

2009

Partnership Guide for Branches

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*Our Memorandum of Understanding with DND
and what it means for Branches*



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NEW MOU WITH D.N.D. AND RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

GUIDANCE TO BRANCHES

INTRODUCTION

1. Partnership means mutual understanding between partners and using negotiating skills in difficult situations. Branch volunteers would do well, in all circumstances, to create a climate of trust and understanding when dealing with Corps officers. After all, we all have a common interest in a highly successful Sea Cadet Corps for the benefit of the cadets. The free sharing of information between the Branch and the corps should be the standard mode of operation. However, the Branch should not be so involved in the Corps' business as to stifle and hamper the initiative and leadership of the Corps officers. When things are going smoothly, officers should generally be left alone to conduct the corps' business. When difficulties arise, the officers should feel comfortable in seeking the branch's counsel, support and help.



2. In short, this not a power game! The MOU and responsibility matrix clearly delineate areas of responsibilities and partnership commitments, in becoming Branch volunteers we agree that, first, the welfare of the cadets is paramount and, second, that the officers and civilian instructors, our partners, are the leaders responsible for the cadets and that, as such, they deserve our help and support. If we accept this proactive and positive approach, we will have gone a long way to ensure an effective and productive partnership.

3. There are a few practical measures that the Branch should take in order to maintain good working relations with the Corps leaders, as follows:

- ✚ Establish and maintain good working relations with the Corps CO and Officers.
- ✚ Appoint a member of the Branch Executive as vice-president Sea Cadets who will be responsible for the liaison between the Branch and the Corps CO and officers. His terms of reference should be in writing and be acceptable to the Corps. They should also accurately reflect the NLOC responsibilities and commitments
- ✚ Set up a procedure by which the Corps CO can make representation to the Branch when problems or misunderstanding arise, or additional help is required.
- ✚ Invite the CO or his representative as an observer to those Branch meetings when Sea Cadet matters are discussed.

4. Some Corps COs or officers may be reluctant to adopt the principles of the Matrix. They would be wrong; the new MOU makes the partnership official! Every effort must be made to resolve any conflict or misunderstanding at the community level. Mustering every ounce of good will, members of the Branch should promote cooperation and try to resolve problems with the Corps. If that still doesn't work, they should report any lack of cooperation without delay to the Division Executive, specifically to the VP Sea Cadets for help and a quick resolution at a higher level.

5. This implementation guide will follow closely the Matrix outline. Branch members should familiarize themselves with the matrix and its content.

SECTIONS 1 AND 2: CADET INSTRUCTOR CADRE AND CIVILIAN INSTRUCTORS

Attraction and Retention (Matrix: 1.1, 1.2 and 1.6)

6. Basically, the Navy League is responsible to attract prospective officers in answer to the needs expressed by the Corps CO. Once the prospects have been identified and possible candidates interviewed and agreed with, DND then screens and recruits potential officers. Both sides of the partnership should act in good faith. The matrix makes references to local recruiting campaigns in answer to punctual requirements. In reality, most corps are always short of leaders, so everyone, Branch or Corps, should be on the lookout for good talent continuously.

7. There is no magic formula to the retention of officers or volunteers, for that matter. Retention will be conditional to a good atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding and a high level of support by the Branch. Recognition of significant individual efforts or meritorious service by way of presentations and awards will undoubtedly encourage officers or volunteers to continue their commitment towards the cadets and the corps

8. Here are some specific measures to be taken by the Branch:

- ✚ Make recruiting of officers a periodic feature of your regular meetings.
- ✚ Ensure that the recruiting and retention of officers and CIs are part of your VP Sea Cadets' terms of reference.
- ✚ At the beginning of each training year, agree on a recruiting strategy and share it with the Corps officers so that they can play their part in the bargain.

9. What you should expect from the Corps

The Corps CO and officers must clearly identify what they need in personnel support. If they already have identified potential candidates to become CIC officers, they must share that information with Branch officials. They are also required to assist the Branch in recruiting campaigns.

Training (Matrix 1.3)

10. It is obvious that dedicated and well trained leaders are the key to a successful corps and well trained cadets. Therefore, at a minimum, we should do the following:

- ✚ Be sensitive to the corps specific requirements for well-trained officers and support the CO's efforts to get his officers trained at the earliest opportunity.
- ✚ In cases where the CO is not successful and there exist a critical shortage of trained officers, refer the matter to the Division so that action can be taken at a higher level.

Key Appointments (Matrix: 1.4)

11. The appointment of a suitable CO is of paramount importance to the smooth and efficient running of the Corps. The MOU requires that input from the Branch be considered by the RCSU prior to the appointment of a new CO. Ideally the new CO should be chosen from the trained officers who already serve in the Corps. The Branch will have had ample opportunity to observe the conduct, leadership ability and effectiveness of these officers so that making an informed recommendation on a new CO should not be difficult. So, here are the measures that the Branch should be taking:

- ✚ Well in advance of the succession, consult informally with the outgoing CO and discuss the choice of his successor. Work towards a mutual agreement on a candidate to be recommended.
- ✚ If there is no agreement, the Branch should still make a firm recommendation to the RCSU, making it clear why it does not agree with the Corps CO and keeping the Division informed.

Civilian Instructors (Matrix: Section 2)

12. The matrix devotes an entire section to civilian instructors but the Branch should give the same care and attention to their recruitment and retention to that of CIC officers. We must keep in mind that Civilian instructors are recruited for a specific purpose and that they are under contract with DND. No other measures than those outlined above are required.

SECTION 3: LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS

13. The MOU requires “that all volunteers used in activities involving cadets...be screened and approved using the same DND criteria” and that a national database of these approved volunteers be created. The National Cadet Committee has decided that the Leagues would conduct the screening of all volunteers, using mutually approved criteria, and develop and maintain the database for the benefit of both partners. This process is well underway at the National Office.



14. Branches must therefore do the following:

- ✚ Identify, and recruit if necessary, volunteers to respond to the Corps requirements.
- ✚ Start the screening process without delay as prescribed by the NLOC.
- ✚ Once approved, make the volunteers available to the Corps and follow their progress.

SECTION 4: SEA CADETS

Attraction and Retention (Matrix: 4.1 and 4.2)

15. As participants of the MOU, both the NLOC and DND have agreed to be involved in cadet attraction and retention. It is a stated goal of the NLOC to recruit as many Sea cadets as possible, and once recruited, to retain them in the program for as long as possible. It follows that all Branches should conduct vigorous recruiting campaigns in the community as required, keeping in mind the capacity of the Cadet Hall and the availability of youth leaders. The Branch officials should be involved in all facets of recruiting including school presentations and information sessions; they should also help the corps officers to conduct information sessions with the new recruits and their parents. In short, you should do the following:

- ✚ Agree with the Corps CO and officers on a recruiting goal
- ✚ Jointly conduct a vigorous recruiting campaign
- ✚ Help in any way you can with the processing of the new recruits.
- ✚ Discuss retention strategies with the Corps officers
- ✚ Keep in contact with the parents at every opportunity.

Administration and policy (Matrix 4.3 and 4.4)



16. It is the responsibility of the Corps to maintain cadet files and to provide administrative services in accordance with DND policies and directives. The NLOC does not have the right of oversight on the administration of cadets. However, in cases when Branch officials receive complaints from parents or guardians or when they, themselves, have concerns about how the program or the policies are being administered, they should raise those concerns with the Corps CO to clarify or straighten out the situation.

If those efforts are unsuccessful and the concerns remain, branch officials should then alert the Division so that those concerns can be raised at a higher level.

17. There have been cases in the past when Corps COs have refused to pass on to the Branch the names and addresses of the cadets' parents or guardians. It is difficult to fathom why, having participated in the recruitment of the cadets; Branch officials should be denied this most elementary information about parents. In cases when Corps officers refuse to give this information, Branches should get in touch with the Division forthwith.

Rank Appointments (Matrix: 4.5)

18. The Branch has the same interest as the Corps to have the best and most deserving cadets being promoted to senior positions. Therefore the selection process for senior cadets should be a cooperative effort between the Branch and the Corps. In this case the MOU mandates the following:

- ✚ The selection criteria must be equitable and published in advance
- ✚ The Branch must be made aware of these criteria by the Corps CO
- ✚ A member of the Branch Executive, normally the VP Sea Cadets, must take part in the selection.

In most cases the criteria will be equitable and reasonable and the Branch will be involved in the selection. In rare cases where the Branch is not consulted or is denied involvement, the Division must be contacted forthwith so that the RCSU can be alerted and the situation corrected.

SECTION 5: CADET SUMMER TRAINING CENTRES (CSTC) AND EXCHANGES

Selection (Matrix 5.1 and 5.3)

19. It should not be difficult to encourage Sea cadets to apply for a summer course at a CSTC or for an exchange; therefore, in accordance with the MOU, the Branch must be proactive in doing so in partnership with the Corps officers. Similarly, it must also promote similar opportunities for employment for staff cadets and CIC officers. Practically, the Branch should do the following:

- ✚ Consult with CO and agree on how to advertise and promote CSTC and exchange opportunities
- ✚ Promote the employment of senior cadets and CIC officers as staff at CSTC
- ✚ Participate in the selection process as determined by the course CO

Training (Matrix 5.4)

20. The NLOC is not involved in the training of cadets at the CSTC. If there are complaints about the selection for, or the conduct of, summer CSTC courses or exchanges, the matter should be referred to at the applicable level (Corps or Division) for clarification or resolution.

Ceremonies (Matrix 5.5)

21. Branch officials who are available should attend parades and ceremonies associated with the Cadets' summer training activities within or without the confines of the CSTCs. Any opportunity to support or cheer the cadets on display must not be missed.

Quality of Life, Materiel and Support Services (Matrix 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8)

22. Again, DND is responsible to implement applicable quality of life standards and to provide facilities and appropriate support services to national cadet activities. After the fact complaints or concerns by cadets or parents should be raised by the Branch at the appropriate level.

SECTION 6: LOCAL HEADQUARTERS (LHQ) OPERATIONS

23. The Branch and the corps must work together to implement the LHQ training programs. Proactive measures to ensure effective cooperation were discussed in the introduction and will not be repeated here. So, for the purpose of this section, we will assume that a climate of trust and cooperation exists between the Branch and the Corps officers.

Training Programs (Matrix 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)

24. Various types of training will require different levels of support from the Branch; at the beginning of the training year, the Corps CO should be invited to discuss the proposed training program with the Branch executive and to submit the supporting budget. The Branch should then do its utmost to support as many optional activities as it can, keeping in mind the general NLOC goals and objectives, i.e. water-based activities, physical fitness, citizenship, etc. This meeting should result in a good program, agreed to by both partners, committed to give it the maximum support. For the Branch, it should provide guidance for the expenditure of funds and for fund-raising activities.

25. In short, the Branch should do the following:

- ✚ In late August or early September, call a meeting with the Corps CO (and officers) to discuss the training year program.
- ✚ At the same time, ask the CO to propose a budget to support the training activities
- ✚ During the meeting, agree with the Corps on a sound, interesting and feasible training program.
- ✚ After the meeting study the proposed budget and allocate funds to the various activities.
- ✚ Inform the CO of the provisions of the Budget so that he can plan accordingly.

During the year, additional funds may be required by the Corps to cover unforeseen expenses with respect to training activities. Additionally, the corps may wish to participate in additional activities not included in the original budget. In either case, the Corps CO should feel comfortable in approaching the Branch for additional support and, if the request is reasonable, the Branch should give it. The welfare of the cadets is the key!

Administration (Matrix 6.4)

26. It is up to the CO and officers to provide administrative services to the sea cadet Corps. For its part, the Branch must be organized and administered according to the NLOC Bylaws; in it, the requirement to maintain close and effective liaison with the Corps, mandated by the MOU, is already spelled out. We have previously outlined the requirement to have a member of the Branch Executive to conduct this function according to simple, clear written guidelines (or terms of reference) agreed to by both partners. Refer to the concrete measures outlined in the introduction.

Accommodation and training areas

27. In communities where DND facilities are not available it is up to the Branch to provide adequate office and training facilities to the Sea Cadet Corps. In doing so, the Branch must balance what is required (i.e. training hall, office space for the officers, messes, etc.) with what is affordable or available. In doing so, the Branch must consult frequently with the CO and try to be as accommodating as possible to reasonable requests. The Branch must also maintain the facilities in a good state of repair so that training operations can be conducted in a safe environment with little or no disruption. In addition those facilities must be properly insured.

28. Since the Branch owns (or leases) the building it has the right to lay down few and reasonable rules for its safe use and the maintenance of good order. These rules should be agreed to by the Corps and the officers must share the responsibility of enforcing them.

Materiel for training activities (Matrix 6.8 and 6.9)

29. The Corps CO may approach the Branch to acquire equipment needed to support cadet training. Ideally, those requirements should have been identified at the initial training meeting (see para. 24 above) and a timely decision taken regarding new acquisitions. In the event this was not done, the Branch should consider favourably any reasonable requests for new equipment that enhances cadet



training activities. This is particularly important for optional activities where DND equipment is not provided. The Branch should maintain an accurate inventory of the materiel it owns and the Corps must account and properly care for the Branch equipment on loan.

Corps formation, Probation and Disbandment (Matrix 6.10 to 6.12)

30. The NLOC rules for a corps formation or disbandment are spelled out in the bylaws, the Branch Guide and other NLOC publications. In these circumstances, the Division and the RCSU will also be involved and help should be available to the Branch to resolve outstanding issues. In cases of a corps being put on probation by DND (RCSU), the Branch must cooperate fully with the CO to quickly solve the problems affecting the Corps. In cases where there are personality conflicts or small turf wars, the Division should be asked to help mediate an acceptable solution. Again the welfare of the cadets and the viability of the Corps are the most important factors to be considered.

SECTION 7: FUNDING

Accounting

31. The MOU recognizes that funding for the Cadet program comes from two sources: public monies through DND and non-public funds through the NLOC. All the monies to be given to the Corps must be kept in one Bank account, controlled and administered by the Branch. The Corps CO should be provided with a petty cash fund. With regard to funding the Branch should do the following:

- ✚ Follow rigorously the budgeting process outlined above (para. 25)
- ✚ Account for receipt and expenditure of all funds in a transparent manner; make periodic financial statements available to the Corps CO and officers.
- ✚ The Corps should make application for all available DND grants (Contingency and Band, where applicable); The Branch should ensure that these funds are expended for the benefit of the Corps in accordance with the agreed budget

Fund Raising

32. It is up to the Branch to organize fund raising in support of the Corps training activities. Again, planning for fund raising initiatives should be concurrent with the budget negotiations between the Branch and the Corps. The MOU requires that the Corps support the Branch in fund raising activities; this seems reasonable since only the cadets will benefit from the operation. The scope of their help however should be fair and reasonable and it should not interfere with their training.

SECTION 8: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

33. This section of the Matrix refers to conflicts between cadets, members of the CF or DND civilian employees and third parties (i.e. NLOC volunteers). The MOU requires that, in these cases, the CCM national conflict resolution process be implemented. If they have not already done so Branches should familiarize themselves with the requirements of this process. An attempt should be made by all parties to resolve conflicts at the lowest possible level with calm, understanding and a great deal of common sense. If that is not possible, the Division should be informed and asked to mediate as appropriate.

SECTION 9: INSURANCE

34. The purpose of insurance is to provide cadets, NLOC members and volunteers with coverage. This is well established within our bylaws and every Branch is aware of its obligations. The MOU requires that all accidents be reported promptly and fully to the National Office and that the Branches provide all possible assistance in the insurance claims process. It is the responsibility of the Corps CO to seek authorization in advance of all the Cadet activities; The Corps CO and officers are further require to report any accidents and significant incidents to the Branch immediately. In addition to liability insurance the Branch must also obtain separate coverage for all non-DND property.

SECTION 10: COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

35. The MOU recommends that joint public affairs committees between DND and the NLOC be established at all levels. The Branch and the Corps should thus work together so as to maximize local media participation in recruiting and local community events. Both partners should identify spokespersons who would deliver agreed responses to media questions.

36. Internal communications and the exchange information between the Branch and the Corps have already been covered in this guide.

CONCLUSION

37. In this guide, we have covered a lot of material and it seems that there is a lot for the Branch Executive and volunteers to do. However, very little has changed; the MOU simply codifies what was general accepted practice in most Branches and Corps. It was mentioned earlier that a good partnership is the result of mutual respect and understanding, a positive attitude and a genuine desire of all concern to solve problems and resolve personal conflicts so that the training of our sea cadets in all the corps across Canada can proceed seamlessly with little or no disruption.

Let's lead by example and become exemplary partners!