

Essentials for New Staff Members

06 June 2006

Table of Changes

Date	Issued By	Change	Entered by
02/25/10	NNN0ASN/FGN	Pg 1, para 6, and Review and Final Exam, para 2; Who to notify on Satisfactory Completion	NNN0ASN/FGN

This course has been approved by Chief, Navy-Marine Corps MARS. It is required for all staff members newly appointed on or after 01 July 06. Members currently serving in volunteer staff positions throughout Navy-Marine Corps MARS are encouraged, but not required, to complete this course.

Any regular member may take this course at any time. Trial service (TANGO) members are not eligible until they complete their Trial Service and are advanced to regular membership.

After satisfactory completion of this course you will not be required to retake it in the future in order to serve in a staff position. Members newly appointed to a staff position who have not already done so, have 120 days from date of their appointment to satisfactorily complete this course.

This is a student graded course. Faith and trust are substantial elements directors repose in their staff. As such, this course is based on the honor system. Attached with it is a review quiz that is also the final exam. The answer key either follows the quiz, or may be available in separate file.

Start with the course, below. Wait until the course directs you to start the quiz. Complete the entire course and quiz then use the answer key to grade yourself. This is a pass/fail course. If you got at least 12 out of 16 right you pass.

Upon satisfactory completion send a message to your state director. Info your state training assistant. If your staff appointment is to a region or area position you should also info that respective director. The message must contain your full name, state, and MARS call sign. State that you successfully completed the Essentials for New Staff Members course. E-mail is acceptable if you do not want your full name going out in a message; otherwise, regular message is preferred.

If you do not get at least 12 answers correct review the course for what you got wrong. Once you've found the correct answers to the ones you missed send the message as above.

PART ONE

I. Purpose

“It is the repeated folding and forging that makes a high quality sword what it is”

This course is intended as a basic introduction to being a staff member in Navy-Marine Corps MARS. It's purpose is not to tell you how to do your job, but rather to provide some basic insight into administrative concepts and leadership in the MARS program.

II. Introduction

For ease of use, references for each section are placed at the beginning of that section.

Oh great! Another training course. Is this really necessary??

A random survey of various staff, directors, and Chief MARS indicates the answer is an emphatic “YES”. The following is a quote to Chief MARS and the members of the author’s region as part of his farewell as region director message. Citing issues he felt are key he states, in part:

Promote training in leadership and staff positions, ...

...promote improved staff cooperation at area or state level. Staff responses can be slow, unresponsive, or overbearing. Many times I have felt like an ombudsman, resolving disputes between area, region, or state on apparent trivial matters

*...fully clarify the distinction between administrative (and) operational functions...
These tend to blur at times.*

This, and many similar comments were freely and readily given almost universally by those surveyed.

Being a staff member in MARS is an awesome, and sometimes challenging, undertaking. Granted some positions are far more involved such as Training (FOUR) or ECOM (TWO) while others, such as Librarian don’t require as much. Never-the-less, when your director makes a staff appointment he or she has determined that your staff position is needed and that makes it important.

Being selected to serve as a staff member at the state, region, area, or Chief MARS level says several things. The respective director has a need for assistance with those duties, he or she has reposed great faith in your skills and abilities to undertake that job, and the membership will look to you for guidance in the area your staff position covers. If you do your job correctly, professionally, and following the policy and practice of the MARS program members will look up to you, and your director will be comfortable knowing the tasks assigned will be handled well.

Whether you do the job well, or you are slipshod and careless, members will follow your example. It is human nature to follow the examples of leaders, **“if it’s good enough for them it’s good enough for me”**. Strangely enough, poor examples tend to get followed more quickly and spread faster than good ones. If your message formatting is incorrect, if you are not clear and concise in your communications, if you do not provide references, members will see that and figure it doesn’t really matter. It matters!

Take a moment right now and look back at staff members you have known and respected. What were some of the key things about that person that led you to respect them? Jot them down on a piece of paper. (do this now)

Hang on to this list for future reference. You may even think of a couple more things to add to it later. I'm going to guess that at least a few of the items on your list were:

Personable,
Knew his or her job,
Knew how to get answers for you,
Always responded in a timely way,
Showed a sincere willingness to help members.

That's just five. I'll bet you could come up with more without a lot of effort.

What about someone who was a poor staff? We are not going to discuss that, except as might be absolutely necessary. This course focuses on the positive. However, you might want to consider say one key point about a poor staff member and ask yourself, "how do I avoid doing the same thing?"

So what does this mean for you? That depends. Personality plays a large part in how you come across in your position. Some people seem to be natural born leaders. Others have to work at it a bit more. Review the list you made of what you admired in a good leader.
(pause and do that now)

Did you think of anything to add to the list? How about:
Practiced what he preached;
Used good communications skills;
Got his or her point across without being offensive.
Do you have any more? I'll bet you do.

Hang on to the list. Add to it any time. We will use it again in "Leadership"

III. Expectations of Staff

Reference for this section

- A. NTP-8 (D), Chapter 2
- B. NTP-8 (D), Chapter 5 paragraph 509.b.

Why do people accept staff positions? For most it's out of a willingness to help the program, often in specialized areas they enjoy. Some might see it as status, prestige, or a position of authority, but these are not the purpose of staff appointments. One thing's for sure, it's not the pay. At least not any economic pay check. The "pay check" is knowing you contributed in a

way that furthered the mission of MARS, made your director's job easier, and made the MARS program a better place.

So why do we have staff positions? Put simply, your director can't do it all. Nor can any one person be expected to have the expertise in every aspect of the program. Staff are appointed to assist the director in administering a particular aspect of the program. They are the go-to person for the topic their position represents.

Often members make the mistake of thinking the director wants an expert, or it will take too much of their time, so they do not step forward. Granted, some knowledge of the field is helpful, but every director will tell you his or her first priority is reliability. You can learn the details of the job. As to time and other concerns you have, discuss them with the director. Remember, staff positions are voluntary. It's not a life time commitment.

What do staff do? Staff provide advice and recommendations to the director for changes in policy and practice as needed. They keep abreast of what's new and what's changing in the field. They interpret policy and regulations for the members as needed. Of all the aspects of a staff position this last one, interpreting policy, is the most critical and probably the single most common pitfall.

Some things director's assistants do not do are establish policy or carry out any form of disciplinary action. Those are the responsibility of the respective director. Helping others is not discipline. Pointing out errors in a friendly and helpful manner is not discipline. MARS even provides some tools to help. A good one is the Communications Improvement Memorandum, or CIM. They are "exchanged between stations to point out... discrepancies and... errors." When used properly they are a tool anyone can use to help another. See reference B.

Stop here and review ref A. Just scan through it for now. Be sure you have a sense of the authority and command structure in MARS. Give special attention to figures 2-1 and 2-2. We will be covering more on these as we go along..

Continue when ready

PART TWO

IV. Chain of Command

Reference for this section

- C. NTP-8 (D), Chapter 2 paragraphs 200.a.; 202; 211; 222; 223; 224; 241; 243; 280; 284
- D. NTP-8 (D), Chapter 2 fig 2-2. (flow chart)

Note in chapter 2 that authority of MARS staff flows from the Secretary of the Navy down through Chief of Naval Operations, Chief MARS, and the area, region, and state directors. This is the chain of command. It is vital for every staff member to know and understand this chain of command. Directors direct. They make policy decisions, issue awards, recommend terminations, process resignations, and make other recommendations to higher echelon. Director's assistants provide support and assistance. They make recommendations to their directors, but do not implement policy change or make personnel decisions.

Staff assistants also work together with their counter parts at the next level above and below. A state TWO will coordinate and consult with their region TWO. A region FOUR works with state and area FOUR staff, etc

Take a few moments now to review and give closer study to references C. and D. The chain of command becomes clear as does the authority and responsibilities of staff down through that chain. You might want to answer questions 4 through 10 on the quiz at this point.

The important thing to keep in mind is that the chain of command within MARS is state director to region director (for operational), to area director to Chief MARS. Director's assistants are NOT in the chain of command, but should be kept in the loop regarding matters within the scope of their staff assignment. This gets a bit confusing to staff and members at times. Let's see if we can clear this up a bit.

Say a member is confused about when and where to e-mail EEI messages. The state ECOM staff person should be their best source for this information. State staff should always be the first line for inquiries and problem solving.

Perhaps the ECOM staff member feels additional addressees should be required on EEI messages sent from within their AOR (Area of Responsibility). The ECOM staff would suggest this to his or her director along with a brief statement in support of the recommendation. The director will then make that decision.

Here's another example. Your region FOUR comes up with an idea for training. She has noticed that traffic has been sparse on the nets anyway, so there is plenty of time available. She gets the idea to create some training tips the NECOS can read on the air during slow times. Her thoughts are 1. each tip will cover a basic idea, 2. it will be short, no more than a minute or two to read, 3. every NECOS on every traffic net will read the training tip at some time during each net., 4. there will be a new training tip each week.

Your region FOUR can't just implement this policy. She presents the idea to the region director along with a brief explanation of why it would be useful and why this method is a good idea. The region director reviews her proposal. Perhaps there will be some discussion between them. Maybe the director would prefer the FOURs in the region be the ones to read the tips. The director then either approves or rejects the idea. If approved the director will announce it in a broadcast message and turn the project back to the FOUR for development and implementation. (The FOUR in this case should always provide the director with advance copies for his or her review.)

In some cases the director may need to seek advice or approval from higher up. In this situation it might even be helpful to collaborate with the region THREE.

V. Collective Call Signs

Reference for this section

- E. NTP-8 (D) Annex K paragraph K301
- F. NTP-8 (D) Annex K paragraph K302 and K310
- G. NTP-8 (D) Chapter 2 paragraph 223 and 224
- H. NTP-8 (D) Annex K paragraph K600 thru K621

Navy-Marine Corps MARS has four categories of radio call signs. They are: personal, military auspices, administrative, and collective. In addition, there are special subsets of call signs reserved for ART and SAT teams and in some cases for specialty network stations such as those in the MDS.

Admin call signs

You are no doubt already familiar with administrative call signs, those assigned to state, region, and area staff. You may be familiar with at least some of Chief MARS staff calls as well. For a specific list of state and region directors see references F. and G. of this section. See reference E. for Area directors.

These, together with the designated call signs for specialty net coordinators and assistants, comprise the administrative call signs. A special subgroup comprises a list of calls for assignment to SAT and ART teams.

Chief MARS staff call signs are organized differently. See reference E. (To avoid confusion we will not consider Chief MARS staff assistants or specialty net coordinators in the rest of this discussion.)

Military auspices call signs

These are different from personal call signs only in that the call is assigned to a unit or command rather than an individual. They usually follow a pattern based on the service or type of command. The application process and requirements for auspices stations is different from those of regular members. This will be covered more in the Training for Directors course.

Collective call signs

Please refer to reference H. of this section throughout the remainder of our discussion on collective call signs.

Collective call signs are often the most misunderstood. Simply put, a collective call sign is intended to include all members of a particular group. Modifiers are authorized for use with some collective call signs. For example, NNN0ALC addresses all state directors. NNN0ALC REGION THREE limits the intended distribution to just the state directors in Region Three.

The most common collective call members see on a routine basis is NNN0ALL. This addresses all members throughout Navy-Marine Corps MARS. NNN0ALL CENTRAL AREA addresses all members in Central Area only. Any area, region, or state can be used as a modifier to the NNN0ALL collective call. Note that state abbreviations, as used on member's call signs, are NOT the modifiers used with collective call signs. Refer to the lists in reference H. Use of an incorrect modifier will prevent your message from going through properly. It will be delayed and could even become lost.

Common sense prevails in the use of modifiers to some degree. That is to say, NNN0ALC SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA makes no sense since Southern California is a state designator and there is only one state director. Note too, in ref H. there are collective call signs for which modifiers are not allowed.

One common misunderstanding is who can use collective call signs. Paragraph K610 clearly defines this usage. The problem is usually one of interpretation of that definition. To use a collective call you must be administratively senior, or equal, to the members in the group. Notice the definition does not say, "be a member of the group". It refers to administrative ranking. Since NNN0ALL includes staff within the group one must be a staff member at, or above, the level being addressed.

State directors and their staff can use NNN0ALL with the modifier for their state, e.g. NNN0ALL NORTHERN NEW YORK. They may not address NNN0ALL to another state, to their region, area, or service wide. State directors can use NNN0ALC for all state directors (including modifiers for their own area or region), but can not address NNN0ALD, all area directors. This doesn't mean they can't address other members, they just can not use the collective call to do it.

Here's another example. Director Region Six will normally address his or her general messages to NNN0ALL REGION SIX, but he could address just the members in say Louisiana, which would be NNN0ALL LOUISIANA. He or she could not address NNN0ALL REGION NINE or NNN0ALL NORTHERN NEW YORK. When it is necessary to address a message to all members of a group to which the originator of the message is not administratively equal or senior those addressees will have to be listed individually. The same is true where modifiers are not permitted.

Staff designators for directors' assistants (such as FOUR for training) can not be combined with any collective call sign. To address all the FOURS in a given area, region, state, or MARS wide they will need to be listed individually, example:

TO NNN0ALC REGION TEN
NNN0GAO FOUR ID
NNN0GCC FOUR WA
NNN0GAB FOUR AK
NNN0GBP FOUR OR
INFO NNN0AS0 OR
NNN0ASO ONE OR

As you can see in this example the collective call for state directors with modifier covers all state directors in Region Ten. There is no authorized modifier for state directors' assistants so the state training staff have to be addressed individually.

(Note the inclusion of the state designator in individual staff calls, but not with the collective call)

In the case where distribution is desired to a large number of addressees and the originator can not use a collective call sign it may be more practical to address to the respective director(s) then in the text request they forward as necessary. Suppose Chief MARS assistant for Emergency Communications wants to address all ECOM staff and the respective directors. Instead of listing all the state, region, and area TWOs service wide as well as the respective directors, this method might work better.

TO NNN0ALD
NNN0ALR
NNN0ALC
BT
UNCLAS

IT IS REQUESTED ALL ACTION ADDEES FORWARD TO ALL ECOM STAFF WITHIN THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP.

Since this is counting on others to readdress the message, if there is any possibility of confusion or doubt about your intended audience, or it is critical the subordinate staff receive it then do not use this method. In reality this would likely be a rare occurrence. It's just an example to get you thinking about call signs and message distribution.

Keep in mind that collective call signs and administrative calls are different categories.

NNN0ALD is a collective call (for all area directors). NNN0ASE is an administrative call (for director, Pacific Area).

Note that in using modifiers ONLY those modifiers listed in reference H. of this section, and which have been established by Chief MARS, may be used. Do not get creative in this regard. Your message will likely end up at a dead end with a service message coming back to you stating your message is undeliverable as addressed.

Even if you think you have a good understanding of call sign usage take some time now to carefully read over all of Annex K. It may seem mundane to you right now, but it will give you a clear and accurate understanding of the use of call signs in MARS.

After you have spent some time with Annex K and feel comfortable with your understanding of it, proceed to answer questions 11 through 14 of the quiz.

We are getting close to the end of this course. Now might be a good time to take a break. Then we will move on to “Leadership”.

PART THREE

VI. Leadership

What is “leadership”? Just about anyone can be an “authoritarian”, but that’s not leadership. Leadership requires thought, practice, thought, skill, thought. Oh, and did I mention “thought”? Think before you act.

Think before you speak.

“Think” doesn’t mean, “I think I know what policy is.” “Think” means process what you are about to say or do before you say or do it. Make sure it is accurate, look it up first. Think about what effect your actions might have on others, on the membership, on the program as a whole. What reflection will it have on your director? Think about whether you are upset because this is the umpteenth time some one made the same mistake. Think whether you want to act now, or go over it some more before you act. It is better to act later than to act incorrectly.

OK, so what makes a leader? Remember earlier in the course I asked you to write down a list of the things you felt were good qualities in staff members. Take that list out now and go over it..

Take a few minutes now to think about individual staff members, one at a time, whom you have admired and respected. Compare your list to each of them. Every good staff person may not have all the traits you listed, or to the same degree, but what about common themes among them? On your list, place an X in front of each item that you find common among all the staff you have known and respected. By the way, when thinking of staff don’t confine it to MARS staff. Include work, social organizations, any situation in which you experienced a hierarchy, a chain of command, leaders.

Now comes the tough part. On a separate piece of paper (not on the back of your list) make three columns. Head them “strong”, “needs work”, and “missing”. Now think about yourself. Be honest, you won’t be asked to turn this in, share it, or discuss it with anyone.

Think about past or current situations in which you have been in any sort of a leadership role. This could be anything from commander of your lodge, to supervisor on your job, to owning your own business, to being a member of a planning committee.

On a third piece of paper just start writing. Don’t think about it. Write down all the descriptive words and phrases you can think of that applied to you in these leadership roles. Put down all the traits, not just the good ones.

After you have brainstormed your traits and jotted them down take a break. When you return review the notes you made about yourself. Got anything to add to the list?

Now, take the second piece of paper, the one with the columns, and copy each of the traits you listed for yourself into the first or second column. If you thought of any negative traits you would like not to have place them in the “needs work” column.

So far the “missing” column should be blank. Compare your own traits with the list you made earlier of others you have known and respected. Anything missing? If so, put it in the “missing” column.

You now have some idea of what you might want to work on to improve your leadership skills. Keep these lists some place where you can find them. In say six months pull the lists out. See what progress you have made. Make a new list to reflect improvements you have made, or any new things you’ve thought of to work on. Remember, developing leadership skills is not a goal, it will always be a work in progress.

Leadership skills are developed. Granted, some people have an easier time doing this. That’s just human nature. The study of leadership is very complex. There are a great many schools, classes, seminars, and courses on the subject.. At every level of advancement in the Navy from seaman recruit on there are required courses that address leadership. The Navy and the Coast Guard have an entire senior enlisted academy that is now required for chief petty officers which focuses in large part on leadership.

Always, always, always think first. Ask yourself, “am I about to speak to this person in a respectful way, in a way I would want someone to speak to me?” “Will what I have to say be helpful and contribute to the good of the order?”

This concludes the Basic Training Course for Navy-Marine Corps MARS staff members. If you haven’t done so already, proceed to completing the quiz for this course.

If you have comments or suggestions please address them to Assistant to Chief MARS for training, NNN0ASN.

Review Quiz and Final Exam **Essentials for New Staff Members**

06 June 2006

Do not begin your studies with this quiz. If you have not started the Essentials for New Staff Members course, begin there. Some questions are specific to sections in that course. After you have completed the training course and this quiz use the provided answer key to grade yourself. This is a pass/fail course. If you got 12 or more right you pass. If you got less than 12 correct determine the correct answer by reviewing the course material. Upon correcting all your incorrect answers proceed with satisfactory completion. This is an honor system course.

Upon satisfactory completion send a message to your state director. Info your state training assistant. If your staff appointment is to a region or area position you should also info that respective director. .

1. A few of the good qualities of a staff member include:
 - a. Leading by good examples,
 - b. Technical knowledge in the area the staff position covers,
 - c. Knowing proper references that apply to the duties,
 - d. All the above

2. One of the true benefits of serving as a staff member is:
 - a. Status,
 - b. Knowing you contributed to the betterment of MARS,
 - c. Pay,
 - d. A sense of power and control.

3. A summarized description of the duties of each staff position, whether state, area, or region, can be found in NTP-8 _____.
 - a. Chapter 2, paragraph 224,
 - b. Annex K, paragraph K610,
 - c. Chapter 2, fig 2-2,
 - d. Annex K, paragraph K301

4. The chain of command within MARS
 - a. Is just a euphemism with no real authority or structure to it
 - b. Is established by authority of the United Nations;
 - c. Begins with the director of FEMA;
 - d. Flows within the program from state directors up thru Chief MARS

5. According to NTP-8 chapter 2, region directors should have the following staff appointments filled and may fill others as they deem necessary:
 - a. Assistant director; ECOM assistant; Training assistant (ONE, TWO, & FOUR);
 - b. Assistant director, Net Ops (freq coordination) assistant, Training assistant; (ONE, THREE, & FOUR)
 - c. assistant director, ECOM assistant, freq coordination assistant (ONE, TWO, & THREE)
 - d. Assistant for internet ops; training assistant, ECOM assistant (FIVE, FOUR, & TWO)

6. Staff duties for a particular assignment differ across administrative levels in what way? (e.g. ECOM assistant whether for an area, a region, or a state):
 - a. Only by geographic size
 - b. Are basically the same, but at different administrative and operational levels;
 - c. May have nothing to do with each other because each director decides what a staff position does;
 - d. Chief MARS decides region by region and state by state what a staff position does;

7. Which is true of appointments of director's assistants at the state level?
 - a. Chief, Navy-Marine Corps MARS selects and appoints them;
 - b. They are recommended by state director, approved by region director;
 - c. State director selects and appoints;
 - d. State director selects, area director appoints.

8. Staff call signs:
 - a. Replace a member's personal call sign;
 - b. Are in addition to personal call sign;
 - c. Are used only in conjunction with the assigned staff duties;
 - d. B., and C. above.

9. State, region, and area staff call signs are:
 - a. Based on the respective director's call with a qualifier;
 - b. Are different at every level and follow no particular pattern;
 - c. Based on Chief MARS staff calls with a qualifier;
 - d. None of the above.

10. Which of these are primary function(s) of any staff position?
 - a. Make recommendations to respective director regarding policy;
 - b. Establish policy within the topic of their appointment;
 - c. Interpret existing policy for members;
 - d. A and C above

11. Collective call signs:
 - a. Are a special type of administrative call sign;
 - b. Identify a predetermined group of addressees;
 - c. Are used only by ships at sea to identify squadrons, fleets, or task forces.
 - d. Refer only to hierarchical command outside MARS but within the Navy Dept.

12. Administrative (staff) call signs:
 - a. Are a special type of collective call sign;
 - b. Identify staff positions regardless of who fills the position;
 - c. Are assigned to DOD and pentagon staff outside MARS;
 - d. None of the above.

13. Modifiers for call signs
 - a. Can be used with any call sign;
 - b. Limit a collective call to a smaller group of the members in the collective call;
 - c. Allow wider dissemination of the message;
 - d. All the above.

14. Which is NOT an authorized use of a modifier on a collective call sign?
 - a. NNN0ALL ARIZONA (all members in Arizona)
 - b. NNN0ALC REGION SIX (all state directors Region Six)
 - c. NNN0ALC FOUR (all state directors' assistants for training)
 - d. NNN0ALM OKINAWA (all USMC military unit MARS stations in Okinawa)

15. Leadership
 - a. Is an inherent ability only some people have, and others can never attain;
 - b. Is a skill that is developed only through programs such as the USCG CPO academy;
 - c. Is not important in the MARS program;
 - d. Is developed over time by practice, being observant, and self assessment.

16. What are some sources for developing leadership skills?
 - a. Self inventory
 - b. Comparison of traits in good leaders you have known
 - c. Correspondence courses and books on leadership;
 - d. All the above

17. Did you complete all the exercises in this course regarding lists of leadership traits?
 - a. Yes, and I learned some things about my self and about leadership;
 - b. No, but I probably should go back and do that now;
 - c. I didn't the first time, but went back, did them, and learned something;
 - d. No because I'm already a great leader.

Questions 1 through 16 are scored. 17 is not included in scoring. It is intended for self reflection only, but an answer is necessary.

To obtain credit for this course, have it documented in your MARS personnel file, and receive your certificate follow the instructions at the beginning of the course for notifying your state director and Chief MARS.

Answer Key: Review Quiz and Final Exam
Essentials for New Staff Members

This answer key should be used with quiz dated 06 June 2006

This is a pass/fail course. 12 or more out of 16 is passing. Question 17 is a thought provoker only and is not scored.

- | | |
|------|---------------|
| 1. d | 10. d |
| 2. b | 11. b |
| 3. a | 12. b |
| 4. d | 13. b |
| 5. c | 14. c |
| 6. b | 15. d |
| 7. c | 16. d |
| 8. d | 17. not score |
| 9. a | |

