

DISCIPLINE

INTRODUCTION

1. In any society a code of behavior and a set of standards will evolve which define what the group believe is an acceptable way of behaving. Some of these standards are defined by Criminal and Civil Laws, in other cases they form the basis of "unwritten laws".

2. In specialist groups, such as the uniformed Emergency Services and the Armed Services, it is necessary to have a special code of discipline to take into account the different roles that those Services perform.



3. As a member of the ATC you form part of a large team governed by rules and regulations laid down primarily in AP1919 and ACP20B.

4. **Meaning of Discipline.** In the ATC discipline is defined as the extent to which its members obey its rules and regulations.

NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

5. The effectiveness, efficiency and well being of the Corps rest fundamentally on respect for authority and the prompt response to command. Primarily, discipline is required for the following reasons:

- **Safety.** In some Corps activities, such as shooting, flying and gliding, self discipline and the prompt obedience of orders is necessary for the safety of cadets and staff.
- **Maintenance of Authority.** Orders must be obeyed promptly or there is a danger that authority will be undermined causing loss of confidence and a breakdown of the command structure. However, orders should be practical, clear and where ever possible received in good time so as to not bring the JNCO's authority into disrepute.
- **Community Living.** It is impossible for large numbers of people to live and work closely together in harmony without rules, regulations and standards to govern their behaviour.

BASIS OF DISCIPLINE

6. There are two main reasons why people obey the rules, regulations and standards, these are:

- Fear of the consequences if they are caught breaking them.
- Because they understand and accept the need for them and impose them upon themselves.

7. **Discipline Based On Fear.** Discipline can be built up by making it clear that those who offend against the rules, or who do not maintain the standards, will be punished.

There are several dangers associated with this type of discipline:

- It is normally impossible to detect all offenders and the quality of the discipline will tend to depend on the detection rate.
- It can be difficult to balance punishment against the offence. If a particular offence is repeated there is a tendency to increase the punishment on each occasion in an effort to deter. Justice may then be brought into disrepute and the reaction against discipline will be reinforced, potentially leading to a general breakdown in discipline.
- This type of discipline relies heavily on close supervision and in any unit it is impossible to have a JNCO watching every cadet at all times.

8. **Discipline Based on Understanding and Consent.** A far better quality of discipline is obtained when cadets understand the need for discipline and willingly impose it upon themselves. For this to happen the following conditions must be met:

- Cadets must accept and respect the authority of the NCOs and Staff. The NCOs and staff must set a high standard themselves and not bring their authority into disrepute by issuing stupid or unnecessary orders.
- Cadets must understand the necessity for discipline in general and the reasons for specific orders and rules in most cases. This requires communication, information and, where appropriate, explanation from NCOs and Staff.
- The application of rules and regulations must be fair and impartial and this must be apparent to the cadets.
- Where appropriate, orders should be given and rules enforced in a reasonable, courteous and correct manner.
- Orders, rules and regulations should be kept to a minimum. Unnecessary, petty and irritating restrictions do not help the maintenance of discipline in a voluntary organisation such as the Air Training Corps.

9. A fair indication of the standard of discipline in a unit may be judged, not when the NCOs are present, but when they are elsewhere.

ADMINISTERING DISCIPLINE

10. The cadet NCO does not have the authority to award punishments other than extra duties. For more serious breaches of discipline the NCO is responsible for ensuring that the offender is referred for punishment by a higher authority. For this to be carried out the NCO will have to ensure that the relevant facts are available to Staff.

11. On many occasions, however, NCO's will use their authority and experience to correct a cadet's undesirable behaviour before it becomes bad enough to deserve punishment. This is, to an extent, a training role rather than punishment and forms part of the Individual Needs that you will read about later in the Leadership Sections. The aim of correcting or in recommending punishment should be to reform bad behaviour and to deter more serious breaches at a later date.

12. The main guidelines to follow when administering discipline are as follows:

- Ensure that cadets understand the standard of discipline expected of them and the consequences if they misbehave.
- Ensure that orders are reasonable and practical. For example it is unreasonable to order cadets to do extra duties because you forgot to tell them what was expected before hand.
- Do not threaten a cadet with punishment unless you have the authority to carry it out. The inability or failure to invoke a punishment will only reduce your authority and credibility as an NCO.
- Be consistent and impartial at all times.
- Avoid punishing a group unless the whole group is in *error*. Group punishment can turn the whole group, both innocent and guilty, against you and possibly authority in general.

REPRIMANDING A CADET

13. As an NCO it will be necessary for you to reprimand cadets for their actions. If a reprimand is to be re-formative it should follow the following guidelines.

14. Do:

- Reprimand in private.
- Reprimand promptly.
- Know all the facts.
- Be specific and not vague in your allegations.
- Give the cadet a chance to explain.
- Point out the way to improve.
- Reprimand once and forget it.

15 Don't:

- Use sarcasm or ridicule.
- Lose your temper.
- Use foul language
- Get drawn into an argument.
- Make threats you can't carry out.

LIMITS OF AUTHORITY OF A JNCO

16. As already mentioned the punishments available to NCOs are limited to extra duties. In particular physical punishments, such as press-ups or running, are not permitted by Law. For example, NCOs who are tempted to cut a cadet's hair by force are committing an act of Common Assault and may be prosecuted by Law. Drill must never be used as a form of punishment as discussed later in Drill section. If you have any doubt about the limits of your authority seek advice and guidance from your Squadron Warrant Officer in advance.

DEPORTMENT OF A JNCO

17. The deportment, i.e. the manner, appearance, bearing and behaviour, of an NCO is of the utmost importance in influencing and maintaining the highest level of discipline and standards in a Squadron. The NCO should recognise the benefit of promoting self-discipline amongst cadets. To do this the NCO should:

- Know the rules and obey them.
- Make sure that their deportment is beyond criticism.
- Never abuse the privileges of rank.

SUMMARY

18. It is far better that a cadet understands the need for discipline and accepts it as necessary for the good of individuals and the Corps. When administering discipline ensure that it is done in a fair and consistent manner so that the authority of NCOs is not brought into disrepute. Ensure that you follow the guidelines for reprimanding a cadet and that you know your limits of authority. Finally make sure you follow the rules yourself and set a good example as an NCO.