



# U.S. NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS

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CHART YOUR COURSE

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## PARENT'S HANDBOOK

A guide for parents during their child's involvement with  
the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps

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# Welcome Aboard

This handbook is provided as a guide for parents during their child's involvement with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC) or the Navy League Cadet Corps (NLCC). Most parents who choose to read this booklet do so because their son or daughter has joined, or is interested in joining, either the NSCC or the NLCC.

Over the next few months, your family will be introduced to the regulations and customs of the USNSCC. We strive to instill a sense of personal honor, patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and confidence in an anti-drug, anti-alcohol, anti-tobacco, and anti-gang environment.

Many things about the USNSCC may be new, especially for parents who have had no previous experience in the naval services; therefore, it is not unusual for parents of a new Cadet to feel "lost". The USNSCC maintains an open door policy with all parents, which means that if, after reading this booklet, there are additional questions or concerns, parents are welcome to address them with the unit's Commanding Officer.

## Benefits of Membership

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a nationwide organization dedicated to helping American youth realize personal success and achievement through a nautically oriented training program. There are around 400 Sea Cadet units in the United States, with units in nearly every state, as well as Puerto Rico and Guam. The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is also a participating member of the International Sea Cadet Association (ISCA), which provides opportunities for cadets to take part in training activities abroad.

Through Sea Cadet leadership, your son or daughter will learn skills in basic seamanship and its naval adaptations, while also learning the values of patriotism, courage, self-reliance, teamwork, and accountability.

Membership in the NSCC allows youth to sample military life with no obligation to join any branch of the armed forces. Should cadets decide to enlist in the Navy or Coast Guard, their training may allow them entry at an advanced pay grade. Historically, a number of Sea Cadets have received scholarships and appointments to military academies.

## Eligibility Requirements

The NSCC/NLCC affords equal opportunity for participation to all young Americans regardless of race, color, religion or gender. To qualify for our senior program, the NSCC, the prospective cadet must be between 13 and 17 years of age. Youth ages 11-13 can apply for to our junior program, the NLCC. The prospective cadet must be unmarried and a full-time student in good academic standing and of good moral character. Eligibility requirements may be found in the USNSCC Regulations.

A medical examination similar to a high school sports physical is required for all cadet applicants to the NSCC or NLCC. No one will be denied admission to the NSCC/NLCC due to a medical disability. Where a medical condition precludes full, unlimited participation, a Request for Accommodation may be presented by the parent or guardian for review so the cadet may participate in NSCC activities to the maximum extent possible. The procedures for requesting an accommodation can be found in the *NSCC Medical Reference Manual*.

In addition to having an interest in the program, all prospective cadets must have parental consent and must be prepared to attend drills regularly in order to enroll. Cadets need to be ready to have fun and be willing to learn new things.

While not a prerequisite for enrollment, cadets will find that physical fitness is a key element of success in the NSCC/NLCC program, and that their continued enrollment and advancement will depend on their ability to pass fitness tests. Our program uses the President's Council on Physical Fitness program and standards to measure their progress. Tests are given at least twice per year, and passing scores are required to attend Recruit Training and for advancement in rate.

## Costs

While there is a standard enrollment fee for membership in the NSCC/NLCC, the actual cost of participation varies by unit and individual cadet depending upon the activities and training planned. Each unit has an annual operating budget. The budget may be larger or smaller depending upon the size of the unit, fund raising activities and donations by unit sponsors. To find out more about the specific costs for the local unit, contact the Commanding Officer.

## Parental Support

Parents need to keep in mind that if their son or daughter decides to join either the NSCC or NLCC, they will play an important role in assuring their child's success as a cadet. The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a non-profit, volunteer organization that relies heavily on parents to support the efforts of volunteer officers and instructors working with their children. With this in mind, parents should:

- Encourage their child to be respectful of officers and adult volunteers.
- Praise their child for his or her accomplishments.
- Remind their child to listen to and obey instructions.
- Be punctual in dropping off and picking up their child from USNSCC functions.

Parents who are interested in volunteering with unit activities and responsibilities are encouraged to read the section on Volunteer Opportunities.

## Surfing the Web

Parents who are new to the program will find both the USNSCC web site ([www.seacadets.org](http://www.seacadets.org)) and the USNSCC Homeport (<http://homeport.seacadets.org>) helpful in answering frequently asked questions. The local unit's web site can be an additional resource, if available, and can be found by searching the e-mail directory on the NSCC Homeport site. Parents can gain a better understanding of the program, and they can access other information of interest to sea cadets through links to individual unit web sites and other related sites.

The information contained on each unit's web site is unique to that unit. The more information parents are able to access, the better understanding they will have of the program. Most parents prefer to know what to expect, and the web site is a good place to go for information when unit officers and instructors cannot be reached. Parents will often find information about meeting times and locations, upcoming events, awards and recognition within the unit, and photographs of cadets participating in unit events.



# Our Navy Heritage

Cadets will be exposed to many naval customs and traditions, including the use of a vocabulary based on a long and rich history of ships and the sea. Shipboard terms are often used at Navy Operational Support Centers and other land-based facilities where cadets drill.

The unique language and jargon used by a group identifies the members, promotes cohesiveness, and sets them apart from those who are not in that profession, sport, club, or organization. This is especially so with the sea services. A short glossary of nautical and military terms used by the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard is located at the end of this handbook.

## The Three Core Values of the U.S. Navy

Our naval customs and traditions have developed and evolved since 1776 when the Continental Congress authorized the creation of the Continental Navy. Naval customs and traditions help keep discipline and order in a military organization. Many of the customs include acts or expressions of respect, such as the hand salute, or considerations of the three core values of the U.S. Navy: Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

**HONOR** - "I will bear true faith and allegiance..." Accordingly, we will conduct ourselves in the highest ethical manner in all relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates. We will be honest and truthful in our dealings with each other and with those outside the Navy. Illegal or improper behavior will not be tolerated. We are accountable for our professional and personal behavior.

**COURAGE** - "I will support and defend..." Accordingly, we will have courage to meet the demands of our profession and the mission when it is demanding, or otherwise difficult. Courage is the value that gives us the moral and mental strength to do what is right, even in the face of personal or professional adversity.

**COMMITMENT** - "I will obey the orders..." Accordingly, we will demand respect up and down the chain of command. We will care for the safety, professional, personal and spiritual well-being of our people. We will show respect toward all people without regard to race, religion, or gender.

## Government Support of U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps

Cadets are authorized by the Secretary of the Navy to wear Navy uniforms duly modified with the NSCC/NLCC insignia. In recent years, the U.S. Congress has allocated funds to help subsidize the cost of recruit and advanced trainings. Cadets who have successfully completed a two-week recruit training are eligible to train aboard U.S. Navy ships and Coast Guard ships, as well as participate in shore activities.

There have been reported instances of parents behaving inappropriately toward active duty and reserve personnel or complaining about the facilities and procedures when visiting a facility hosting a USNSCC event or function. Please keep in mind that it is a privilege to be allowed to continue to use these facilities for functions, especially since the attacks on September 11, 2001. We consistently find that military personnel are respectful and courteous of civilian guests and their inquiries. However, their primary mission is service to and security of our country. Parents and cadets are expected to demonstrate appropriate decorum and respect when visiting our military installations.

# Cadet Training

While League and Sea Cadet units are organized along military lines, their main purpose is to foster good citizenship and an interest in and appreciation for our nation's maritime services. Cadets study a broad range of subjects, both in the classroom and through practical, hands-on application.

Some types of training are designed to help cadets become better adult citizens, while others teach the importance of strong maritime skills such as seamanship, maritime history, damage control, firefighting, and customs and traditions. They also study subjects which could improve their promotion potential, should they decide to join one of the sea services. Cadets are instructed by qualified adult leaders willing to devote their time and knowledge to this worthwhile activity.

## Recruit Training (Boot Camp)

First-year Sea Cadets are required to attend recruit training. Recruit training is the cadet's introduction to military routine and discipline and is the first step towards advancing in the Sea Cadet program. Sea Cadets are permitted to choose a training period during the summer or winter months to accommodate employment arrangements or family vacations. League Cadets may choose to attend a similar one-week recruit orientation, but it is not a requirement of the NLCC program.

## Advanced Summer Training

Having successfully completed recruit training, Sea Cadets will participate in additional training in advanced subjects during succeeding summer, winter and school holidays. These one- or two-week training periods offer varied programs in addition to valuable instruction of a maritime nature. Sea Cadets are eligible to attend advanced training aboard naval vessels, where they will learn Seamanship and Navigation, among many other skills. They may also attend advanced orientation courses such as Airman's School, Music School, Culinary Training, Law Enforcement training, Photojournalism training, Seabee Indoctrination, SCUBA Qualification, Underwater Demolition/SEAL Team training, and Submarine Orientation. Other available courses are designed to prepare cadets for leadership, either within the Sea Cadet organization or in other fields. Exemplary senior cadets may also be considered for our International Exchange Program.

Additional information on the NSCC and NLCC training programs can be found in the *NSCC/NLCC Training and Operations Manual*.

# Drills

Every unit is required to conduct a specific number of drills each year. Typically, units drill one weekend or two Saturdays each month. Each unit has an established drill schedule, often posted on their unit web site. Units seldom deviate from their scheduled drills, but some changes may be made due to holidays.

Drills end on time and parents are asked to pick up their cadet within 10 minutes of the scheduled end of drill. Units discourage parents from picking up cadets early and disrupting the discipline of the drill routine. However, parents are always welcome to observe drills and final muster. The Commanding Officer (CO) is usually available at the end of each drill to talk with parents.

## What to Bring

Each NSCC/NLCC unit has its own unique drill routine. Cadets should always wear the appropriate uniform of the day and carry their cadet ID card. The unit's officers and instructors will establish any other requirements for meals, snacks, special equipment or course material. This type of information is generally communicated through a Plan of the Month and/or Plan of the Day.

## Plan of the Month

Every good team must know how to communicate. The way that our officers communicate with parents and cadets each month is through the Plan of the Month (POM). The POM provides the month's drill dates, the appropriate uniforms and a list of any special requirements or other pertinent information for activities and events. Some units also communicate promotions, special events and other information in the Plan of the Month.

**It is very important that parents and cadets read the POM as soon as it is received. There is no excuse for not knowing the information contained in the POM.** Parents and cadets typically begin receiving the POM at beginning the month following the cadet's enrollment into the Corps. If a POM is not provided, parents should contact the unit's Commanding Officer or other designated representative.

## Attendance

Attendance at drills is one of the Annual Inspection criteria for each unit, so cadets are required to attend 75% of the unit's regular drills. See the unit's Commanding Officer to discuss needs for excused absences.

The cadet or parent should call the Division Officer (DO) or other official as designated by the CO when it is necessary to miss a drill. If the DO is unavailable, the chain of command should be followed (see *page 10*) until someone is reached. If a cadet misses too many drills or does not call when he/she is going to be absent, the cadet could be put on probation or disenrolled.

## Proper Appearance

### Uniforms

The unit will issue surplus Navy uniforms to cadets, typically for a reasonable fee or deposit. Uniforms are issued to the best of the Corps' ability within the limits of the uniform supply available to the program from the U.S. Navy. Typically, uniforms may be exchanged throughout the cadet's participation in the program at no additional cost. Remember that these are used uniforms and not all sizes are available.

Parents are responsible for alterations as needed. If the cadet leaves the program, all issued uniforms must be returned. Not all required items may be issued; items such as white hats, black socks, second shoes, second name tapes, and other miscellaneous items may be required at the cadet's expense.

### Name Tapes and Flashes

Nametapes and NSCC/NLCC flashes are required on all uniforms to identify the cadet and his/her affiliation with the NSCC/NLCC. Nametapes are strips of material with the cadet's name embroidered on it. Information regarding the proper placement and wearing of the Sea Cadet uniform can be found in the *NSCC/NLCC Uniform Regulations*.

### Personal Grooming

Good grooming and personal appearance practices instill pride and self-confidence in cadets. All cadets are expected to be clean and well-groomed at all times. Uniforms are expected to be clean and pressed with all patches and nametapes attached securely in the proper position. Cadets will be taught grooming customs and traditions early so that they may assimilate into the unit with as little disruption as possible. Parents can help by being aware of the following grooming standards and reminding the cadet that these are the grooming expectations while in uniform.

Male: Hair must be short, above ears, no sideburns and no facial hair. Nails trimmed even with end of finger and clean. No earrings may be worn; a religious medal may be worn if it is not visible.

Female: Hair must not fall below the bottom of the collar. If long, it must be put up and pinned flat against the head. Ponytails and braids are not allowed. Hairpins should match the hair color. Makeup, if worn, should be light and natural looking and jewelry should be one pair of silver ball earrings only. A religious medal may be worn if not visible. Fingernails may not be more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch past the end of finger. The use of light natural nail polish is acceptable.

# Chain of Command

Every person in the military has someone to whom they are responsible. Even the President of the United States has to answer to someone: the American people. The members of the NSCC/NLCC between the cadet and the Commanding Officer make up the unit chain of command. Both cadets and their parents need to understand the importance of the chain of command and follow it to resolve questions or problems in an orderly, disciplined, and professional manner.

## Cadet Chain of Command

The newly enrolled cadet, having no supervisory responsibility, is the lowest link in the chain. The next person, or link, in the chain will generally be another cadet who has some leadership responsibility. Instilling leadership skills is one of the benefits of involvement in the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps. Leadership responsibilities teach accountability and the appropriate use of power when working with others.

The following figure illustrates an example of a chain of command within a unit that includes the cadet ranks. Not all units have the same chain of command structure, so the cadet chain of command for the local unit may be quite different from this example.



Figure 1: Typical Cadet Chain of Command Diagram

## Officer Chain of Command

The chain of command for the officers and instructors of a U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps unit, like the cadet chain of command, is the line of authority and responsibility along which orders are transmitted. Not all units have the same structure, so the chain of command for the local unit may be quite different from the example provided below. These differences are often due to the size of the unit, the availability of adult volunteers, and the skills of those who do volunteer. The figure below provides an illustration of a typical unit's chain of command structure.

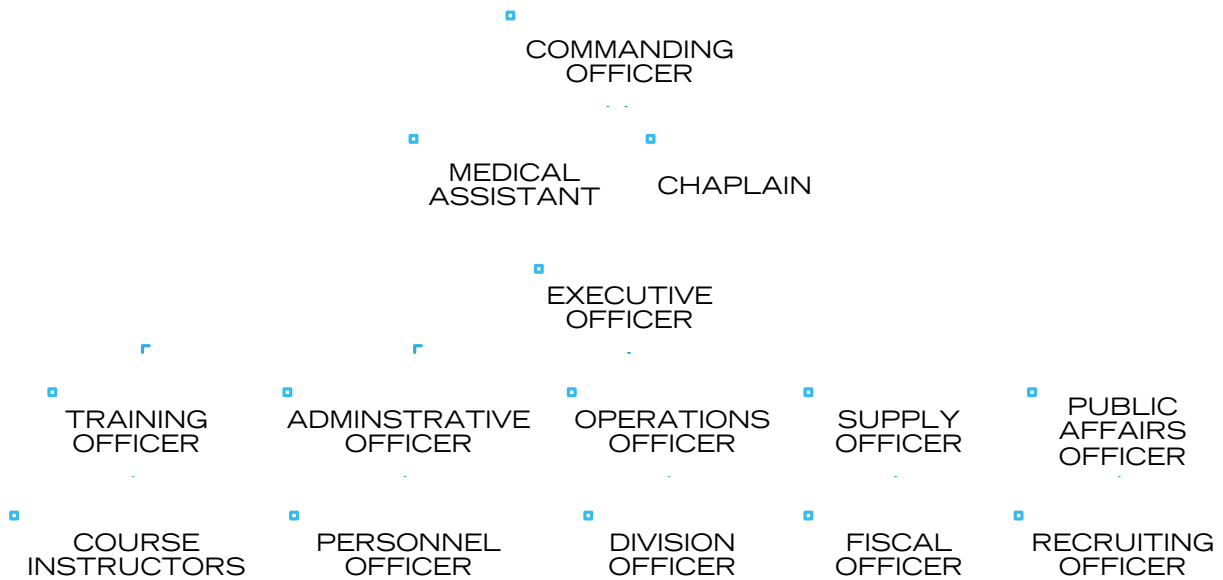


Figure 2: Typical Officer Chain of Command Diagram

## Other Important People

There are many people who may be “in charge” of something within the unit, but are not in the chain of command. Parents may volunteer to issue uniforms, collect money, chaperone an event, or serve in various other capacities within the program. Parents who want to volunteer in a capacity that will routinely put them in direct contact with cadets will be asked to complete an Adult Enrollment application so that a background check may be conducted and proper liability risk mitigation is achieved. Cadets are expected to treat all adult volunteers and guests with respect and courtesy. Parent volunteers sometimes have a tendency to ask cadets to help in a work effort. If these requests interrupt a cadet who is acting under the direction of an order or request from someone within the chain of command, the cadet is placed in an awkward position. Consequently, parent volunteers are asked to be courteous and respectful of the cadets. This might include confirming that the cadet is available and able to help, answering cadets’ questions when they can, and always encouraging cadets to seek out resolution through the chain of command.



# Mutiny: Resolving Unit Conflicts

One potential naval action that parents should be cautioned about is mutiny. Those who have been involved with other youth programs may have previously experienced this phenomenon. It occurs when parents and/or adult volunteers cannot cooperate with each other, have interpersonal conflicts, and/or have very strong differences in their views of how the unit should operate. In these cases, the chain of command may temporarily break down at the unit level. Remember, this program exists for the benefit of our cadets, and disagreements between adult volunteers should always take a “back seat.”

During these times of strife, parents need to remember the importance of setting a good example for their cadets. They should follow the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps national chain of command, as illustrated in Figure 3, to resolve questions or problems in an orderly, respectful, disciplined, and professional manner. Parents who have questions about the chain of command should discuss them with the unit’s commanding officer and ask that the appropriate parties be involved if necessary.

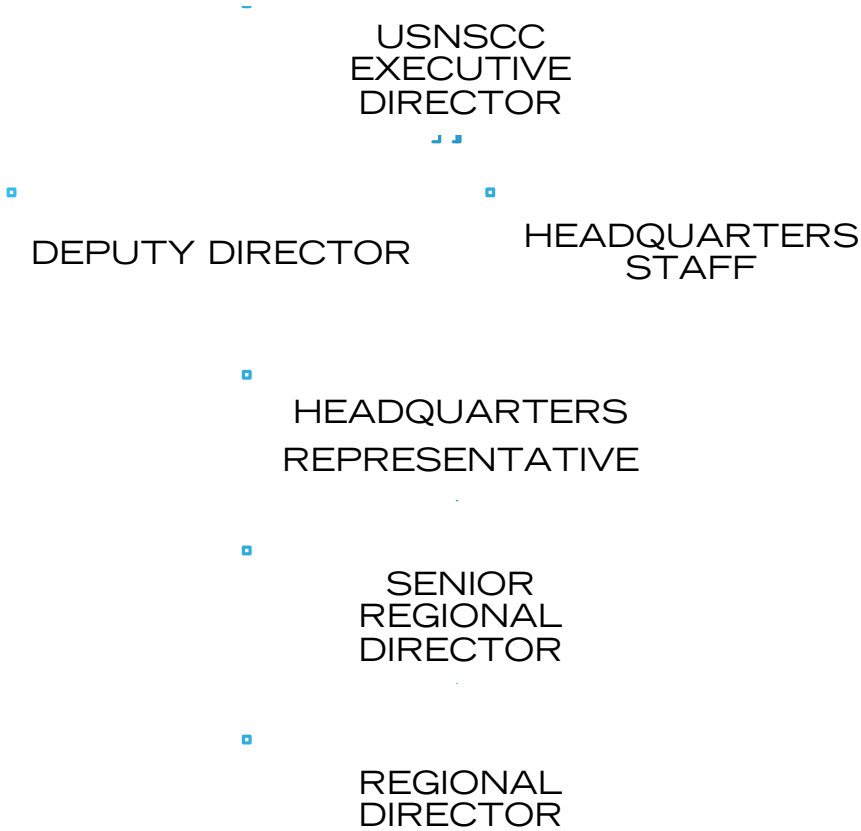


Figure 3: National Chain of Command Diagram

## Our Facility Hosts

There is no direct chain of command relationship between the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, unit leadership, and the military personnel and activities that host units in their facilities. The unit Commanding Officer is expected to maintain a positive working relationship with the facility host and to utilize the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps chain of command to assist with any difficulties.

There have been reported instances of parents going directly to facility hosts with complaints about their unit or how their cadet is treated. Parents may have used this approach because they were unaware of the chain of command. It should be noted that involving active duty military personnel in this way is inappropriate and constitutes a breach in the chain of command.

# Adult Volunteer Opportunities

## Parent Volunteers

Some units have a parents' organization that helps the unit in many ways. These organizations operate independent of, but with guidance from, the unit Commanding Officer. Parents' organizations are made up of parents that wish to be involved and help but do not have time to commit to every drill weekend.

Sea Cadet units can always use help making phone calls, sending emails, providing transportation, raising funds, or obtaining chaperones for unit functions. **Parents can be as involved as their schedules permit. Units need help in many important areas. If all parents would give just a little bit of time to the unit, running the unit would be a much less overwhelming job for the unit staff as a whole. If possible, all parents should GET INVOLVED!**

## Officers and Instructors

Officers and instructors are adult volunteers who have made the commitment to become members of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps and to support a local unit with a greater level of involvement. These volunteers are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the unit and drills. They are expected to attend the OPD 101-301 series of training programs, which are designed specifically for USNSCC officers and instructors.

Many USNSCC officers have previous military experience. Some are currently serving in active or reserve duty in one of the armed services. However, this is not a requirement. Any parent can complete an application to become an officer or instructor. Parents wishing to participate as officers or instructors should be advised that all applicants are subject to a security screening and/or background check.

Refer to the *NSCC/NLCC Administration Manual* for a complete list of qualifications and procedures for enrollment. Questions regarding enrollment as an NSCC/NLCC officer should be directed to the unit Commanding Officer.

## Dual Parent and Officer Roles

As officers, parents of cadets need to separate their role as parents from their role as unit officers. Having the dual role of parent and officer is frequently difficult for both the parent and the cadet, and should only be pursued after careful consideration. Parents' bias can get out of hand. Consequently, parents of active cadets do not always make the best officers. Those that are successful in separating their dual role of officer and parent follow the basic rules of conduct listed below.

Successful parent officers DO:	Successful parent officers DO NOT:
Use the Navy greeting of rank and last name when addressing their cadet.	Use their cadet's first name or a pet name like "Princess" while at Sea Cadet functions.
While at drill, respond to their cadet only when the cadet addresses them by their rank and last name.	Respond to their cadet during a drill if they refer to the officer as "mom" or "dad".
Treat their cadet the same as all other cadets at all times.	Give special privileges that have not been earned or set higher expectations of behavior.
Request other officers and instructors to work directly with their cadet whenever possible.	Ask or expect to always be assigned to be with the same group of cadets as their cadet.
Utilize other officers and instructors within the chain of command to intervene in any reprimand or discipline of their cadet, if needed.	Publicly reprimand or discipline their cadet in excess of the situation or outside the context of the chain of command.
Act with sensitivity to peer pressure that their cadet may face due to having a parent serve as an officer or instructor in the unit, adapting their behaviors or enlisting the support of others in the chain of command to balance any conflict among cadets.	Take sides or ignore conflict among the cadet ranks that could stem from accusations of parent bias.

# Supplementary Material

## Unit Handouts or Orientation Packet

Each unit may have supplementary material specific to their unit that they provide to parents including, but not limited to the following:

- Welcome Letter to Parents
- Local Unit Policy Statement or Handbook
- Local Unit Costs
- Parent Organization Information
- Local Web Site Address
- Plan of the Month
- Unit Chain of Command and Contact Information
- Drill Calendar
- Contract of Understanding for Applicant and Parent
- Local Welcome Aboard Letter to Cadets
- Cadet Handbook or Cadet Qualification Standard

## Web Links on Naval Heritage / Core Values

- United States Navy: <http://www.navy.mil>
- MCPON Reading List: <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/mcpon/readgide.html>
- Naval Historical Center: <http://www.history.navy.mil/nhc11.htm>
- Navy Traditions and Customs: <http://www.history.navy.mil/trivia/trivia01.htm>

## Web Links for Sea Cadets

- U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps: <http://www.seacadets.org>
- NSCC Homeport: <http://homeport.seacadets.org>
- Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/usnsc>
- International Exchange Program: <http://iep.seacadets.org>

# Glossary of Nautical Terms

All hands	The entire ship's company - everyone in the unit.
Aye, aye	The traditional and expected response to an order. "Yes, sir" (or Ma'am) is not an acceptable substitute.
Belay	To cancel an order or stop an action, as in "Belay the small talk!"
Binnacle List	Those excused from drills or activities because of illness are said to be on the binnacle list. This list is named from the practice in the age of sail of keeping such a list handy in the binnacle, the housing for the compass located near the ship's wheel.
Bulkhead	A vertical partition, i.e., a wall.
Colors	The morning or evening ceremony of hoisting or lowering the U.S. flag.
Compartment	A room. Sailors sleep in berthing compartments in a ship. A small compartment housing officers is called a stateroom. The compartment where the Captain lies is called the cabin. It is the only cabin in a naval vessel.
Cover	Head gear, such as the cadet's white hat or ball cap.
Division	A local unit of the Sea Cadet Corps in which the training involves general seamanship topics. Sea Cadet Squadrons concentrate on aviation while Sea Cadet Battalions study SeaBee construction subjects.
Door	Oddly enough, the nautical term for a door—an opening in a bulkhead (wall)—is "door." It is not a hatch. A hatch is an opening in a deck.
Drill	A training period scheduled for the unit. Commonly on a regularly scheduled weeknight or weekend, it can also include special training events, parades, etc.
Field Day	A general clean-up of the facility involving all hands.
Galley	The kitchen.
Gear Adrift	Items, such as personal gear, not properly stowed.
Head	The bathroom or, more specifically, the toilet, so named because in the days of sail it was a simple seat over a hole cut in the overhand of the bow in the foremost part (head) of the ship.
Ladder	Doesn't necessarily mean something with rungs, it also means stairs. A stairwell is called a ladderwell.
Midshipman	An adult, typically a former cadet or college student, appointed by the National Chairman to a position of leadership in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps (including the Navy League Cadet Corps), under the age of 21.

Muster	To assemble the cadets for a roll call.
Officer	An adult appointed by the National Chairman to a position of leadership in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps (including the Navy League Cadet Corps). In order of precedence officer ranks include: Warrant Officer, Ensign, Lieutenant Junior Grade, Lieutenant, and Lieutenant Commander. By custom, it is common to address a Lieutenant Junior Grade as "Lieutenant" and a Lieutenant Commander as "Commander."
Overhead	The ceiling. The deck forms the overhead of the compartment below it.
Quarterdeck	The area of the ship or training facility, commonly the entrance, set aside for ceremonial purposes.
Rack	Common slang for bunk or berth where the cadet sleeps.