

Navy League Cadet Program

Return to In-Person Training and Recovery Plan

INTRODUCTION

As the COVID 19 situation continues to improve we are now turning our attention to the resumption of in-person activities. The Return to In-Person Training and Recovery Plan for the Navy League Cadet Program is an evolving document created to guide the Branch Presidents and the Navy League Cadet Corps Commanding Officers as they plan for, and resume training as Provincial and local Public Health direction allows for greater interaction. Corps will face ongoing challenges related to local Public Health Protocols and there will likely continue to be new direction, adaptations, and expectations for how the Corps may operate. The Corps must be able to adapt to what is likely to be the “new normal” for the immediate future planning for and implementing a hybrid method of engagement which includes in-person and virtual training.

As a national organization responsible for a youth program and thousands of community volunteers, our highest priority is the health and safety of our cadets, members, volunteers, and their families. For all of us, the past 18 months have been very difficult and challenging with the changing restrictions through the various waves that resulted in virtual training through online platforms or no training for Navy League cadets. There was some incredible ingenuity and effort put forth and for some, the challenge of trying to continue a local program was overwhelming or impossible. With the greatest appreciation and respect, we would like to thank all Officers, Branch members, volunteers and cadets for their flexibility, perseverance and continued support during the uncertainty and challenges brought on by the pandemic. With the positive progress of the vaccination process, we are beginning to see positive steps towards reopening and a return towards more in-person activities and programs, but unfortunately, the current vaccination program does not include children up to the age of 12 and there is still no clear direction about vaccination requirements or restrictions for those who may choose not to be vaccinated. We will watch closely what the CAF direction is for the Sea Cadet program as well as Education Ministries and School Board announcements and continue to conduct risk assessments and take a cautious approach to ensure the entire program can be conducted in a safe manner.

RESUMPTION OF TRAINING

With the expectation that the COVID 19 vaccination program will continue, and that the Public Health Protocols will allow for a gradual expansion of in-person activities both outdoors and indoors, we are providing instructions based on the assumption that the Navy League Cadet program will be able to resume in-person training starting in the Fall. Since the Navy League Cadets have not received a vaccination, and there continue to be COVID variants of concern, we still have to be very cautious and maintain a number of the COVID 19 health and safety guidelines and protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of our members, volunteers, and cadets remains our top priority.

The resumption of in-person training will be solely dependent on any individual Corps' ability to implement a plan that must be approved by their Division to carry out training safely again once public health officials give the green light for in-person activities or gatherings of specified numbers and when Corps have access to an approved training location.

Although many Corps developed COVID safety plans for training in 2020, we have two new requirements, one, for the resumption of summer training activities which was sent out previously, and two, a return to in-person Corps training in the Fall. These two periods will require new evaluations and separate submissions. All Navy League Cadet Corps are required to develop an in-person safety plan specific to their local situation to include considerations for on-going COVID protocols or restrictions to group gatherings, cleaning, mask wearing, screening, etc. in accordance with their local Public Health authorities and the National Navy League Cadet COVID – 19 Policies and Procedures documents found at [COVID 19 Folder](#). Wearing of non-medical masks or face visors and social distancing during in-person activities will be dependent on the local Health Protocols. Visitors to the Corps are to be kept to a minimum and screening and maintenance of a Contact Tracing Log is still mandatory. The Corps COs are to ensure they have assigned a COVID 19 Safety Officer in accordance with the terms of references published last Fall and available on-line. A detailed '[Return to In-person Plan](#)' must be sent by all Corps through their Branches to their Divisions for review, and final approval by the Division President, or their representative, prior to any in-person activities taking place. A change in circumstances within the local community that results in greater restrictions for in-person activities or moving to a new training location will require an update of the plan by the Corps and/or Branch and review by the Division President.

Those Corps who do not have access to their previous training facility or who are uncertain as to when or if they will have access, should identify these issues to their Branch who should keep the Division informed. Planning should still continue with the premise that access will be granted so that pre-approval will be in place to facilitate a quick return when access is confirmed.

TRAINING

For the past 18 months our Navy League cadets have experienced constant disruptions to the mandatory training program, and their lives. Many Corps have completed little to no in-person training since March 2020 and other Corps have seen some measured success in the virtual training, while others have seen success with a hybrid model of in-person and virtual training. Under the 'new normal' the Google Classroom will continue to be available to the Corps to complement the in-person training and we will continue to encourage use of other virtual platforms for engagement and training.

Returning to and starting up in-person training will be a challenge and there are several initial steps that will be critical in the planning and execution phases. It will be essential to reach out to families during the summer period to reconnect and re-engage, especially for those Corps who have not been conducting any on-line activities. Check-

ins have become increasingly important due to the isolation of COVID as mental health has been of great concern during the pandemic and connection across our communities is more essential than ever before. Recruiting activities continue to be restricted for cadets to be participating in-person, but Branches and Corps should be doing outreach in their communities and utilizing the new tools that have been produced by the National Communications Team. The following are some suggestions and fundamentals to take into consideration when developing the training plan for those cadets that joined since the pandemic started as well as those returning cadets who may have forgotten routines:

- Corps officers and staff should meet well in advance, either in person or virtually, prior to the first day of training to develop a “fun” training program and phased approach to returning to mandatory training. Other important subjects to discuss are:
 - how to manage cadets who may be suffering some stress as a result of the pandemic
 - how to manage those who may have concerns or are leery about the return to in-person training and the safety of cadets
 - develop protocols and an action plan if there is a COVID 19 exposure and/or change of the restrictions in your community
 - communications plan with the parents/guardians
 - recruitment of cadets, staff, and volunteers
 - re-engagement of cadets, staff, and volunteers
 - how to phase back into in-person training activities starting with those that can be done outdoors or in smaller groups
 - how to manage some of the administrative procedures like registration, uniform issue or exchange, information for new cadets and families
- Develop a welcome back program to include FUN activities (as permitted) such as a sport event, BBQ Corpsopoly game, Scavenger hunt, Trivia contest, etc.
- Due to the uncertain and somewhat scattered training program over the past 18 months, it is recommended that the Corps COs initially develop a “flexible and fun” training plan from the CTS to include the entire Corps that can be adapted to the hybrid approach of in-person and on-line to cover the following subjects:
 - Wearing Uniform
 - Dress and deportment
 - Colours/Sunset
 - Drill – Basic and March past
 - Cadets and officer’s roles, rank structure and positions
 - Corps routine
 - Naval terminology
 - Sports and Optional training
- When developing the training plan keep in mind current local Health Protocols may change at very short notice and some families may have concerns about returning to in-person activity but still want cadets to be involved.
- Develop the training plan working towards a fun filled but structured ACR in the spring.

- Under the current CAF policy, senior Sea, Air and Army cadets will not be allowed to assist with the Navy League Cadet training. This issue is being addressed by the National Office and hopefully a more positive answer will be forthcoming.
- When developing the training program, keep in mind that some cadets may not want to return in-person, so an alternate training program must be available through an easily accessible on-line platform.
- No overnight activities will be permitted at this time.

FUNDRAISING / RECRUITMENT

Based on the current vaccination program where children under the age of 12 are not currently being vaccinated, Navy League Cadets are not permitted to participate with in-person fundraising and recruiting activities until further notice. In-person fundraising, and recruiting is restricted to adult participation only.

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT - RECRUITMENT

As the Navy League Cadet program transitions to in-person activities, the national communications team is working on several initiatives to assist Corps in their outreach, engagement and recruiting efforts at the local level.

Four of the current initiatives are outlined below.

1. Tools, Pamphlets, Templates
 - On 7 July, the National Office distributed a [Google Drive Link](#) containing three different pamphlets focused at adults. These pamphlets can be printed locally on 8.5" x 11" paper in bilingual or unilingual front/back combinations, depending on the event. The current topics covered include General Navy League Information, Navy League Cadets, and Volunteer Opportunities. Additional tools and templates will be added to this Google Drive link over the coming months.
2. Digital Advertising Campaign
 - The National Office will launch a digital advertising campaign across social media to increase awareness of the Navy League Cadet program. The topics covered will focus on adventure, hands-on activities, and disconnecting from the digital space to return to play in the community. These ads will run over the course of the summer on multiple platforms and continue into September to complement the regular recruiting period for the upcoming training year.
3. "Public Service Announcement"
 - The Navy League is engaged with a production company to create a 30-second "public service announcement" style product that will be broadcast on major television networks and multiple media platforms across Canada. This campaign is generic and will lead people to the national website to encourage them to sign up for the cadet program. This PSA is expected to

run for 8 weeks covering the August-September timeframe to complement the regular recruiting period for the upcoming training year.

4. Virtual Training Sessions

- The National Office is currently working with the Navy League Cadet portfolio team to create virtual engagement opportunities for individuals who want to learn more about the Navy League Cadet program. One idea we are currently exploring is a virtual training session open to prospective cadets and their parents so that they can sit in on an information session and do some fun, interactive online training to get an idea of what topics will be covered at the Corps level. This is intended to connect parents and cadets directly with program leaders to get a bite sized sample of training offered. The current target for this virtual activity is late August, and further details will be distributed so that folks at the local level can advertise this opportunity in their communities as well.

While each of these initiatives has a specific purpose and broad target audience, Navy League Cadet Corps and Branches should continue to ensure that their contact information displayed on the national website is accurate and up to date. The communications team is expecting to see an increased amount of traffic to our website, and ultimately the responsibility lies with each individual Branch and Corps to update the National Office with their contact information. This will ensure our efforts are maximized to create a positive recruiting experience for parents looking to register their children for Navy League Cadet activities in their area. It may also have an impact on attracting new volunteers and adult leaders so Branches and Corps will both benefit.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING

As the pandemic has resulted in some administrative challenges and slow downs of processing, there may be a number of officers, staff and volunteers whose screening have expired. Branch Presidents are to ensure all individuals working directly with the cadets are currently screened. If some screening has expired, please ensure that the renewal process is started in a timely manner and a Screening Renewal form must be sent to National Office for approval. [Volunteer Renewal Form](#)

CONCLUSION

Since the pandemic continues to be a fluid situation and its impact are varied across all of our communities, subsequent direction and guidance will be sent out when new and relevant information is received. Each Division may adapt the National direction and add information to reflect their Provincial direction depending on any changing situations within their respective region and communities. Although the Navy League Cadet program has been significantly impacted over the past 18 months, we remain committed to ensuring that we continue to provide a unique and fun experience for the cadets within our communities. Above all, the Navy League of Canada remains committed to the health and safety of the cadets, members, volunteers, and their families. We all have an important role to play in this and your continued dedication and diligence is appreciated as we look forward to more positive times.

Any questions on the material contained within this update can be sent to the Vice-President Navy League Cadets, John Philips, at jphilips@navyleague.ca .

Issued under the authority of

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Pinto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Brenda Pinto
National President
Navy League of Canada