

PREPARATION

The mission of the Verdugo Fire Academy is to prepare Cadets for the position of firefighter. In the community, firefighters are often looked to as leaders. It is important to have leadership abilities to be successful in the fire service. With correctly applied leadership, you as a Cadet can experience the rewards that come with this facet of the Academy. All Cadets in the Verdugo Fire Academy will be required to hold the position of a leader before the culmination of the Academy. This position might be as a Class Battalion Chief or a Platoon Leader. Leaders are made and not born. While some people seem to have natural born leadership skills, anyone can be a leader if they are willing to conform to the requirements that make a leader. Your experience in a leadership role will make you more valuable, not only to your future fire department when you are hired as a firefighter, but it will improve you in your present field of work. This leadership manual has all of the tools needed to be successful as a leader. **Remember: A leader is a person who people want to follow.**

LEADERSHIP

Manuals, publications, and thousands of books have been written on leadership. Depending on the text some say that leaders are made and some say they are born. Regardless of the philosophy one holds, most agree that it comes from within the individual.

To be an effective leader, you must know your personal strengths and weaknesses. The leader's code is a guideline to use in making an HONEST evaluation of your personal strengths and weaknesses in leadership. After you determine these areas, you can improve weak areas and exploit the strong areas.

The Leader's Code

"I become a leader by what I do. I know my strength and my weaknesses and I strive constantly for self-improvement. I live by a moral code, with which I set an example that others can emulate. I know my job and I carry out the spirit as well as the letter of orders I receive."

"I take the initiative and seek responsibilities, and I face situations with boldness and confidence. I estimate the situations and make my own decisions as to the best course of action.

No matter what the requirements, I stay with the job until the job is done; no matter what the results, I assume full responsibilities."

"I train my people as a team and lead them with tact, with enthusiasm, and with justice. I command their confidence and their loyalty. They know that I would not consign to them any duty that I myself would not perform. I see that they understand their orders, and I follow through energetically to ensure that their duties are fully discharged. I keep my people informed and I make their welfare one of my prime concerns."

"These things I do selflessly in fulfillment of the obligations of leadership and for the achievement of the group goal."

The self-evaluation is simple. As you read each sentence, ask yourself, "Is this what I do?" You must answer HONESTLY! When your answer is NO, you become aware of your personal weak areas and you know it should be improved. This evaluation is not meant to be the Bible of leadership. Yes and no answers do not make or break you as a leader.

The Leader's Code is simply a guideline to follow in the progress of self-development.

I. CHAIN OF COMMAND

The chain of command ensures that each Cadet has but one supervisor, its purpose is to decentralize authority and to link the different levels of command. The Instructors in the chain of command are to pass on orders and information, to train Cadets, and to provide supervision and personal guidance for Cadets. After meeting certain statistical and personal qualifications, a Cadet maybe promoted to an Engine Company Leader, Squad Leader, Platoon Commander or Class BC. **The Cadets in leadership roles are not Instructors** but fill the role of peers to mimic the chain of command as part of their education in the Fire Service. The Cadets who are the designated leaders in the class are expected to lead in the absence of an instructor. To keep order, it is imperative that all Cadets respect the Cadets in leadership roles.

II. LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Leadership traits are individual characteristics. Proper understanding of the fourteen leadership traits will help you to gain the respect, confidence, willing obedience, and cooperation of your fellow Cadets.

The purpose of the fourteen leadership traits is to help you set guidelines for yourself. By evaluating your own personality with respect to the leadership traits, you can find your personal strengths and weaknesses of leadership. By following the traits as a guide, you can exploit your strong traits and develop your weaker leadership traits.

These traits are the most important aspect that you can take with you from the Academy experience. Each Cadet must make a conscious decision to instill them into their life, attitude and behavior. They are basic to the human condition but are becoming scarce, especially in the work place. They go beyond firefighting. They are necessary for success in life. These traits should be the foundation for your Fire Service career. See Appendix A.

1. INTEGRITY

Integrity is the quality of absolute honesty, trustfulness, and uprightness of character and moral principles. In the Fire Service, a few Captains may hold the lives of many Firefighters in their hands. As a leader you must have unquestioned integrity.

Honesty, sense of duty, and moral principles must be placed above all else. You must be totally trustworthy in order for subordinates to have faith in you and for seniors to have confidence in you.

Following these practices and habits develops the trait of integrity:

- Practice absolute honesty and be trustworthy at all times, not only with yourself, but also with others. Never shade the truth.
- Be accurate and truthful in all statements. Don't tell your superiors only that which you think they want to hear. Tell it as it is, but tactfully.
- Stand for what you believe, even if the belief is an unpopular one.
- Place honesty and duty above all else.

2. KNOWLEDGE

Nothing will gain the confidence and respect of your subordinates more quickly than demonstrated knowledge. As a leader you should develop a personal program for learning. Development of knowledge and skills is not only for Fire Service purposes. You study and read not only to keep up with current changes in procedures and policies but also to keep in tune with matters of general interest. (For example: issues concerning the fire department that you work for.)

To improve your knowledge, you can take fire-training courses, read technical manuals, or articles on varied subjects. An excellent source of knowledge is to form discussions with people of sound experience. Ask questions of these people every time you have a chance. Remember, before you can teach someone else how to do something, you first must know how to do it.

To develop the trait of knowledge you should:

- Read all kinds of articles and take courses.
- Listen to experienced people.
- Ask questions.

Note(s): Your Instructors are your greatest source of learning during the Academy. If you don't take advantage of them it is your loss.

3. COURAGE

Courage is the physical and mental control of fear. It is essential to leadership. Courage is a mental quality that recognizes fear, yet enables you to meet danger or opposition with calmness and firmness. Courage is a quality of mind that gives you personal control, enabling you to accept responsibility and to act in a dangerous situation. You show physical courage when you continue to perform in the face of personal danger. Physical courage also means controlling your emotions. You show moral courage when you stand up for and enforce decisions that are right even in the face of popular disfavor. Admitting errors takes real moral courage.

To develop the leadership trait of Courage you must:

- Place duty over you personal desires or feelings.
- Look for and readily accept responsibilities.
- Speak in a calm tone; keep orderliness in your thought processes; don't make any physical danger or hardship bigger than it really is.
- Stand for what is right, even in the face of popular disfavor.
- Never blame others for your mistakes.
- Recognize fear but control your emotions.

4. DECISIVENESS

Decisiveness is the ability to weigh all the facts in a situation, analyze the facts and then arrive at a sound and timely decision. But before you make a decision, you must be sure that you have all the facts. Decisiveness is largely a matter of practice and experience.

To develop the trait of decisiveness you should:

- Form the habit of considering several points of view for every problem.
- Learn from the mistakes of others.
- Force yourself to make a decision and then check the decision to see if it is sound.
- Talk to people and practice making your conversations logical and clear.
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5. DEPENDABILITY

A dependable leader is one who can be relied on to carry out any mission to the best of his or her personal ability. To be dependable you must voluntarily and willingly support the policies and orders of your seniors and department. This does not mean blind obedience but a high sense of duty. This high sense of duty results in your setting very high personal and unit standards. You put personal interests second to your Fire Service duties while you are on the job and sometimes off the job.

To develop the leadership trait of dependability you should:

- Practice honest thinking and avoid making excuses.
- Accomplish the assigned task, regardless of the obstacles.
- Always be prompt and do all tasks to the best of your ability.
- Be careful about making promises and personal deals. But when you have made them, build a reputation for keeping them.

6. INITIATIVE

The trait of initiative is a key to being a successful leader. Initiative is simply seeing what has to be done and doing it without having to be told to do it. As a Cadet you must develop initiative, not only in yourself, but also in your peers and subordinates. Your fellow Cadets will develop trust and respect when you take prompt action in meeting a new situation. To develop initiative in subordinates, you should assign tasks according to the subordinate's ability and experience. But once a task is assigned, don't tell the subordinate how to do it, unless he asks for suggestions. By allowing the subordinate to do the job, it not only develops initiative but also frees you to do other tasks.

Closely related to initiative is resourcefulness. The successful Cadet must know the materials available and how they can best be used to accomplish the task at hand. Resourcefulness sometimes means using materials to deal with a situation even when these materials and methods are not normally used.

Another side of initiative is the ability to anticipate. Simply stated, this is the ability to foresee situations before they arise.

This prior knowledge gives you a chance to plan for the event and have preparations ready to deal with the situation. It is easier to prevent a fire than to put one out.

Initiative, with resourcefulness and anticipation, gives you an advantage. When you combine initiative with good judgement and experience, you have a strong leadership base. The key to initiative is to recognize the task and accomplish it, using the resources at hand.

To develop initiative you must practice the following:

- Develop and maintain a state of mental and physical alertness.
- Look for tasks to be done and do them without being told.
- Practice thinking and planning ahead.
- Anticipate situations before they arise and have a plan already developed.

7. TACT

Tact is the ability to deal with people without causing friction or giving offense. More simply stated, tact is the ability to say and do the right thing at the right time. **You must use tact not only when dealing with seniors and subordinates but it is a must when dealing with the public that you serve.** To successfully use tact, you must be courteous because courtesy given will be returned. It is important that courtesy not be misunderstood as "brown-nosing". Inexperienced Cadets may wrongly feel that politeness in a Fire Service command is a sign of weakness. All orders given will be obeyed but those given with courtesy will be obeyed willingly. Even in emergency situations where orders must be abrupt and rapid, there is no room nor need for discourtesy. Usually you will find that a calm and courteous, though firm, manner of speech gets the best results. Tact becomes very important when dealing with criticism of a subordinate. Lack of tact can crush a Cadets spirit and initiative. Criticism must be made in a manner that will point out a weakness in the subordinate's actions but still encourage the subordinate to continue to show initiative.

To develop the leadership trait of tact you must:

- Be considerate. Develop the habit of cooperating in spirit as well as in fact.
- Study the actions of successful Instructors/Captains who enjoy a reputation for being able to handle Cadets/Firefighters successfully.
- Check yourself for tolerance and patience. If at fault, correct your habit.
- Apply the Golden Rule: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. It is vital to teamwork.
- Let no one, superior or subordinate, exceed you in courtesy and consideration for the feelings of others.

8. JUSTICE

Justice is fairness! As a leader you give rewards and punishments as each case merits. Justice must be impartial. Personal feelings, emotions, beliefs, and prejudices are not allowed to influence your decisions. When dealing with a situation that requires justice, you must be fair, consistent, and prompt. It only takes one unfair decision to hurt your reputation and lose the respect of your peers. Each person requires individual attention; each case should be looked at individually and be dealt with fairly.

Justice is not only involved in dealing with problems; it is rewarding a job well done. When you use justice in recognizing outstanding effort, you boost morale.

To improve the trait of justice you should:

- Search your mental attitudes to determine prejudices. Then seek to rid your mind of them.
- Learn to be impersonal when imposing punishment or giving rewards. Be absolutely impartial when performing these duties.
- Search out the facts of each case.
- Analyze cases that have been decided by leaders who have the reputation for justice.
- Study human behavior.
- Be honest with yourself.
- Recognize those subordinates worthy of commendation or award. Don't be known as one who hands out only punishment.

9. ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm is showing sincere interest and zeal in the performance of duties. You should tackle all tasks cheerfully and with determination to do the best job possible. Enthusiasm is contagious and is an excellent way to set the example for subordinates or fellow Cadets. Demonstrate enthusiasm and you will develop a happy, close-knit, and successful team.

To develop the trait of enthusiasm, both personally and in others, you should:

- Explain "why" the mission must be accomplished, time and situation permitting.
- Understand, know, and believe in your work.
- Tackle all tasks with a cheerful "can-do" attitude.
- Believe in your mission, no matter what it is.

10. BEARING

Bearing is a Cadets general appearance, courage, proficiency and conduct. By your bearing you establish a standard for your peers, superiors, and subordinates. Your appearance should show confidence, competence, alertness, and energy. Your uniform and equipment should be neat and clean at all times. Your voice and actions should be under control. Few things can steady the morale of Cadets like a leader who, with full knowledge of the difficulties of a situation, neither looks nor acts worried. When speaking to Cadets, talk in short, plain sentences. Never talk-down to another person, nor allow sarcasm to enter the conversation. Vulgar speech, profanity, frequent loss of temper, and irritable nature show a lack of self-confidence that subordinates and peers easily see. They react to lack of self-confidence with resentment or even insubordination. Your bearing should show dignity and control of both emotions and actions. Dignity shows pride and confidence in you and the ability of the Cadets. Emotional control shows that any situation is well in hand.

To develop and improve bearing you should:

- Practice control over your voice, facial expression, and gestures.
- Demonstrate calmness, sincerity, and understanding.
- Master your emotions so that you control them and they do not control you.
- Speak simply and directly.
- Never reprimand subordinates in the presence of their subordinates.
- Observe and study leaders who enjoy a reputation for good bearing.

- Know and adhere to regulations concerning dress, grooming, and conduct.
- Demand the highest standards of yourself and subordinates.
- Avoid indiscriminate use of coarse behavior, profanity and vulgarity.

11. ENDURANCE

Endurance, like courage, has two distinct parts. Physical endurance means not giving in to pain and being able to function even when tired or in pain. Mental endurance is the ability to think straight when fatigued, distressed, or in pain. Demonstrated endurance brings respect from subordinates and peers. Lack of endurance fails not only to set a proper example for subordinates to follow, but it can be mistaken as lack of courage.

You increase both mental and physical endurance by:

- Avoiding excesses that lower both physical and mental stamina.
- Keeping physically fit by exercise and proper diet.
- Learning to stand discomfort by undertaking hard physical tasks.
- Forcing yourself to study on occasions when you are tired and your mind is sluggish. (An example is standing in the back of the room when you are tired during lecture.)
- Finishing every job regardless of the obstacles.

12. UNSELFISHNESS

The unselfish leader is one who gives credit where credit is due. Unselfishness means not taking advantage of a situation for personal gain at the expense of others. No subordinate can respect a leader who takes credit for jobs well done and blames others when performance is poor. As an unselfish leader, you must ensure that your subordinates' needs come before you personal needs.

To develop unselfishness you should:

- See that subordinates have the best that can be obtained for them under the circumstances.
- Try to understand the problems, job related or personal, of subordinates.

- Put the comfort, pleasures, and recreation of subordinates before your own. An example of this would be on a wild land fire, your crew eats before you do.
- Give credit to subordinates for jobs well done and ensure that any recognition from higher commands is passed on to the deserving Cadet.

13. LOYALTY

Loyalty is the quality of faithfulness to your God, County, Department, your seniors, your subordinates and yourself. Demonstrated loyalty wins respect and confidence from seniors and subordinates alike. Your reputation spreads far and wide if it is based on actions taken to protect subordinates from abuse. Loyalty means supporting the views and methods the unit employs, but it doesn't mean becoming a "yes man". Every action you take must reflect loyalty to every area where you owe allegiance.

To develop loyalty you should:

- Be quick to defend subordinates from abuse.
- Never give the slightest hint of disagreement with orders from seniors when giving instructions to subordinates.
- Practice doing every task to the best of your ability. Wholeheartedly support your commander's decisions.
- Never discuss the personal problems of subordinates with others. Keep them confidential.
- Stand up for your God, Country, Department, your seniors, and your subordinates when they are unjustly accused.
- Never criticize seniors to subordinates.
- Do not discuss command problems outside the unit.
- Be loyal to your seniors and subordinates. Support the lawful policies of senior officers whether you personally agree with them or not. Remember loyalty is a two-way street.

14. JUDGMENT

Judgment is the ability to logically weigh facts and possible solutions on which to base sound decisions. Judgment includes common sense! When faced with information that is new or not understood, seek advice before you attempt a solution. It is not

degrading to ask questions. It is embarrassing to arrive at a poor solution because of the lack of judgment to seek help.

To develop the trait of good judgment you should:

- Practice making estimates of the situation.
- Anticipate situations that require decisions in order to be prepared when the need arises.
- Avoid making rash decisions.
- Approach problems with a common sense attitude.

III. DISCIPLINE

The term discipline has acquired at least three meaning

- A. First, defined as punishment; this is frequently used when a Cadet violates a policy, regulation or fails to meet the standard.
- B. Second, discipline seems to suggest complete and total obedience to the orders of Instructors. The most striking characteristic of this type of discipline is the consistent and unwavering compliance with duty demanded of all Cadets.
- C. Third and the most constructive form of discipline involve something more than either punishment or unquestioning obedience. It is considered the highest concept of discipline, which involves self-control and a sense of personal responsibility that goes beyond the threat of punishment or mere obedience.

Discipline is the individual or group attitude that insures prompt obedience to orders and starting of proper actions in the absence of orders. Discipline is an internal attitude that motivates men/women to conform to the informal and formal requirements of their leaders and the Fire Service. It is a state of mind that produces a readiness for willing and intelligent obedience and for proper conduct. **Discipline insures stability under stress; it is prerequisite for predictable performance.**

Discipline is essential for Fire Ground efficiency, and obviously it must be achieved before a Cadet or Firefighter enters an emergency. Unit discipline must be continually evaluated to make sure it is maintained.

Factors to look for as indicators of the state of discipline are:

- Attention to detail.
- Friendly relations between Cadets, other organizations and the public.
- Devotion to duty.
- Proper senior-subordinate relationships.
- Standards of cleanliness, dress and courtesy.
- Promptness on responding to orders and directives.
- Using the chain of command.
- Ability and willingness to perform effectively with little or no supervision.

Discipline can be achieved by, continual effective training, hard work, and intelligent leadership.

Intelligent leadership can be achieved by:

- Demonstrating discipline by your own conduct and example.
- Starting a fair and impartial system for punishment and distribution of privileges and rewards.
- Striving for mutual confidence and respect through training.
- Encouraging self-discipline among your fellow Cadets.

The proficiency of a Class is how that Class accomplishes its assigned tasks. A Class's worth is measured by its proficiency; therefore, it is important to be able to evaluate the Class's proficiency.

Factors to look for in order to evaluate Class proficiency include:

- Personal appearance and physical condition of the Cadets.
- Appearance and condition of equipment, training grounds, apparatus and classroom areas.
- Reaction time of the Class in various situations and conditions.
- Professional attitude demonstrated by the unit and its members.
- Leading ability of subordinate leaders.
- Promptness and accuracy in passing out orders, instructions, and information.
- Degree of skill demonstrated when accomplishing tasks.

The old saying "practice makes perfect" is the key to Class and personal proficiency. Continual training and practical applications of skills improve proficiency. **Improvement of individual proficiency leads to unit/Class proficiency when the training includes teamwork.**

To achieve proficiency you:

- Thoroughly train yourself in your duties.
- Emphasize teamwork through the chain of command.
- Establish a sound physical conditioning program.
- Provide for cross training and encourage Firefighters to learn the duties of the next higher position. (This does not refer to Cadet in an Academy environment – you need to be proficient in the basics before you take this step.)
- Set high standards of performance and insist that they be met.
- Check proficiency by inspecting and testing.

IV. INDICATORS OF LEADERSHIP

The success of any Class depends on the leadership exercised within that Class. Cadets are only as good as their leaders. Thus, Class efficiency can be determined by measuring the leadership. In order to measure a Class's leadership, you should look at the four indicators of leadership: moral, esprit de corps, discipline, and proficiency of the Class.

A. Morale.

Morale is the state of the individual Cadets mind. Morale is the most important leadership indicator because the other indicators are affected by morale.

B. Esprit de corps.

Esprit de corps is loyalty to, pride in, and enthusiasm for a Class shown by its Cadets. Esprit de corps is the personality of the Class and it makes up the Class's spirit.

C. Discipline.

Discipline is the individual or group attitude that ensures prompt, willing obedience to orders. Discipline within a Class also means that Cadets start actions and perform properly without being told to do so and without direct supervision.

D. Proficiency.

Proficiency is the technical, tactical, and physical ability of a Cadet or a unit to successfully accomplish the assigned task.

V. PROFESSIONALISM

- A. A professional Firefighter is one who has undergone special preparation and training, who has the knowledge on which professional actions are based, and who has the ability to apply knowledge in a practical way. **The Verdugo Fire Academy, its Instructors and Staff, in which you are a part of, are committed to making you a professional.**

The professional leader knows the principles of leadership and how to apply them to the Class's advantage. A professional Firefighter tries to be of service; wages are a means of earning a living but wages do not become the primary purpose of work.

- B. There are two main reasons why professionalism is important in the Fire Service.
1. First, the Fire Service leader is a public servant responsible for the safety of the community it serves.
 2. Secondly, the Fire Service leader may have to take risks, which endanger the lives of fellow firefighters. Subordinates and these risks must be carefully evaluated in light of all the available facts. If the leader is less than professional, the individual, Engine Company and/or department may suffer needlessly.
- C. Three attributes, which must be developed for a Firefighter to become professional, are technical competence, values, and ethical conduct.
1. **Technical competence:** you must know your job and be able to do it well in order to lead others. Knowing your job and doing it well gives you an inner confidence, which in turn can help give you a professional bearing. This confidence can also lead wrongly to an overbearing "smart aleck" bearing if you do not develop your values along with developing your confidence.
 2. **Values**, in general, are those things that are important to you. These include what is important to your own life such as self development; social values or traditions you grew up with; economic values or what you would like to own; political values such as loyalty to your country and voting; and religious values like reverence for life and freedom of worship. All of these tie into the

way you approach people. To develop professional values and attitudes you simply resolve to let nothing be more important to you than the welfare of your fellow Cadets, the accomplishment of your task, and you personal integrity.

3. Your **personal integrity** is based on your code of ethics. Your sense of right or wrong. Your code of ethics is closely related to your values. Your values include what you want, but your ethics are more involved with the way you get what you want. Getting a promotion may be important to you but if you put down other people by “back biting” and cheating, you have not been ethical. If, on the other hand, you desire to improve yourself (a value), you work to improve your knowledge and ability (technical competence), and use methods which are fair and honest (ethical conduct), you are on your way to being a professional.

VI. MOTIVATION

Motivation is probably the single most important factor in developing a highly proficient, mission oriented Class. Why is motivation of such great importance? The reason is simple; motivation is the internal process by which each individual Cadet strives to satisfy personal goals or needs. If the Cadet is properly motivated, that Cadet will do the best possible job because he/she sees the end result as the fulfillment of those things that are personally important to him/her.

The Staff and Instructors have learned to recognize each Cadet’s needs and then create an atmosphere that will permit those needs to be satisfied. They channel these personal needs towards a Fire Service goal. Therefore, the Staff and Instructors encourage Cadets to put self-improvement above self-satisfactions.

VII. CONCLUSION

Leadership is the sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that enables a person to inspire and control a group of people successfully. It consists of a leader, those lead, and a specific situation. Leadership has a goal of creating and maintaining an organization which will loyally and willingly accomplish any reasonable task, assigned or indicated, and will initiate suitable action in the absence of orders. Welcome to the Fire Service!

Appendix A

14 Leadership Traits

1. Integrity
2. Knowledge
3. Courage
4. Decisiveness
5. Dependability
6. Initiative
7. Tact
8. Justice
9. Enthusiasm
10. Bearing
11. Endurance
12. Unselfishness
13. Loyalty
14. Judgment