resources) at command and CG events such as unit trainings, award ceremonies, all-hands, family nights, and Coast Guard day).

Unit 6 Check-on-Learning

1. List five ways to identify resources.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

2. You contact a local resource to gather information. You have identified the point of contact, hours of operation, eligibility requirements and costs for services, necessary documentation, and confidentiality of services. List six additional pieces of information that you should gather.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

   f. _____

3. Caller. We are having some family problems and I would like to talk with someone. Ombudsman. I am sorry to hear that you are having problems. There are serveral resources available to you. You can contact CG SUPRT, work-life, the chaplain, medical, and there are also several good therapist in town. Let me give you the names and numbers to call. Caller. I think I have all the information straight. Ombudsman. Repeat the information back to me. Ombudsman. All the information sounds correct. I'll give you a call next week to see how things went. If you need assistance before then, give me a call.

   Which of the following basic guidelines for making referrals did the ombudsman NOT adhere to in this scenario? (Circle all that apply)

   A. Give no more than three referrals at a time.
   B. Make sure the individual has the correct information.
   C. Do not give referrals to any "for profit" business.
   D. Follow up with the individual.

Unit 6 Check-on-Learning

4. Which component of the PACT model addresses what to do when a problem cannot be solved?

   A. Problem identification.
   B. Assess options.
   C. Choose an option.
   D. Try referral.

5. [Question Removed]

6. Match the customer service technique in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

	Column A		Column B
_____	1. Listen to customers	a.	Encourage and welcome suggestions about how you could improve.
_____	2. Deal with complaints	b.	Provide current and relevant information and resources.
_____	3. Get regular feedback	c.	Smile and use the customer's name.
_____	4. Pay attention to details	d.	Answer the phone only when full attention can be directed towards the caller.
_____	5. Be credible	e.	Learn why or how assistance and services fell short of the customer's needs.

7. When marketing the ombudsman program, you should tailor your message and strategy to your audience.

   A. True.
   B. False.

UNIT 7

CRISIS RESPONSE

Overview

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most challenging, yet most important, functions an ombudsman can perform is to handle crises. Although you may have concerns about being able to handle these situations, those feelings are very natural and you can learn how to respond and prepare yourself to handle crises. Crises may involve just one person or family, or they may involve an entire command. Each type of situation is treated separately.

This unit of training will help prepare you to respond to individual and command crises and report incidents as appropriate. In addition, the unit focuses on preparing families for emergencies.

Objectives

After successfully completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- **DEFINE** the ombudsman's role in individual and command crises.
- **RECOGNIZE** the types of individual and family crises and appropriate referrals.
- **IDENTIFY** reportable incidents and associated reporting requirements.
- **DESCRIBE** how to prepare families for emergencies and disasters.
- **IDENTIFY** resources for crisis response and emergency planning.
- **SPECIFY** methods for dealing with the media during a crisis.
- **RECOGNIZE** symptoms of and ways to mitigate and/or prevent compassion fatigue.

References

The following references were used to develop this unit:

- Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (Series)
- Coast Guard Ombudsman Handbook 2010
- Navy Ombudsman Basic Training
- Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual, Sep 1994
- United States Coast Guard Casualty Assistant Calls Officer Handbook

Individual and Family Crisis

Ombudsman's Role

As mentioned previously in this training, although most of the calls the ombudsman receives are routine, ombudsmen must be prepared to handle and assist individuals and families in crisis. In addition, the ombudsman should be aware of the command's policies and expectations regarding crisis response.

When responding to crises, never act independently or without explicit guidance from the command and do not assume the role of counselor, you must refer persons in crisis to the appropriate resource as soon as possible. An ombudsman's role during crises is to:

- Recognize the crisis.
- Refer for assistance.
- Report crisis incidents as required.

Crisis Intervention

Before ombudsmen can respond to crises they must understand how to perform crisis intervention. Crisis intervention can be described as emotional first aid. The goals of crisis intervention are to:

- Restore individuals to their pre-crisis level of functioning.
- Cushion the impact of the stressful event by offering practical and emotional support.
- Identify and mobilize resources to cope with the crisis event.
- Understand events leading to the crisis.

Remember, not every problem may be an actual crisis by definition, but the individual may experience it as a crisis. Crises are different for each person. The ombudsman's role is to assist, not to judge.

The National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) www.trynova.org, suggests that helpers prepare in advance to experience distress when working with a crisis victim. Ombudsmen should:

- Be mentally available to a victim by putting their own thoughts and concerns aside.
- Be prepared physically by eating properly, getting enough sleep and exercise.
- Be aware of how they generally deal with stress.
- Make sure they have dealt with their own issues.
- Diversify activities. Make time for fun.
- Know resources.

Individual and Family Crisis

Crisis Intervention (Cont'd)

- Educate themselves about reactions to crisis.
- Establish and nourish a meaningful belief system.
- Cultivate a support system.

In a crisis, ombudsmen should assist the persons in crisis with resources and support, but allow them to make their own decisions and deal with the situation as it unfolds. This will empower the person and give them some sense of control and accomplishment rather than helplessness or powerlessness.

An ombudsman may take a more directive role if the individual in crisis is:

- In danger (i.e. if the attacker is still present).
- So overwhelmed they have limited or no capability to care for themselves.
- Injured.

In crisis intervention, there are certain actions that are appropriate and others that are not appropriate (i.e., Do's and Don'ts of crisis intervention).

DO

- Ask for assistance when needed.
- Make sure the individual is safe.
- Listen attentively, but do not force them to talk.
- Get the caller's name and phone number without being intrusive.
- De-escalate distressed individuals by talking in a soft, calm voice and encouraging them to focus on what they are requesting.
- Show concern, support, acceptance, hope, and a positive attitude.
- Be tolerant of extreme emotions. Crisis brings a flood of emotions, be careful not to take things personally.
- Maintain confidentiality and inform the individual of situations that may have to be reported.
- Listen. In some situations a concerned, understanding ear may be all that is needed.
- Use caring words and phrases.

Individual and Family Crisis

Crisis Intervention (Cont'd)

Caring Words and Phrases

- ✓ *I'm sorry that this has happened.*
- ✓ *Would you like me to help you with...*
- ✓ *It's not your fault.*
- ✓ *What you're feeling is very normal.*
- ✓ *I cannot imagine how difficult this must be for you. I'd like to be with you for a while if you wish.*
- ✓ *I do not know how you feel, but I would like for you to please share your feelings with me.*

DON'T

- Give unofficial information concerning injuries or casualties.
- Use military phrases or acronyms when talking with families.
- Make physical contact unless you have permission or the individual initiates contact.
- Focus the conversation on you.
- Be judgmental.
- Give advice or opinions unless asked.
- Offer false hope or make promises.
- Be a hero, or rescuer, or get in over your head. You should not bring people home, offer to take care of their children, or promise punishment for wrong doers.

Don't use phrases such as:

- × *I know how you feel.*
- × *It's God's will.*
- × *Tell me what I can do.*
- × *It was a blessing that....*
- × *You'll get over this.*
- × *Just be thankful that....*
- × *You are so strong. I know you can handle this.*

Individual and Family Crisis

RECOGNIZE the Crisis

The first step in crisis response is to recognize the crisis. Crises individuals and families may experience include:

- Intimate partner maltreatment.
- Child abuse.
- Sexual assault.
- Suicide.
- Death of a loved one.

Recognizing Intimate Partner Maltreatment

Intimate partner maltreatment is an offense under the United States Code and the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) that involves the use, attempted use or threatened use of force or violence against someone who is a:

- Current or former spouse.
- Person with whom the abuser shares a child.
- Current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a residence.

Intimate partner maltreatment is characterized by physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty. Actions indicative of:

- Physical abuse include hitting, kicking, slapping, biting, burning, throwing objects, and sexual assault.
- Emotional or psychological abuse include yelling, name-calling, threats, isolation, blaming, shaming, intimidation, or obsessive behavior such as extreme jealousy, dominance, and rage.
- Economic control and/or interference with personal liberty include stealing, withholding basic needs (i.e., food, clothes, medication, and shelter), withholding money, and sabotaging someone's job).

Often, but not in all cases, intimate partner maltreatment becomes a pattern. The cycle of violence explains the dynamics of how intimate partner maltreatment may become a pattern and encompasses the following three stages:

Stage 1 – Tension Building

- Stress builds.
- Victim senses danger.
- Minor conflict may occur.
- Victim hopes things will get better.

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Intimate Partner Maltreatment (Cont'd)

Stage 2 – Violent Episode

- Abuser blames victim for the abuse.
- Victim may escape and return after the abuse ends.
- Serious injury or death can occur.

Stage 3 – Honeymoon Phase

- Family is in shock.
- Can last days, months, or years.
- Batterer feels remorse, shame, and guilt.
- Victim denies and minimizes the abuse to cope.
- Batterer seeks forgiveness and may be kind and loving.

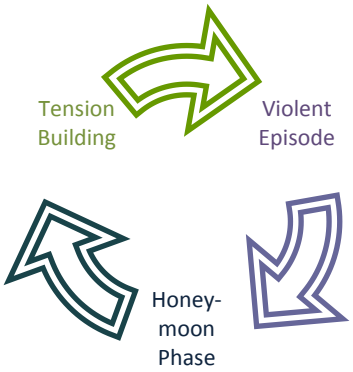


Figure 5.1- Stages of Intimate Partner Maltreatment

Recognizing Child Abuse

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C.A. §5106g), as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

- Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation.
- An act/failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

Within the minimum standards set by CAPTA, each State is responsible for providing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect and you should be familiar with the definitions for the state in which you are residing. Most states recognize four major types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Action(s) indicative of:

- Physical abuse include punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting with a hand or other object, burning, or other manner as to cause harm to a child. Such injury is abuse regardless of whether intentional.
- Sexual abuse include engaging a child in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct, or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children, or any sexual activity between an offender and a child when the offender is in a position of power over the child. This includes any simulation of sexually explicit conduct to produce a visual depiction such as pictures or videos of such conduct.

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Child Abuse (Cont'd)

- Emotional abuse includes constant criticism, threats, rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.
- Neglect includes failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs such as necessary food or shelter, appropriate supervision, medical care, hygiene, and education.

Behaviors and physical signs of abuse vary depending on the type of abuse the child is exposed. The following table identifies the behaviors and physical signs exhibited by children that are characteristic of the four major types of abuse.

NOTE. Children suffering emotional abuse do not normally have physical indicators, but emotional abuse is usually present with other forms of abuse.

Type of Abuse	Behaviors/Physical Signs
PHYSICAL	***Behaviors*** • *Cautious of adult contact* • *Exhibits extreme behavior (passive/ aggressive)* • *Displays an inappropriate level of maturity* • *Anxious/uneasy when other children cry* • *Wears concealing clothing* ***Physical Signs*** • *Unexplained bruises; marks on the face, mouth, or large areas like the torso, back, buttocks, or thighs* • *Bruises and marks in the shape of an object like a belt buckle or iron* • *Unexplained burns such as rope burns (wrists, neck, and ankles), cigarette burns, water burns, or obvious burns from objects like irons* • *Unexplained bites, broken bones, or black eyes* • *Fractures, bruises, or other marks in various stages of healing, indicating injuries on a continuing basis* • *Fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school*
	Behaviors/Physical Signs
SEXUAL	***Behaviors*** • *Frequent touching/fondling of genitals or masturbation* • *Inappropriate sexual expression with trusted adults* • *"Clinginess," fear of separation Excessive bathing* • *Reenacting abuse using dolls, drawings, or friends*

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Child Abuse (Cont'd)

SEXUAL (Cont'd)	• *Avoidance of certain staff, relatives or friends* • *Lack of involvement with peers* ***Physical Signs*** • *Pain, itching, bruises, swelling/bleeding around the genital area* • *Stained or bloody underclothing* • *Demonstrated difficulty sitting/walking* • *Neglected appearance*
EMOTIONAL	**Behaviors/Physical Signs** ***Behaviors*** • *Withdrawal/low social interaction* • *Apathy* • *Fear of parent/caregiver* • *Exhibits extreme behavior (passive/aggressive)* • *Developmentally delayed* ***Physical Signs*** • *Whispering speech* • *Inappropriate dress* • *Poor hygiene* • *Consistent hunger* • *Unattended medical needs* • *Recurring cases of head lice* • *Fatigue or listlessness*

Recognizing Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.

Sexual Assault includes rape, forcible sodomy, and other unwanted, indecent contact (e.g., kissing against another person's will) that is aggravated, abusive, or wrongful (to include unwanted and inappropriate sexual contact), or attempts to commit these acts.

Consent is words or overt acts indicating a freely given agreement to the sexual conduct at issue by a competent person. An expression of refusal or lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent (i.e., "No Means No").

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Sexual Assault (Cont'd)

Lack of verbal or physical resistance or submission by the victim does not constitue consent, especially when it results from:

The accused's:

- Use of force.
- Threat of force.
- Placing another person in fear.

Did you know?
Most victims of sexual assault know their attacker.

The victim's:

- Intoxication.
- Unconsciousness due to sleep or alcohol consumption.
- Any other conditions which render the person substantially incapacitated or substantially incapable of understanding the nature of the sexual act.
- Declining participation in the act, or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act.
- Current or previous dating relationship.
- Manner of dress of the victim.

Victims of sexual assualt may experience shock, denial and fear and have other emotional, physcial and psychological reactions.

EMOTIONAL	PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL
Shame/guilt *Anger/rage* *Mood swings* *Depression* *Low self-esteem*	*Sleeping and eating disruptions* *Nervous or anxious* *Sexual dysfunction*	*Powerlessness* *Nightmares* *Overwhelmed* *Suicidal* *Self-mutilation*

Other reactions may include isolation, engaging in multiple relationships, promiscuity, and drug or alcohol abuse.

Recognizing Suicidal Risk

Suicide is often described as a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Ombudsmen may get a call from a person who is so overwhelmed by their current situation they are considering suicide. Conditions associated with increased risk of suicide include:

- Death or terminal illness of relative or friend.
- Divorce, separation, broken relationship.
- Loss of health.
- Loss of job, home, money, status, self-esteem, personal security.

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Suicidal Risk (Cont'd)

- History of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Depression that seems to quickly disappear for no apparent reason is cause for concern. The early stages of recovery from depression can be a high-risk period for suicide.
- Difficult times include holidays, anniversaries, and the first week after discharge from a hospital; just before and after diagnosis of a major illness; just before and during disciplinary proceedings.

Emotional changes associated with risk for suicide include:

- Overwhelming pain that threatens to exceed the person's coping capacities.
- Hopelessness or the feeling that the pain will continue or get worse; things will never get better.
- Powerlessness, the feeling that one's resources for reducing pain are exhausted.
- Feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt, self-hatred, no one cares.
- Person becomes sad, withdrawn, tired, apathetic, anxious, irritable, or prone to angry outbursts.

Behavioral changes associated with risk for suicide include:

- Giving away possessions or making a will.
- High-risk behaviors that may include speeding and reckless driving.
- Explicit statements of suicidal ideation or feelings.
- Self-inflicted injuries such as cuts, burns, or head banging.
- Inappropriately saying goodbye.
- Declining performance in school, work, or other activities.
- Social isolation or association with a group that has different moral standards than those of the family.
- Declining interest in sex, friends, or activities previously enjoyed.
- Neglect of personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance.
- Alterations in either direction in sleeping or eating habits.

Three factors that indicate when a person is comtemplating or may attempt suicide are that the person:

- Has a plan for how they will kill themself (i.e., taking pills, shooting or hanging themselves).

Individual and Family Crisis

Recognizing Suicidal Risk (Cont'd)

- Has a means to carry out the plan (i.e. gun, pills, rope).
- Has established a time frame to carry out the plan (i.e., tonight this will all be over).

Recognizing the Stages of Grief

An ombudsman may be contacted to help a family member deal with the death of a loved one. The death of a parent, child, spouse, or even pet can be devastating. Many service members and their families are young and have not experienced the death of a loved one before. According to Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, a psychiatrist who wrote extensively about death and dying, there are five stages associated with grieving:

1. **Denial.** Shock and disbelief, not accepting the truth (e.g., not possible or it must be a mistake).
2. **Anger.** May be directed at the messenger, the doctor, the person that died, or they may blame themselves.
3. **Bargaining.** Attempts to negotiate the situation, either with another person involved or with God (e.g., give me one more chance or if you bring them back, I'll do better).
4. **Depression.** Feelings of remorse, regret, or guilt that they are still able to enjoy life while their loved one no longer can. This intense sadness can leave an individual with sparse energy for work or daily activities.
5. **Acceptance.** Coming to terms with the reality of the situation, recognizing it as a part of life, and gradually letting go of the grief.

Not everyone goes through all of them or in a prescribed order. These stages are often experienced in sequence, but individuals can cycle through these feelings in a different order, and can return to previous phases as grief is processed.

There is no prescribed timetable for bereavement. Each person's experience is unique. For some, a few weeks or months and others experience wave after wave of grief for years on end, with varying frequency and intensity.

REFER for Assistance

When an ombudsman receives a call, follow the PACT model and refer for assistance as appropriate to the situation. If at any time, the ombudsman feels that the life, health, or safety of an individual is in imminent danger, the ombudsman will call 911; safety is the ultimate concern.

Each crisis call will have its own unique circumstances and referrals for assistance will vary depending on the specific nature of the crisis.

Individual and Family Crisis

REFER for Assistance (Cont'd)

DOMESTIC AND CHILD ABUSE

When an ombudsman receives a call of intimate partner maltreatment, child abuse, or family violence of any kind, or suspects that abuse may be occurring, they should advise the individual that support is available, provide information on available Family Advocacy Program (FAP) or community resources, and refer the caller to the Family Advocacy Specialist (FAS).

FAP offers counseling and assessment services to families experiencing domestic violence, child abuse, and child neglect. Victims and offenders are equally encouraged to seek help through this program. The following services and resources are available within the Family Advocacy Program:

- Victim safety planning.
- Domestic violence assessment and rehabilitation.
- Referrals to mental health providers for diagnostic assessments.
- Referrals to anger management, parenting classes, couples communications, and substance abuse programs.
- Ongoing case management by the FAS until successful resolution.
- Referrals for financial assistance for victims.
- Any other services/resources required to address the abusive situation.

The ombudsman should contact the FAS to identify appropriate national and local community resources or to ask questions or address concerns about specific community programs and services.

In instances when children cannot be properly cared for, CPS should be called to take responsibility for the children. Never should ombudsmen take children in their home. This puts the ombudsman and the command at risk.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

When an ombudsman receives a call from a sexual assault victim, it will be important to link them with a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA) as soon as possible to ensure an appropriate response and to obtain information with regard to investigation, legal actions, and support services.

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). The SARC is trained to ensure appropriate care is coordinated and provided to victims of sexual assault; and tracks the services provided to a victim of sexual assault from the initial report through final disposition and resolution.

Victim Advocate. VA's are not counselors, therapists, or investigators, but advocates for the victim and the only responders whose sole interest is to ensure the victim's needs are met.

Individual and Family Crisis

REFER for Assistance (Cont'd)

The VA provides information and support until the case is concluded or the victim no longer has a need for the additional support. The VA has three primary responsibilities: to support and inform; to act as a companion in navigating investigative, medical, and recovery processes; and to help ensure the victim's safety. Specific functions of the VA include providing emotional support, providing information on victim's rights, accompanying victims to medical facilities, interviews, legal hearings, etc., securing basic needs, e.g., providing clothing and arranging transportation.

If the caller identifies him or herself as a recent victim of sexual assault, ask:

- What is your name (if unknown)?
- Where are you now?
- Are you safe?
- If currently in danger, Can you get to a safe place? If the caller is in danger, get their location and call 911 or the police.
- Are weapons involved?
- Do you need medical attention?

It is important to get as much identifying information as possible in case the telephone connection is interrupted or the police need to be contacted. Ask the victim if he or she wants you to contact the police.

If the assault was recent, the victim should try to preserve potential evidence even if they are not sure whether they want to take any legal action. Instruct the victim not to wash, brush their teeth, change clothes, drink or eat anything, smoke, or use the bathroom.

Explore immediate options and concerns with the victim by asking questions.

- Do you have a friend or neighbor who can be with you?
- Is there a family member you would like me to notify?
- Do you need a ride to the emergency room for medical treatment?
- Do you want me to call the police, SARC, or VA; do you have someone there who can call?
- Do you have children? If so, where are they now? Is there someone who can take them for a while?

Close the call by agreeing to the actions to be taken by the caller and by the ombudsman. At minimum, the ombudsman should get the caller to agree to either contacting the SARC or victim advocate or allowing the ombudsman to contact the SARC or victim advocate. The caller is most likely in shock and will need assistance once the reality of the assault is realized. Offer to contact the caller later to ensure they were able to connect with resources.

Individual and Family Crisis

REFER for Assistance (Cont'd)

SUICIDE

When an ombudsman receives a call about suicidal behavior, a concerned voice tone and knowledge of resources is what is most important. As with other situations, obtain contact information as soon as possible in case the telephone connection is interrupted or the police need to be contacted.

Let the person unload despair and ventilate anger. If given an opportunity to do this, he or she may feel better by the end of the call. No matter how negative the call seems, the fact that it exists is a positive sign, a cry for help. Be sympathetic, non-judgmental, patient, calm, and accepting. The caller has done the right thing by getting in touch with another person.

When you suspect someone is thinking of suicide, remember ACE:

Ask – Care – Escort

Ask. This is not an easy thing to do, but it is essential. Asking does not put the idea in someone's head. It may be helpful to lead into a question with a statement of your observations.

"You said you were thinking of ending your life and that worries me. Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

If the individual attempts to make a joke or gives other indications of attempting to deflect the question, hang in there and ask the question again, letting the person know you are serious. Be aware you may be "tested" in this way and that the person may want some indication of your sincerity before opening up.

Ninety-five percent of all suicidal callers will answer "no". Talking about their problems can help the suicidal person by giving relief from loneliness and pent-up feelings and increasing awareness that another person cares. They also get tired. Talking about the emotional pain can ease their agitation. If the person responds in the affirmative, or otherwise indicates he or she has had thought of suicide, get additional information on the situation is:

- Is there a plan and does he or she possess the means (e.g., pills, gun).
- Is he or she alone? Have they been drinking?
- Have you made prior attempts? Were you hospitalized?
- Do you have a family history of suicidal behavior?

Care: Be willing to listen and allow the person to express feelings. Talk openly about suicide. Active listening is likely to produce relief. Take a deep breath. Be calm and listen. Encourage the person to seek help.

Individual and Family Crisis

REFER for Assistance (Cont'd)

Do not promise confidentiality instead consider something like this:

"I have to make sure you get the help you need and that means I have to tell others what you've told me. I'm sorry if that upsets you, but I don't want you to hurt yourself."

Escort. Get assistance from others. Engage the command and/or the local emergency services providers. Sources of assistance include:

- Medical
- Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (EAPC)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline /800-273-TALK (8255)
- CG SUPRT/855-CG SUPRT (247-8778)

If they have already injured themselves or an attempt seems imminent, keep the person on the phone and use another phone line (if available) to call 911. If you only have one phone line, hang up and call 911.

DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

When contacted by a family about the death of a love one, listen, be supportive, and ask how you can help.

For death of an active duty member, the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) will likely make the notification to the family, and will be there to assist the family with arrangements and survivor benefits. If not, then refer the family to the CACO. Other resources for assistance include:

- The chaplain for assistance dealing with grief.
- Veterans Affairs to obtain benefits.
- The Transition Relocation Manager to obtain assistance with transition to civilian life.

If the loved one was not an active duty (AD) member, refer the family to the chaplain. The chaplain will be able to assist with the grieving process and identify resources in the community. In some instances, it may be appropriate to refer the family to the American Red Cross to contact an active duty member that is deployed and/or underway.

Additional sources for assistance in either case include:

- CG SUPRT for confidential professional counseling, education, and referral services.
- EAPC for resources and potential CISM response if necessary to help the command cope with the loss.

Individual and Family Crisis

REPORT as Required

In most incidents involving individual and family crisis there is a requirement to report the incident. Ombudsmen will take immediate action when reportable issues or life endangering situations come to their attention by reporting to the appropriate official or organization and the CO/OIC. Ombudsmen are mandated by law to report these incidents:

1. Alleged intimate partner maltreatment.
2. Alleged sexual assault.
3. All suspected/known child abuse/neglect.
4. Suspected/potential homicides, violence or life-endangering situations.
5. All suspected/potential suicidal risks.
6. Other items as directed by your CO.

In cases of intimate partner maltreatment and sexual assault, ombudsmen should consider the abuse or assault alleged if:

- An individual discloses to the ombudsman an abuse or assault.
- A third party discloses to the ombudsman that they witnessed abuse or assault.
- The ombudsman has first-hand knowledge of abuse or assault.

Child abuse. The ombudsman will immediately report to the FAS any allegations and/or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the FAS. The FAS shall inform the member's command and law enforcement officials. When making a report to the FAS, the following information is helpful:

- Names of those involved.
- Type of abuse.
- Contact information for the family.

Intimate partner maltreatment (IPM). All allegations of IPM must be reported to the servicing FAS for appropriate action.

Sexual assault. Ombudsmen must report all allegations of sexual assault to the servicing Employee Assistance Program Coordinator/Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (EAPC/SARC) and the CO/OIC for appropriate action.

Homicide and suicide. Ombudsmen will immediately contact the proper authorities and the CO/OIC in cases of any potential or actual homicides, suicides, violence, or life endangering situations.

Command directed. Ombudsmen shall also report any additional items as directed by the command as long as the request is lawful and in accordance with the policies set forth in Commandant Instruction.

Command Crisis

Large Scale Crises

In addition to assisting family members to cope with individual crises, ombudsmen may be called upon to assist in a large scale crises involving a command emergency or a community, state, or national disaster. Command emergencies are incidents that impact the command. Command crises may include:

- Active duty death.
- Helicopter or plane mishap.
- Accident or incident while underway.
- Terrorist attack.
- Training incident.
- Natural disaster.

To prepare and repond to to these disasters the ombudmsan must understand and develop skills, knowledge, and abilites in:

- Disaster Preparedness.
- Ombudsman's role in large scale disaster response.
- Disaster Assistance Organizations.
- Dealing with the Media.
- Self-care.

Disaster Preparedness

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning. They can force families to evacuate from their neighborhoods or be confined to their homes. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Ombudsmen can help command families prepare for a disaster by:

- Publishing short articles about the need for disaster preparation or providing tips on disaster preparedness (e.g., making a plan, building a disaster supply kit) in the ombudsman newsletter and periodically listing web sites such as the CG Family Readiness page (www.uscg.mil/worklife/ready.asp), which provides links to many readiness resources like the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sponsored disaster preparedness page (www.ready.gov) or the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) that provide guidance for family disaster readiness.
- Using email or the phone tree to provide notice of impending crises and command or installation guidance. Include command instructions/reporting phone number if evacuation is advised. Provide out of state or cell phone number for ombudsmen.

Command Crisis

Disaster Preparedness (Cont'd)

- Distributing print materials (e.g., Emergency Supply List, Family Emergency Plan, and Child Emergency Contacts Card) about disaster preparedness at spouses' club meetings and at the command.
- Providing notices to remind CG members to prepare their homes and families for disaster, and asking the XO to include the notices in the Plan of the Week or address at All Hands.

Additional ombudsmen efforts to prepare families for potential disasters may include:

- Helping families who are new to the area become familiar with the types of disasters most likely to occur in their locale and how to best prepare for them.
- Suggesting families develop an emergency communication plan.
- Providing lists of items to include in a disaster supply kit.
- Publicizing evacuation routes, emergency public shelters, caring for animals, and information specific to people with disabilities before disasters occur and when a disaster is imminent.

Ombudsman's Role in Disaster Response

Ombudsmen are often called upon to provide information to command families during a command crisis. Ombudsmen may also have specific roles or responsibilities in command disaster preparedness. They should check with their POC to discuss their role during a command crisis.

Regardless of the kind and extent of the command emergency, the ombudsman is never to act independently or without explicit guidance from the command. The ombudsman should be thoroughly aware of the commanding officer's policies and expectations in the event of a crisis or natural disaster occurring where the command families live.

An ombudsman's responsibilities in a command crisis may include:

- Initiating the phone tree to inform family members of an incident.
- Coordinating meal delivery for a grieving family.
- Representing command families with local and national media.
- Arranging a group meeting of family members to provide information and support.
- Arranging transportation and accommodations for out-of-town guests.

Command Crisis

Ombudsman's Role in Disaster Response (Cont'd)

- Sending flowers to a funeral on behalf of the command.
- Arranging emergency childcare.
- Keeping families abreast and providing updates on the situation as much as reasonably possible.

During a major crisis such as a hurricane or terrorist attack, ombudsmen may be asked to:

- Serve as the POC for evacuated families to get information about the crisis, and for CG members to get information about the status of their families.
- Staff support facilities set up by the command to provide information and support services (e.g., food, clothing, and child care) to those impacted by a major crisis.
- Coordinate food and clothing drives.
- Answer 1-800 lines established by the CG for families from out of the area to get information.
- Take telephone calls from family members.

Ombudsmen are not immune to crisis. They cannot provide comfort to others when they are in need themselves. It is not reasonable for them, to try to be a helper when they are a victim. In situtaions such as these ombudsmen from other commands or W-L staff can:

- Respond to calls and emails from command family members.
- Update families on the situation via the phone tree or email.
- Respond to requests for interviews by media.
- Help the command ombudsman coordinate their own personal needs such as childcare and work requirements.
- Work with CG and community resources to ensure the ombudsman and command families receive needed support.

Disaster Assistance Organizations

Assistance is available to families involved in a disaster. Before the need arises, it is helpful for ombudsmen to be familiar with the organizations/programs that provide assistance during crises.

Local military installation. A family assistance center may be opened on the installation to provide:

- A place for those affected by the crisis to gather or seek safe haven.

Command Crisis

Disaster Assistance Organizations (Cont'd)

- Information as it becomes available, notification of the status of loved ones involved in the disaster.
- Services such as food, shelter, and financial assistance.

Servicing W-L office. During crises the W-L staff provides assistance to comands and familes, normally through a coordinated Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) response intended to help individuals exposed to critical incidents to identify and cope with their responses to these events. Services provided under "on-scene" conditions are brief, practical crisis intervention functions designed to limit the level of distress members encounter. On-scene support does not interfere with operations. These service providers usually are peers, with chaplains or mental health professionals called only as needed.

State Emergency Management. Each state has an emergency management agency responsible for coordinating the state's response to a major disaster. This includes supporting local governments as needed or requested, and coordinating assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). During an emergency, the agency is likely to report directly to the governor of the state.

Most state agencies:

- Research, write, implement, and review emergency plans and procedures.
- Hold drills with agencies and departments statewide such as police, rescue, and fire departments.
- Maintain a comprehensive telecommunications network among an emergency operations center, local and federal governments, weather services, etc.
- Coordinate public information and awareness efforts.
- When the governor declares a state of emergency, coordinate efforts with FEMA to request a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This allows the flow of money and services to begin.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is part of the Department of Homeland Security. FEMA is in charge of helping people before and after a disaster. FEMA is called in to help when the President declares a disaster. Disasters are declared after hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes or other similar events strike a community. Before FEMA can respond, the governor of the state must ask for help from the president.

Command Crisis

Disaster Assistance Organizations (Cont'd)

FEMA workers help disaster victims find a place to stay if their homes were damaged or destroyed. FEMA also helps provide resources to repair homes and works with city officials to fix public buildings that have been damaged.

FEMA helps people before a disaster so they will be ready. FEMA teaches people how to prepare for a disaster and how to make their homes as safe as possible. FEMA works with communities to help them construct safer buildings that are less likely to be damaged. FEMA also trains firefighters and emergency workers, and runs a flood insurance program.

American Red Cross. The American Red Cross responds to about 70,000 disasters each year. Most of these responses are to house or apartment fires. They also respond to large scale disasters such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hazardous materials spills, transportation accidents, explosions, and other natural and man-made disasters.

The American Red Cross is not a government agency; however, its authority to provide disaster relief was authorized by Congress in 1905. Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency, disaster caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition to these services, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is the assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster, enabling them to independently resume their normal daily activities.

The Red Cross also feeds emergency workers, handles inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, provides blood and blood products to disaster victims, and helps those affected by disaster to access other available resources.

Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACO). The CACO assists the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) or beneficiary of a service member who is either dead or missing. The CACO is responsible to notify the PNOK of the death, determine their needs, explain their benefits, assist in funeral details, and help them apply for their benefits. The ombudsman should never accomanpany the CACO on a death notification.

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA). CGMA is the official relief society of the U.S. Coast Guard. CGMA is a non-profit charitable organization established to provide essential financial aid to the entire Coast Guard family, primarily through interest-free loans, grants, and financial counseling. Assistance is provided under a large variety of conditions and situations usually involving everyday essentials including emergency, housing, and medical needs that are beyond the individual's ability to meet at the time assistance is requested.

Command Crisis

Disaster Assistance Organizations (Cont'd)

United Services Organization (USO). The USO is chartered by Congress and is a nonprofit, charitable corporation. The USO relies on donations from individuals, organizations, and corporations to support its programs. The mission of the USO is to provide support to military service members and their families. During disasters, USO centers located in the United States and throughout the world provide a variety of services. They:

- Accept donations from individuals, organizations and corporations who want to assist military families.
- Expand hours and services provided at the centers to accommodate the needs of those impacted by disaster.
- Provide food and a place to relax to service members and their families.
- Assist families to locate temporary housing, clothing, and food.
- Offer emotional support and encouragement.

Dealing with the Media

As previously discussed in unit 5, during times of crisis the media will want to interview those who are most visibly distressed and impacted by the crisis. Look out for family members that appear distressed and ask if they need help. If they accept your assistance, intervene and refer the media to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for any comments.

During a military crisis and anytime the media makes a request of the Coast Guard to talk with family members, an ombudsman may be asked to represent Coast Guard families because they:

- Are articulate and aware of appropriate responses to questions.
- Are knowledgeable about the Coast Guard and resources.
- Have a professional appearance.
- Have a positive outlook.

Using the media is a good way to:

- Get accurate information to families.
- Provide reassurance.

Ombudsmen should always consult with the command and work with the PAO before talking with the media. Ombudsmen are representing themselves, other CG families, and the Coast Guard; therefore, it is important to review key points with the PAO, ask for a practice session, and get feedback and tips for improvement.

Command Crisis

Dealing with the Media (Cont'd)

When a reporter is questioning an ombudsman, it is okay for the ombudsman to say they do not know the answer to the question. The ombudsman can then provide information about what they do know.

"When will the crippled cutter return to port?"

"We don't have that information at this time, but families will be notified as soon as the information becomes available. In the mean time, families may direct their questions or concerns to…"

When talking with the media have a clear message. Ombudsmen should have no more than three points they want to communicate. One of the three points should be a telephone number for individuals to contact for more information.

Self-care

Be Prepared

The ombudsman is the link to the command. The families will be counting on you to keep them informed. When your unit is in a crisis, it will be hard to focus and help others if you are worrying about your own spouse and family. Prepare your home and family in advance, remain calm, and:

- Rely on your personal support system to help you emotionally.
- Coordinate with other unit ombudsmen. Plan and act together.
- Be prepared for numerous phone calls. If you are the only ombudsman, you may want to ask another ombusman for help.
- Remain in contact with your point of contact or the command center. They will give you the facts as they can.
- Stop all rumors.
- Decline any media contact, refer the press to the PAO.
- Find a suitable location for families to wait together.
- Call the W-L office for advice and assistance.

The more prepared you are for crisis, the better you will be able to support the command and families. Use the Crisis Checklist (enclosure 10) to help you stay focused during crisis repsonse.

Recognize and Mitigate Compassion Fatigue

Whether it's helping the command, families, and community during times of crisis or assisting families with daily issues and concerns; the duties of an ombudsman can be taxing. The emotional strain of providing empathy and support to victims and focusing on others without practicing self-care can affect an ombudsman's mental and/or physical health and lead to a secondary traumatic stress disorder known as Compassion Fatigue.

Symptoms may take a long time to appear. Sufferers of Compassion Fatigue can exhibit several symptoms such as hopelessness, apathy, stress, anxiety, persistent negative attitude, and decreased emotion. These symptoms can affect the sufferer personally and professionally and may cause decreased productivity, an inability to focus, and self-doubt.

There are several ways an ombudsman can mitigate and possibly prevent the symptoms of compassion fatigue:

- ✓ Practice good nutrition.
- ✓ Exercise.
- ✓ Get plenty of rest.
- ✓ Engage in recreational activities.
- ✓ Avoid negative addictions such as cigarettes and alcohol.

To care for others effectively, an ombudsman has to take care of himself or herself.

Unit 7 Check-on-Learning

1. What is the goal(s) of crisis intervention? (circle all that apply)

   A. Identify and mobilize resources.
   B. Cultivate a support system.
   C. Cushion the impact of the event.
   D. Assist, not judge.

2. What are the three "Rs" that comprise an ombudsman's role during crises?

   A. Recognize, refer, and respond.
   B. Recognize, refer, and report.
   C. Respond, refer, and resolve.
   D. Respond, refer, report.

3. Economic control is a form of intimate partner maltreatment.

   A. True.
   B. False.

4. This form of child abuse does not normally have physical indicators, but is usually present with other forms of abuse?

   A. Physical.
   B. Sexual.
   C. Emotional.
   D. Neglect.

5. If a person doesn't say "no" or physically resist sexual contact, consent is implied.

   A. True.
   B. False.

6. A person thinking of or intending to commit suicide will have a plan, a means, and _____.

   A. the will to do so.
   B. an opportunity.
   C. a time frame.
   D. a suicide letter.

7. Ombudsmen that suspect intimate partner maltreatment should refer a caller to the _____.

   A. Family resource specialist
   B. Family advocacy specialist
   C. Victim advocate
   D. Domestic violence response coordinator

Unit 7 Check-on-Learning

8. List the five incidents an ombudsman is mandated to report.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

9. Ombudsmen must report all allegations of sexual assault to _____ for appropriate action.

A. The EAPC/SARC.
B. The police.
C. The CO/OIC.
D. Medical.

10. Match the disaster assistance organization in column A with their descriptions in column B. Use each description only once.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. Federal Emergency Management Agency	a. Handles inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, provides blood and blood products to disaster victims.
_____ 2. State Emergency Management	b. Official relief society of the Coast Guard.
_____ 3. CG Mutual Assistance	c. Responds when the governor of the state asks for help from the president.
_____ 4. American Red Cross	d. Provides assistance to comands and familes, normally through a coordinated CISM response.
_____ 5. Servicing W-L office	e. Hold drills with agencies and departments statewide such as police, rescue, and fire departments.

Unit 7 Check-on-Learning

11. Which of the following should ombudsmen consult with before talking with the media? (circle all that apply)

    A. The command.
    B. Public Affairs Officer.
    C. Work-Life.
    D. Other CG spouses.

12. Which of the following practices can mitigate or prevent compassion fatigue? (Circle all that apply)

    A. Get plenty of rest.
    B. Focus on the needs of others.
    C. Exercise and eat healthy.
    D. Engage in recreational activities.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Ranks and Insignias

Enlisted Ranks

Rank	Insignia	Rank	Insignia
Seaman Recruit E1		Seaman E3	
Fireman Recruit E1		Fireman E3	
Airman Recruit E1		Airman E3	
Seaman Apprentice E2		Petty Officer 3rd E-4	
Fireman Apprentice E2		Petty Officer 2nd E-5	
Airman Apprentice E2		Petty Officer 1st E-6	

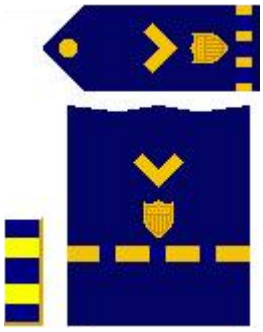
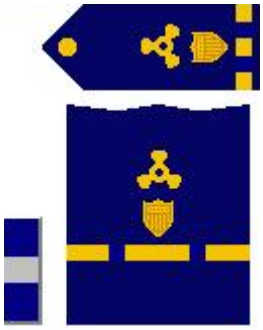
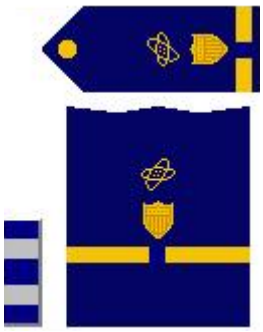
Ranks and Insignias

Senior Enlisted Ranks

Rank	Insignia
Chief Petty Officer (CPO) E-7	
Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO) E-8	
Master Chief Petty Officer (SCPO) E-8	
Command Master Chief (CMC) E-9	
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard E-9	

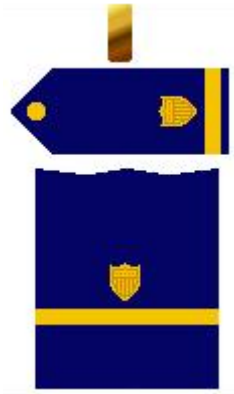
Ranks and Insignias

Warrant Officers

Rank	Insignia
Chief Warrant Officer (CWO1) W-1 *Discontinued by the Coast Guard in 1995*	None
Chief Warrant Officer (CWO2) W-2	
Chief Warrant Officer (CWO3) W-3	
Chief Warrant Officer(CWO4) W-4	
Chief Warrant Officer(CWO5) W-5 *Not used by the Coast Guard*	None

Ranks and Insignias

Junior Officers

Rank	Insignia
Ensign (ENS) O-1	
Lieutenant, Junior Grade (LTJG) O-2	
Lieutenant (LT) O-3	

Ranks and Insignias

Senior Officers

Rank	Insignia
Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) O-4	
Commander (CDR) O-5	
Captain (CAPT) O-6	

Ranks and Insignias

Flag Officers

Rank	Insignia
Rear Admiral, Lower Half (RDML) O-7	
Rear Admiral, Upper Half (RADM) O-8	
Vice Admiral (VADM) O-9	

Ranks and Insignias

Flag Officers (Cont'd)

Rank	Insignia
Admiral (ADM) O-10	
Fleet Admiral (FADM) O-11 *Reserved for wartime only. The Coast Guard does not have a FADM.*	

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Volunteer Agreement

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FOR

☐ **APPROPRIATED FUND ACTIVITIES** ☐ **NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES**

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. TYPED NAME OF VOLUNTEER *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*		2. YEAR OF BIRTH
3. INSTALLATION	4. ORGANIZATION/UNIT WHERE SERVICE OCCURS	
5. PROGRAM WHERE SERVICE OCCURS	6. ANTICIPATED DAYS OF WEEK	7. ANTICIPATED HOURS
8. DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES		

PART II - VOLUNTEER IN APPROPRIATED FUND ACTIVITIES

9. CERTIFICATION

I expressly agree that my services are being provided as a volunteer and that I will not be an employee of the United States Government or any instrumentality thereof, except for certain purposes relating to compensation for injuries occurring during the performance of approved volunteer services, tort claims, the Privacy Act, criminal conflicts of interest, and defense of certain suits arising out of legal malpractice. I expressly agree that I am neither entitled to nor expect any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these voluntary services. I agree to be bound by the laws and regulations applicable to voluntary service providers and agree to participate in any training required by the installation or unit in order for me to perform the voluntary services that I am offering. I agree to follow all rules and procedures of the installation or unit that apply to the voluntary services I will be providing.

a. SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER		b. DATE SIGNED *(YYYYMMDD)*
10.a. TYPED NAME OF ACCEPTING OFFICIAL *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*	b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED *(YYYYMMDD)*

PART III - VOLUNTEER IN NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES

11. CERTIFICATION

I expressly agree that my services are being provided as a volunteer and that I will not be an employee of the United States Government or any instrumentality thereof, except for certain purposes relating to compensation for injuries occurring during the performance of approved volunteer services and liability for tort claims as specified in 10 U.S.C. Section 1588(d)(2). I expressly agree that I am neither entitled to nor expect any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these voluntary services. I agree to be bound by the laws and regulations applicable to voluntary service providers, and agree to participate in any training required by the installation or unit in order for me to perform the voluntary services that I am offering. I agree to follow all rules and procedures of the installation or unit that apply to the voluntary services that I am offering.

a. SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER		b. DATE SIGNED *(YYYYMMDD)*
12.a. TYPED NAME OF ACCEPTING OFFICIAL *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*	b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED *(YYYYMMDD)*

PART IV - TO BE COMPLETED AT END OF VOLUNTEER'S SERVICE BY VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR

13. AMOUNT OF VOLUNTEER TIME DONATED				14. SIGNATURE	15. TERMINATION DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*
a. YEARS *(2,087 hours=1 year)*	b. WEEKS	c. DAYS	d. HOURS		
16.a. TYPED NAME OF SUPERVISOR *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*				b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED *(YYYYMMDD)*

DD FORM 2793, MAY 2009 PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE. Reset Adobe Professional 8.0

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Sample Appointment Letter

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Unit Name
United States Coast Guard

Unit Address
Street address
City, State. Zip Code
Phone:

1750
dd mmm yyyy

MEMORANDUM

From: (Commanding Officer, rank)
CG Unit

To: (Ombudsman)
Thru: (Point of Contact)
CG Unit

Subj: APPOINTMENT AS (COMMAND NAME) OMBUDSMAN

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (series)

I take great pleasure in appointing you as Ombudsman for **COMMAND NAME.** The function of the Ombudsman is to serve as a link between the command and the unit's families, to assist the command and to refer individuals with problems to the proper resources. The Ombudsman will also forward ideas from the families to the appropriate office. For those seeking guidance about particular problems, the Ombudsman attempts to find the best resources possible to assist the individual or the family.

All information provided to you as Ombudsman will remain confidential. However, you are required to report to me any information involving military personnel dealing with child abuse, spouse abuse; sexual assault, suspected and/or potential suicidal risks, suspected and/or potential homicides, violence or life endangering situations in accordance with Commandant Instruction 1750.4 (series)

As Ombudsman, you will be an official member of my staff. You have direct access to me and my Executive Officer (or other appointed POC) in the performance of your duties. You are authorized use of **COMMAND NAME** office space, office supplies and equipment, and official mail to conduct business related to your duties as Ombudsman.

The Family Advocacy Specialist for this command is (insert name here). She/He may be reached at PHONE NUMBER. The Ombudsman Coordinator for your area is (insert name here and phone number) who will provide policy and guidance on the role and duties of the Ombudsman. In addition, we will request training for you as it becomes available.

Your services are considered free and donated; however, you will be entitled to reimbursement for child care, telephone toll calls and local travel in the performance of your duties while under orders. You are also protected under Federal Law for liability and work related injury when you are serving as a volunteer within the scope of your duties as defined in the policy provided in Ombudsman Program COMDTINST 1750.4 series.

The need to improve the quality of life in the Coast Guard has never been greater. I welcome you as the Ombudsman for **COMMAND NAME** and look forward to working with you. I thank you for your willingness to devote your time and talent to serve in this position.

Please let me know if there is anything we can do to assist with your transition.

#

Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures

CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1. DEPARTMENT OR ESTABLISHMENT, BUREAU, DIVISION OR OFFICE

2. VOUCHER NUMBER

3. SCHEDULE NUMBER

Read the Privacy Act Statement on the back of this form.

5. PAID BY

4. CLAIMANT

a. NAME *(Last, first, middle initial)*

b. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

c. MAILING ADDRESS *(Include ZIP Code)*

d. OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER

6. EXPENDITURES *(If fare claimed in col. (g) exceeds charge for one person, show in col. (h) the number of additional persons which accompanied the claimant.)*

DATE 19 (a)	CODE (b)	*Show appropriate code in col. (b):* **A** - Local travel; **B** - Telephone or telegraph, or; **C** - Other Expenses *(itemized)* — *(Explain expenditures in specific detail.)* (c) FROM	(d) TO	MILEAGE RATE ¢ NO. OF MILES (e)	AMOUNT CLAIMED: MILEAGE (f)	FARE OR TOLL (g)	ADD. PERSONS (h)	TIPS AND MISCELLANEOUS (i)
If additional space is required continue on the back.			**SUBTOTALS CARRIED FORWARD FROM THE BACK**					
7. AMOUNT CLAIMED *(Total of cols (f), (g) and (i).)* ▶ $				**TOTALS**				

8. This claim is approved. Long distance telephone calls, if shown, are certified as necessary in the interest of the Government. *(Note: If long distance calls are included, the approving official must have been authorized, in writing, by the head of the department or agency to so certify (31 U.S.C. 680a).)*

Sign Original Only

APPROVING OFFICIAL SIGN HERE ▶ DATE

9. This claim is certified correct and proper for payment.

Sign Original Only

AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICER SIGN HERE ▶ DATE

10. I certify that this claim is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and that payment or credit has not been received by me.

PAYMENT DESIRED ☐ CHECK ☐ CASH

Sign Original Only

CLAIMANT SIGN HERE ▶ DATE

11. CASH PAYMENT RECEIPT

a. PAYEE *(Signature)*

b. DATE

c. AMOUNT $

12. PAYMENT MADE BY CHECK NO.

ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION

STANDARD FORM 1164 (REV. 11-77)
Prescribed by GSA, FPMR (CFR 41) 101-7

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Ombudsman Activity Log

Ombudsman Activity Log

Month & Year: _____

Contacts ***(i.e., Incoming and outgoing contacts)*****:**

Date	Name Incoming (I)/Outgoing (O)	Sp/FM/SO, SM, CG/DoD Civ, Comm, Other*	E-mail/Phone Number	Type of I&Rs	Time Spent	Follow-Up**

Sp (Spouse)/FM (Family Member)/SO (Significant Other), SM (Service Member), CG/DoD Civ (Coast Guard or DoD Civilian), Comm (Community)

*** For contacts that require follow-up, enter the date to follow-up.***

Other Activities ***(i.e., Newsletters, meetings, presentations, trainings, outreach, and administrative duties)*****:**

Date	Activity	Time Spent	Description

Ombudsman Individual Contact Form

Ombudsman Individual Contact Form

Date: _____ Caller's name: _____

Telephone/e-mail: _____

Situation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Referrals Provided:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Follow-Up:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Sample Newsletter

MSST 91109 San Diego
Ombudsman Newsletter

Summer 2012
Volume 1, Issue 2

1650 Henderson Avenue, Building 310
San Diego, California 92140

Inside This Issue

Command Corner	1
Meet the New XO	2
A Note From Your Ombudsman	2
Chaplain's Corner	3
New CG SUPRT Program	4
Local San Diego Resources	4
Post Deployment Yellow Ribbon Event	5
Welcome New Babies	6
Local Events	7

Command Corner

By CDR Eric M. Cooper, Commanding Officer

Greetings to everyone and welcome to the new members of our MSST family.

It is great to be back home after our 6+ month deployment to Guantanamo Bay! The team was wildly successful throughout the deployment thanks to the extremely hard work performed by every member of the crew. In recognition of the team's efforts, the team was awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon and a Meritorious Team Commendation. As always, the team demonstrated that Maritime Safety and Security Team San Diego remains one of the pre-eminent teams throughout the Deployable Specialized Forces Community. Bravo Zulu!

During the time that the team was deployed and beginning this summer, we have had more than 1/3 of our crew transfer out and be replaced by new members of our family. I am excited to get to know each of you individually and meet your families. We will be having a Family Day in the middle of July, which will be planned by our Morale Committee and Ombudsman. I encourage each of you to get your names and email addresses to the Ombudsman, so at a minimum, you can receive some of the information and benefits available to military members here in San Diego. She is also the conduit through which deployment information and opportunities to help with Morale events flow.

Deployments for the team will begin to occur more frequently as we finish up our training and rest periods. As deployment information becomes releasable to families, I will ensure that everyone has maximum visibility. If you ever have questions, Mrs. Satter has my direct line so that you can get the information that you need in a timely manner.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Family Day event!

Sample Newsletter - Message from the XO and Ombudsman

Meet the XO

By LCDR Aaron Roe, Executive Officer

Hello, my name is Aaron Roe and I just took over as the Executive Officer here at MSST San Diego.

It is truly a great honor to be a part of this unit and to be living here in Sunny San Diego. My wife Erin and I moved from Washington DC where I was stationed at the Deployable Operations Group as the Training Operation Officer.

I have been in the Coast Guard for 14 years and before moving to Washington DC I lived in Seattle, Pensacola & Alameda. My father is a retired Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer, so before I attended the Coast Guard Academy I moved around from Mobile to Puerto Rico, Sacramento, Kodiak and Cape Cod.

LCDR Roe and Erin Roe visiting the ombudsman's table at the YRE

This first month has been a very rewarding and eye opening experience and I am looking forward to meeting you all in the near future.

A Note From Your Ombudsman

By Amanda J. Satter, Ombudsman

I am looking forward to another great year as the MSST's ombudsman!

As your Ombudsman, I am available to help you with a variety of challenges as an information and referral resource, and a communication link. I am a Coast Guard spouse and a volunteer, and am appointed by the Commanding Officer to be a point of contact and resource for all military families, including spouses, parents, extended family, and others. So please ensure that all of your family members are aware that I am here for them!

I have information on local and national resources that can help with financial support, food resources, furniture, counseling, spouse employment, volunteer opportunities, deployment support, and much more! There are a variety of support programs, both in San Diego and throughout the nation, and I can help you find the organizations to meet your needs for almost any problem. If you're just curious about what's out there, give me a call and I will be happy to share my resource information with you.

I am also your communications link with the command, especially during deployment. Throughout the months ahead, I will be the official source of command information, which I will pass on through our newsletters and email trees. I can also contact the command in emergencies, to get messages to crew members and for assistance. Also, I am a listening ear and support for each of you – so please contact me anytime!

Admiral Papp with MSST 91109

Ombudsman Amanda J.Satter
2011 Ombudsman of the Year

Sample Newsletter - Message from the Chaplain

Ombudsman Newsletter Page 3

Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain Daniel Owens, District 11 South

First, I want to thank each one of you for your service to our nation overseas the past six months. Our prayers were with each one of you during that time. As each one of you transition back to "normal" please be assured there are many services available to you within the Coast Guard.

Many times we are reluctant to seek them out because we feel they are unnecessary or ineffective. Please be assured that many of these programs are time tested and can provide vital assistance to you and your family.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about a service or where to go for assistance. I would be honored to sit down with you and your family to discuss them.

Coast Guard Transition and Relocation Manager Jennifer C. Conole with Chaplain Owens.

My phone number is (619) 246-6371. Have a great summer and look forward to seeing each one of you in the upcoming days.

Chaplain Corps Vision Statement:

"Mission ready Coast Guard men and women and their families, demonstrating spiritual, moral, and ethical maturity supported by innovative delivery of religious ministry and compassionate pastoral care."

The members of MSST 91109 on the Guantanamo Bay deployment.

Sample Newsletter - Resources

CG SUPRT PROGRAM

1-855-CG SUPRT (247-8778)

The Coast Guard implemented a new program on May 1st titled "CG SUPRT". This program is the new and revamped EAP (Employee Assistance Program) with a support phone number to call 24/7, 365 days a year!

When you call CG SUPRT, you will speak with an experienced and specially trained counselor who will assist you in getting the help you need. Your participation in the program will be treated confidentially in accordance with all state and federal laws.

CG SUPRT can help in the following ways:

Face-to-face and telephonic non-medical counseling for individuals with a wide variety of psychological/life challenges (up to 12 sessions), FREE.

b. Telephonic assistance, consultation, and referral for a broad range of life events that individuals may need assistance with such as childcare, eldercare, college funding, and moving,

CG SUPRT Contact a Consultant: 855-CG SUPRT (247-8778)

c. Telephonic consultation for supervisors and commands regarding issues that may be impacting their employees/unit,

d. Telephonic health coaching and information for a broad range of health issues such as smoking, weight management, and stress reduction (up to 12 sessions),

e. Education and self-assessment tools on a broad range of behavioral, psychological, and life event topics,

f. Assistance with critical incident responses,

g. Prevention and awareness activities, help with locating pet services, volunteer opportunities, and recreational resources,

h. Financial and legal assistance (30 minutes with qualified professionals), and

i. Tax preparation assistance.

"It's easy to access, free, and confidential."

Local San Diego Resources

Add these to your favorites!

Armed Services YMCA

The San Diego Armed Services YMCA provides comprehensive, ongoing services to military service members and their families through over 40 free programs within four departments: Family Outreach, Military Youth and Community Outreach, Active Duty Programs, and Wounded, Injured and Ill Programs at Naval Medical Center to make military life easier. Check out all they have to offer online at www.militaryymca.org.

San Diego Movie Theaters on Base - FREE

MWR movie theaters are open to all active duty, reservists, retirees, dependents, DoD civilians, contractors and their sponsored guests. Concession stands sell movie theater foods however the movies themselves are FREE. Theaters are located on 32nd Street Naval Base, NAB and NASNI. For a list of what is currently playing check out http://navylifesw.com/sandiego/movies.

Sample Newsletter - Command Events

Ombudsman Newsletter Page 5

Post-Deployment Yellow Ribbon Event

June 22-24, 2012

The unit had their Post-Deployment Yellow Ribbon Event the weekend of June 22nd at the Hilton Hotel in Mission Valley. Many families from all over the country were able to join their service members for this reintegration event.

Those in attendance got the opportunity to hear from some great speakers including Jennifer Conole from the local Work Life Office, the Chaplain, the Red Cross, Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve, Hero to Hired, Tricare and Military Life Consultant.

Families enjoyed their time together and had a great weekend in San Diego with wonderful weather.

Resources at the Yellow Ribbon Event

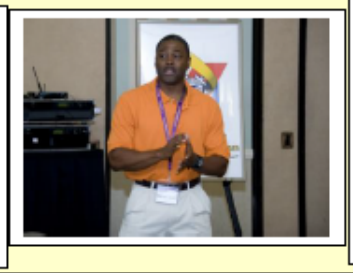
Hero 2 Hired - Everything you need to find a job. Tons of job listings, plus much more, all FREE. www.H2H.jobs

Tutor.com - Free homework help and online tutoring for active duty, national guard and reserve families. Free, 24/7 access plus college support.

Red Cross - The Coming Home series helps military families with reintegration after deployments. Go to redcross.org to learn more about this no-cost, confidential program.

All Yellow Ribbon Event photos taken by PA1 Henry Dunphy.

Yellow Ribbon Event Mission:
To promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.



Sample Newsletter - Community Events

Page 6 Ombudsman Newsletter

Local Upcoming Events

Get your calendar out!

Summer Family Fitness & Movie Night

Friday, July 27 · 6:30-9:00 pm · FREE · 619-553-4259

Naval Base Point Loma Main Base Fitness Center · Bldg. 1, Outdoor Exercise Area @ Smuggler's Cove
Parents and children of all ages are welcome to join MWR Fitness for a night of outdoor family friendly fitness activities followed by a movie. Presented by MWR and USAA.

Activity Morning on MCRD - Offered the second Tuesday of every month, 9:30am-11am, Building 6E on MCRD

Activity Morning is a fun opportunity for parents and young children (0-5 years old) to play and learn together! It is also a great chance for tots to socialize with their peers. Each month has a different theme and children can choose to engage in a variety of activities such as: story time, arts & crafts, movement activities, snack making, ideas for games at home, and much more. Registration is not necessary and this monthly experience is free of charge.

MCRD BABY BOOT CAMP - Classes are held the 4th Tuesday and Wednesday of each month from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM

This two-day class is the first step in preparing expectant families to be confident and competent parents. First time expectant parents can benefit from this educational and informative class. Infant development, social and emotional changes in the family, baby safety, diapering, bathing, soothing a crying infant, and community resources are just a few of the topics covered. Current information about infant care and local resources is crucial to build strong families and this class provides a solid foundation for infant care. Please call 619.524.0465 to register.

MSST 91109
Ombudsman
Amanda J. Satter

Phone:
757-284-7673

E-Mail:
Msst91109ombudsman@yahoo.com

The ombudsman distributes frequent emails with pertinent information - please email her to be added to the distribution list!

The MLE/FP Team conducting vertical insertion training with the USCGC Petrel on June 21, 2012.

Sample Phone Tree

The phone tree below shows four volunteers (A, B, C, and D) with 10 families each to contact. The ombudsman will contact each volunteer, provide him or her with a message, and ask him or her to call each person on his or her list. The last person each volunteer must contact is the ombudsman to provide him or her with an update on the status of notifications.

Phone Tree - USCGC ALWAYSGONE			
Volunteer A	**Volunteer B**	**Volunteer C**	**Volunteer D**
Mr. Anderson (###) ###-####	Mrs. Knight (###) ###-####	Mr. Uno (###) ###-####	Mrs. Eckerd (###) ###-####
Mrs. Brown (###) ###-####	Mrs. Lane (###) ###-####	Mrs. Vickers (###) ###-####	Mrs. Finlay (###) ###-####
Mrs. Crane (###) ###-####	Mrs. Mosby (###) ###-####	Mrs. Weston (###) ###-####	Mrs. Georges (###) ###-####
Mrs. Donner (###) ###-####	Mrs. Nelson (###) ###-####	Mrs. Xavier (###) ###-####	Mrs. Henkel (###) ###-####
Mrs. Elm (###) ###-####	Mr. Olson (###) ###-####	Mrs. Yancey (###) ###-####	Mr. Iverson (###) ###-####
Mr. Frank (###) ###-####	Mr. Pink (###) ###-####	Mrs. Zimmerman (###) ###-####	Mr. June (###) ###-####
Mrs. Gray (###) ###-####	Mrs. Queen (###) ###-####	Mrs. Alton (###) ###-####	Mrs. Kick (###) ###-####
Mrs. Hunt (###) ###-####	Mrs. Roman (###) ###-####	Mrs. Blaine (###) ###-####	Mrs. Lime (###) ###-####
Mrs. Imel (###) ###-####	Mrs. Sloan (###) ###-####	Mr. Cory (###) ###-####	Mrs. Minor (###) ###-####
Mrs. Jones (###) ###-####	Mrs. Tinker (###) ###-####	Mrs. Donnelly (###) ###-####	Mrs. Neat (###) ###-####
Ombudsman (###) ###-####	**Ombudsman (###) ###-####**	**Ombudsman (###) ###-####**	**Ombudsman (###) ###-####**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Resource List

DISCLAIMER: Links to non-federal entities are provided as an administrative convenience. The Coast Guard cannot and does not endorse any of the linked non-federal entities, their products, or their services.

Coast Guard

- **CG Work-Life** (www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cg111). The overall objective of CG Work-Life is to support the well-being of active duty, reserve and civilian employees and family members. For assistance visit the website or call 800-USCG WLS (872-4957) to contact the W-L office nearest you.
- **CG SUPRT** (www.CGSUPRT.com). Free professional counseling, health coaching, education, and referral services for many issues such as relationship problems, depression, legal and financial challenges, health improvement, and balancing work and life demands. For assistance visit the website or call 24/7 at 855-CG SUPRT (247-8778).

National Hotlines

- **Safe Helpline** (www.SafeHelpline.org). Safe Helpline provides live, one-on-one support and information to DoD and Coast Guard. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available worldwide 24/7, providing victims of sexual assault with the help they need, anytime, anywhere. For assistance, visit the website or call 877-995-5247.
- **Childhelp** (www.childhelp.org). Childhelp is a non-profit organization whose mission is to meet the physical, emotional, educational and spiritual needs of abused, neglected and at-risk children. Childhelp is not affiliated with Child Protective Services, any governmental agency, political party, religious denomination, or any other entity, organization or institution. For assistance, visit the website or call 800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453).
- **The Hotline** (www.thehotline.org). The Hotline is a nonprofit organization that provides crisis intervention, information and referral to victims of domestic violence, perpetrators, friends and families. The Hotline answers a variety of calls and is a resource for domestic violence advocates government officials, law enforcement agencies and the general public. For assistance, visit the website or call 800-799-SAFE (7233).
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For assistance, visit the website or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Resource List

Disaster Preparedness

- **Ready Campaign** (www.ready.gov). Information, checklists, and printable forms to educate and empower Americans to prepare for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Defense. Listo America (www.listo.gov/america) is the Spanish version of Ready.gov.
- **American Red Cross** (www.redcross.org). Preparedness guides and information for home, school, work, and community. The Safe and Well List (https://safeandwell.communityos.org) provides a way for disaster victims to communicate with family members about their well-being.
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (www.cdc.gov). Under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the principal federal agency for protecting the health and safety of all Americans.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency** (www.fema.gov/plan). FEMA's "Plan Ahead" site offers information on the range of natural and manmade disasters and guidance for protecting your family and property. Are You Ready? (www.fema.gov/areyouready) is a comprehensive online and downloadable resource on individual, family, and community preparedness.
- **Flu.gov** (www.flu.gov). The most current information on pandemic and avian flu from the Department of Health and Human Services.
- **World Health Organization** (www.who.int). Resources for epidemic and pandemic alert and response issues.

Stress Management

- **American Institute of Stress** (www.stress.org). Provides newsletters and information regarding stress.

Financial Management

- **Coast Guard Mutual Assistance** (http://www.cgmahq.org). CGMA offers emergency financial assistance and many types of financial counseling. To learn more about these services visit the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance web site.

Resource List

- **Women, Infants, Children Program (WIC)** (www.fns.usda.gov/wic). WIC provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.
- **Military Saves** (www.militarysaves.org). Military Saves is a social marketing campaign to persuade, motivate, and encourage military families to save money every month, and to convince leaders and organizations to be aggressive in promoting automatic savings.
- **National Foundation for Credit Counseling** (www.nfcc.org). A great site for useful information and services related to debt management. NFCC is the nation's largest and longest serving national nonprofit credit counseling organization. Coast Guard Mutual Assistance has long partnered with NFCC and will pay reasonable fees for counseling services provided by their member agencies.
- **Incharge Debt Solutions - Military Debt Relief** (www.incharge.org/our-services/military-debt-relief). InCharge is a leading nonprofit organization, which has brought debt relief to over a million struggling Americans, and developed tools and alliances to bring specialized help to military families struggling with debt overload and the unique challenges of military life.
- **Better Business Bureau (BBB) Coast Guard Line** (www.bbb.org/us/uscg). A Coast Guard Qualified Organization, encourages Coast Guard personnel (including Reservists), retirees, and their family members to use the free consumer services and materials offered by BBB, as well as to partner with their local BBBs. BBB is proud to work with the Coast Guard Office of Work-Life to improve the financial readiness of Coast Guardsmen and their families.
- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau** (www.consumerfinance.gov). The consumer bureau is working to give consumers the information they need to understand the terms of their agreements with financial companies. Like a neighborhood cop on the beat, the CFPB supervises banks, credit unions, and other financial companies, and enforces Federal consumer financial laws.
- **My Retirement Paycheck** (www.myretirementpaycheck.org). Explore retirement decisions and obtain information on making retirement resources go further.
- **SaveAndInvest.org** (www.saveandinvest.org). Unbiased financial tools and information for military families.

Resource List

- **Thrift Savings Plan** (www.tsp.gov). The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees and members of the uniformed services, including the Ready Reserve and offers the same types of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans.

Healthcare

- **Health Benefits Advisor** (HBA) provides information on health/dental programs (1-800 9HBA HBA).
- **TRICARE** (www.tricare.mil) provides plan information for your geographical area.
- **Navy Safe Harbor** (www.safeharbor.navy.mil). Coordinates the non-medical care of seriously wounded, ill, and injured Sailors, Coast Guardsmen, and their families.

Spouse Employment

- **Military Spouse Career Center** (www.military.com/spouse).

Crisis Checklist

Upon notification of a command incident or crisis, consider the following:

Self Care

- ☐ Shower and dress professionally, yet comfortably, and wear your nametag and ombudsman pin.
- ☐ Alert your family and your spouse's family of incident.
- ☐ Arrange childcare. If your children are older, leave money for food or other necessities. Leave phone numbers of neighbors and close friends.
- ☐ Contact your support system and ask them to assist you if needed.
- ☐ Ensure you have the following items:
  - Driver's license
  - Gov't. ID
  - Cell phone
  - Cash
  - Flashlight with batteries
  - Snacks and bottled water

Crisis Response

- ☐ Begin a notebook or log to note all information gathered and disseminated.
- ☐ Contact command POC to identify expectations such as who will call who, how often, type of information to share, etc.
- ☐ Contact CO, XO, and CMC spouses and establish plans for communication.
- ☐ Activate emergency phone tree.
- ☐ Contact PAO if needed.
- ☐ Get command roster and any emergency data forms you might have.
- ☐ Keep your cell phone and charger nearby.
- ☐ Work with command to arrange an informational meeting for families. Contact: PAO, W-L, chaplain or others as appropriate.
- ☐ Identify a command spouse or other ombudsman to act as volunteer coordinator. Work with volunteer coordinator to determine needs of families and identify resources.

After Care

- ☐ Contact the command and CACO regarding visitations and needs of casualty families.
- ☐ Possibly visit families in conjunction with CO, XO, or CMC spouses.
- ☐ Attend memorial service.
- ☐ Contact W-L to coordinate a CISM response, as directed by the command.
- ☐ Follow up with casualty families.
- ☐ Follow up with volunteer coordinator.
- ☐ Follow up with the command.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK