ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS

SILVER STAR

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

SECTION 2

EO M325.02 – LIST THE COMPETENCIES OF AN OUTDOOR LEADER (OL)

Total Time:	60 min

PREPARATION

PRE-LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

Resources needed for the delivery of this lesson are listed in the lesson specification located in A-CR-CCP-703/PG-001, Chapter 4. Specific uses for said resources are identified throughout the instructional guide within the TP for which they are required.

Review the lesson content and become familiar with the material prior to delivering the lesson.

When setting the jigsaw activity, ensure there is enough room for each group to work independently and free from interruptions by other groups.

Photocopy:

- the scenario located at Annex A (one per cadet),
- the competencies of an OL information cards located at Annexes B to D (three copies),
- the expert activity sheets located at Annex E (one per cadet),
- the competencies of an OL handout located at Annex F (one per cadet), and
- the homework assignment located at Annex G (one per cadet).

PRE-LESSON ASSIGNMENT

N/A.

APPROACH

An interactive lecture was chosen for TP 1 as it is an interactive way for cadets to define an OL.

An in-class activity was chosen for TP 2 as an interactive way to provoke thought and stimulate interest in the competencies of an OL within a peer setting.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW

N/A.

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson the cadet shall be expected to define the term OL and list the competencies of an OL.

IMPORTANCE

It is important for cadets to be able to list the competencies of an OL to ensure that when the cadet is placed in a team leader role while participating in an adventure activity they know what is required of them. The competencies of an OL provide cadets with a foundation on which to develop their skills as an OL. Understanding and subscribing to these competencies will benefit the cadet during cadet adventure training activities, and during civilian outdoor experiences.

Teaching point 1 **Define an OL**

Time: 15 min Method: Interactive Lecture



Some of the information included in this TP will be a review for the cadets. It is important to explain the uniqueness of an OL and how it differs from that of a regular leader at the home corps.

LEADERSHIP

The term leadership can be interpreted in many different ways. It is defined to meet the needs of goals of the organization, however, all meanings have a common basis or foundation. In most cases, the definition is tailored to fit the activity or organization under which it has been developed.

The Canadian Forces (CF) defines leadership as “directly or indirectly influencing others, by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with one’s intent to a shared purpose”. The CF definition is generic, value-neutral and broadly inclusive of all forms of leadership across a wide range of settings and times.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND LEADERS

It is important to note that there should be a distinction between the concept of leadership and the ways in which an individual becomes a leader.

Leadership

Leadership is a process of influence. In most informal group settings, people who become group leaders influence other group members to create, identify, work toward, achieve, and share mutually acceptable goals. In these types of situations, more than one group member often emerges to fulfill different leadership responsibilities.

Competent leadership requires formal training, especially in outdoor situations where bad leadership can have disastrous consequences.

Leader

A leader is a person with certain qualities or traits exercising a definite and particular role in relation to others. The role they exercise is a set of expected behaviours associated with a person’s position in a group.

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It is important for cadets to understand how the concept of leadership influences the cadets' ability to become a leader. While the terms may seem interchangeable, they are not. Leadership allows for the cadet to develop their skills as a leader even in situations where they are not the leader of the group.

EXPECTATIONS OF A LEADER

Any person who has been a member of a team, participating in an activity, whether indoors or outdoors, has developed a list of expectations they believe the leader of their group should possess. As an individual participating in an activity, people expect leaders to:

- be good at planning and organizing;
- be confident;
- be technically competent, which for OLs includes competency in basic skills such as first aid, route finding and predicting the weather;
- care for other people;
- make good decisions;
- be trustworthy;
- communicate well;
- inspire others to be their best;
- build and maintain morale;
- be good teachers and coaches;
- be able to deal with difficult people and handle conflicts;
- be able to build and guide teams; and
- anticipate problems and deal with them proactively.

QUALITIES OF AN OL

The responsibilities associated with being an OL can, at times, seem overwhelming. It is not just about possessing leadership skills. To be an effective OL, the leader should possess the following qualities:

- courage,
- tenacity,
- humility,
- warmth,
- enthusiasm,
- integrity,
- patience,
- competency,
- strength of character,
- desire to be a leader,

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- humour,
- organizational skills, and
- risk management skills.

THE UNIQUE SKILL OF BEING AN OL

Being an OL requires a different set of skills, qualifications, competencies and qualities than that of a leader in other settings. Incorporating these skills, qualifications and competencies into daily routine while participating in an outdoor adventure activity (OAA) is what makes an individual an OL. OLs:

- are unique as they are usually appointed into the position they hold in the group;
- are motivated and enjoy being outside and instilling this enjoyment in the individuals they lead;
- have previous outdoor experiences that provide them with a strong basis from which to lead;
- are required to use the process of group interaction and cooperation as a basis for the facilitation of personal and social growth of the members in their group;
- are responsible to ensure the safety of the individuals engaging in OAA under their leadership;
- aim to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural environments into which people venture for OAA; and
- aim to enhance the quality of OAA for individuals they are leading.

Who Will Lead the Group?

A leader is either appointed or emerges from the membership to lead. Groups may naturally be drawn to the individual who exhibits the best leadership qualities. Some groups may naturally defer to the individual with the most experience while other groups may feel that no one person needs to be designated as the leader and leadership should be shared among the members of the group.

Designated Leader. When a person is appointed as the leader of a group, they become the designated leader. OLs will usually find themselves in this role. They are appointed due to their knowledge and experience in the activities being completed.

HARD AND SOFT SKILL COMPETENCY

Being a leader in the outdoors requires a different set of hard and soft skills than that of a leader in other settings. OLs must be able to incorporate both types of these skills into their daily routine while participating in OAA.

Hard Skills

Hard skills are the technical, safety and environmental skills associated with being an OL. There is no requirement for individuals to master every skill; however, competency with a wide variety of skills is encouraged. As well, it is important for OLs to know their limitations. The safety of the individuals in the group relies on the ability of the OL to carry out the specific activity.

Examples of hard skills include:

- canoeing,
- mountain biking,
- hiking,
- mountaineering,
- kayaking,

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- rock climbing,
- caving,
- ice climbing,
- navigating,
- camping, and
- winter hiking.

Soft Skills

Soft skills complement hard skills. Being an excellent kayaker does not mean that an individual will be an effective OL. There has to be a balance between hard and soft skills. Soft skills are divided into the categories of instruction, organization and facilitation. Unfortunately, soft skill development is sometimes neglected.

DEFINITION OF AN OL

An OL is an individual who leads groups and individuals into natural settings using a variety of modes of transportation such as hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, mountaineering, etc. An OL must combine their hard skill competencies with soft skills in order to provide groups and individuals with a positive, safe and challenging outdoor experience. It is the responsibility of an OL to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural environments into which they bring people for an OAA.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 1

QUESTIONS

Q1. What qualities should an OL possess in order to be effective?

Q2. What type of leader is an OL?

Q3. What are some examples of hard skills?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS

A1. To be an effective OL, the leader should possess the following qualities:

- courage,
- tenacity,
- humility,
- warmth,
- enthusiasm,
- integrity,
- patience,
- competency,
- strength of character,
- desire to be a leader,
- humour, and
- organizational skills.

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A2. OLs are usually designated leaders because they are appointed due to their knowledge and experience in the activities being completed.

A3. Examples of hard skills are:

- canoeing,
- mountain biking,
- hiking,
- mountaineering,
- kayaking,
- rock climbing,
- caving,
- ice climbing,
- navigating,
- camping, and
- winter hiking.

Teaching point 2 **Conduct an Activity Where the Cadet Will List and Discuss the Competencies of an OL**

Time: 40 min Method: In-Class Activity

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

SELF-AWARENESS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Being Self-Aware

A competent OL needs to be self-aware. To be self-aware is to be conscious of one's character, feelings and motives. As an OL, who is responsible for the safety, well-being and organization of a group of people, being self-aware ensures a higher quality experience for all group members. Being aware of individual feelings and motives will allow the OL to better relate to their group members.

Being Aware of One's Personal Abilities and Limitations

Self-awareness starts with a clear understanding of one's personal abilities and limitations. Without a clear sense of their own abilities and limitations, OLs will have difficulty setting challenges appropriate to the abilities and limitations of group members. As well, there may be a tendency to set the bar too high, which may jeopardize the emotional and physical safety of the members of the group they are leading. This can result in the OL becoming a possible danger to the group and diminishing the quality of the experience for all.

Being Mindful of All Actions

Good OLs are always mindful – intentional – in their actions. They act with regard to the ultimate goals of the group experience, which is a balance between being attentive to the needs of the group members and being attentive to the tasks that must be accomplished.

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Managing Stress

Stress can be caused by a number of factors. While some may believe that stress caused by physical danger is the hardest to manage, this is not the case. Situations that place stress on the OL are often a lot less dramatic than a singular event such as a rope breaking during a climbing activity. The event happens so fast that adrenalin kicks in before stress can occur. Instead, it is the ordinariness of the situation which makes it so stressful. For example, a rainstorm catches a group 5 km (3 miles) away from the trailhead. Members force their own frustrations on the group leader, who not only has to deal with the group complaints, but also with the stream of rain running down the neck of their own parka.

Demonstrating Professional Conduct

OLs are placed in a position of responsibility and as such must conduct themselves accordingly in all situations. A lack of professional conduct could result in situations such as an injury during a paddling activity, or a breakdown in group dynamics while on an OAA. It is the inherent risk associated with OAA that makes professional conduct so important for an OL. Professional conduct is characterized through demonstration of the following qualities:

- trustworthiness,
- flexibility,
- approachability,
- commitment,
- awareness of the position of authority, and
- modelling.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflicts in OAAs are inevitable. The challenge, for the OL, is to stop the conflict before it escalates, or deal with it quickly and effectively as possible. Most conflicts that occur in outdoor situations are a result of:

- weather conditions;
- varying levels of experience among group members;
- the challenging nature of the activity; and
- personalities of group members.

An OL who is able to communicate clearly with all group members will be better suited to manage conflict. There are always going to be situations where the OL is required to interact with difficult people. A group member who was a pleasure to have around at the beginning of a 10-day expedition, and who got along with everyone at the campsite, may, by Day 8, have blisters from ill-fitting boots and be arguing with everyone. It becomes the responsibility of the OL to deal with this situation. Conflict while on an expedition is like a wound: unless it is dealt with, it will just keep spreading and festering. Dealing with conflict is not a pleasant task, however, the first step is to always speak with the individual and discuss the issues in a calm and sensitive manner.

DECISION MAKING AND JUDGMENT

Decision Making. Decision making is the process of choosing the best option from a collection of possible options. In order to make this choice, the OL will be required to use their judgment.

Judgment. Judgment is an informed opinion based on past experiences. Judgment also provides OLs with the ability to anticipate problems before they occur. Their experience in leading people during an OAA provides them the foresight to know when something is going well or when it needs adjustment.

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OLs are placed in the position because of the experience they have. It is then assumed that when leading a group, they will be qualified to make decisions that affect the safety and welfare of the group. That is not to say that OLs have to make the “big” decisions on their own: being able to communicate with fellow group members and use their experience and ideas to help make a decision is also an integral part of making a decision. An OL, who has completed the same route up a mountain, may benefit from another individual’s point of view before deciding whether or not to continue an ascent, or halt due to a lack of motivation in group members.

Decision making is a process which should be carried out decisively. Once an OL has considered their options and reached a decision, they should stick with it, unless circumstances change. They should not allow themselves to be swayed by other group members. They have the experience, have assessed the factors and have reached a decision. In OAA, where safety is always a concern, the OL must have confidence in the decisions they make and the group must have confidence in the decisions the OL has made.

FACILITATION OF THE EXPEDITION EXPERIENCE

Leading others in OAA does not guarantee that learning will occur. An outdoor experience can bring joy and wonder, and can help people develop new relationships and make discoveries. An outdoor experience encourages people to learn things about themselves, others and the outdoors.

It is possible to be outdoors and miss these opportunities or not enjoy the experience. Some participants do not want to learn in the outdoors:

- it feels unsafe in its newness;
- they have had previous negative experiences; or
- they are not interested in getting the most out of the experience.

An effective OL can facilitate the experience and shift the outdoor experience from a mere excursion in the outdoors to a dynamic learning experience.

Facilitation is the process of moving a group or individual toward a desired outcome. A facilitator provides the means for making experiences possible. For an OL, facilitation is a skill which fosters productive group dynamics, enabling all members to work toward completing the OAA, in a safe and enjoyable manner, while also developing interpersonal relationships.

OLs will often be required to:

- resolve conflicts;
- communicate effectively;
- foster personal trust and group cooperation; and
- debrief and guide reflection during and following an OAA.

TECHNICIAL ABILITIES

OLs may possess excellent facilitations skills and may be extremely effective at organizing an OAA, however, without technical ability to serve as the foundation for conducting the activity, these skills cannot be used. Technical abilities are organized into two main areas – generic competency skills and specific competencies.

Generic Competency Skills

Generic competency skills are those skills in which, no matter the OAA, an OL must be competent. They include:

- weather prediction,
- wilderness first aid,

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- trip planning,
- navigation,
- camp skills,
- general outdoor skills,
- physical fitness,
- mental awareness, and
- risk management.

Specific Competency Skills

Specific competency skills are those skills unique to the OAA the OL will be leading. Examples include:

- trekking,
- mountain biking,
- abseiling,
- climbing,
- caving,
- canoeing, and
- kayaking.

There is no requirement for an OL to be an expert in all activities. In many cases they choose activities that interest them the most and capitalize on the experiences they offer. Proficiency in an OAA can only be gained through experience. The more experience OLs gain, the more competent they become.

OLs cannot allow their skills to decay; they should continuously participate in professional development training to refresh their knowledge and skills. It is the responsibility of the OL to stay up-to-date in the areas in which they lead others.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Instructional skills are important because OLs often have the opportunity to teach and thus share important skills and knowledge with the people they lead. OLs with the responsibility of teaching others need to be well versed in skills such as using instructional aids, developing skill lesson plans and employing different teaching strategies. Experiential education is the primary method by which OLs deliver their educational content. Every lesson involves some degree of explanation and demonstration, and a greater degree of practice – which gives individuals the opportunity to learn skills in a hands-on manner.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Environmental stewardship is a three-faceted term that takes into account environmental ethics, ecological literacy and parks and protected areas management. With the environment experiencing the heavy impact of current culture, it is OLs who must alter the attitudes of others toward preserving and conserving the environment. When leading groups, OLs must practice and enforce the environmental ethical code, represented by the seven principles of Leave No Trace, which serve as the basis for ecologically responsible interactions with the natural environment.

Ecological literacy entails thinking and acting critically in an environmental context, especially when making decisions and exercising judgment regarding environmental problems.

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Many of the areas OLs use to conduct OAAs are managed by provincial and national agencies. It is critical that OLs are aware of the policies and regulations of the park/conservation area they are using and abide by these rules. The park/conservation area has implemented these policies and regulations as a means to reduce the environmental impact while still allowing people to enjoy the outdoor setting. OLs must understand that every action has the potential to impact the natural environment and that they must take the necessary precautions to protect the environment when travelling or camping outdoors. As well, they must teach low-impact camping, waste management and travelling techniques to their groups.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program management consists of two main areas – employing safety and risk management, and planning, organizing and managing. OAAs are, for the most part, characterized by the inherent risk they possess. Risk is one of the critical components that make outdoor programming so popular and successful. OLs must be able to balance risk and safety – too much risk and the danger of the experience will become unreasonable; too much safety and the activity will fail to remain adventurous. As an OL, there is a responsibility to assess the OAA for risk, manage risk during the activity and develop a contingency plan to ensure the safety of all participants. Most aspects of risk management are carried out during the planning phase of an activity.

OLs are required to complete detailed planning for trips/activities they lead. Proper planning is essential for any OAA and when it is not carried out thoroughly, the possibility for tragedy increases. Trip/activity plans include:

- emergency management details,
- contingency plans,
- time control plans,
- energy control plans,
- ration plans,
- communication plans, and
- equipment/resource procurement, etc.

Once a plan has been developed, the ability to implement the plan is based on the OL's organizational skills. Implementation involves creating a system for getting tasks done and requires the ability to coordinate the various components of the plan so that it comes together to create a unified whole.

Management skills involve the ability of the OL to direct the group in an efficient manner to complete all required tasks throughout the OAA. For example, when arriving at the campsite, after a long day of paddling, an organized OL will have already divided the group into sub-groups to allow for multi-tasking to ensure the campsite is set up, water is collected, the fire is started and supper is prepared.

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ACTIVITY



A cooperative learning strategy called a jigsaw structure will be used for this activity.

A jigsaw structure allows each cadet, as a member of a team, to become an “expert” in their part of the assignment. They do this by developing communication strategies that will allow them to interpret information they receive, both on their own and as a contributing member of a team, and by presenting the information as a response.

Each cadet in a team will receive the information to complete only their part. The cadets who are responsible for the same part join together and form a new, temporary expert team whose purpose is to master the ideas in their part and to develop strategies for communicating/ presenting what they have learned to the other cadets in their original team.

Cadets must work together to accomplish a common goal which means that each cadet’s part, and each cadet, is essential. This structure encourages teamwork and it requires the cadets to be actively engaged in the process. It facilitates the development of a depth of knowledge not possible when learning material individually.

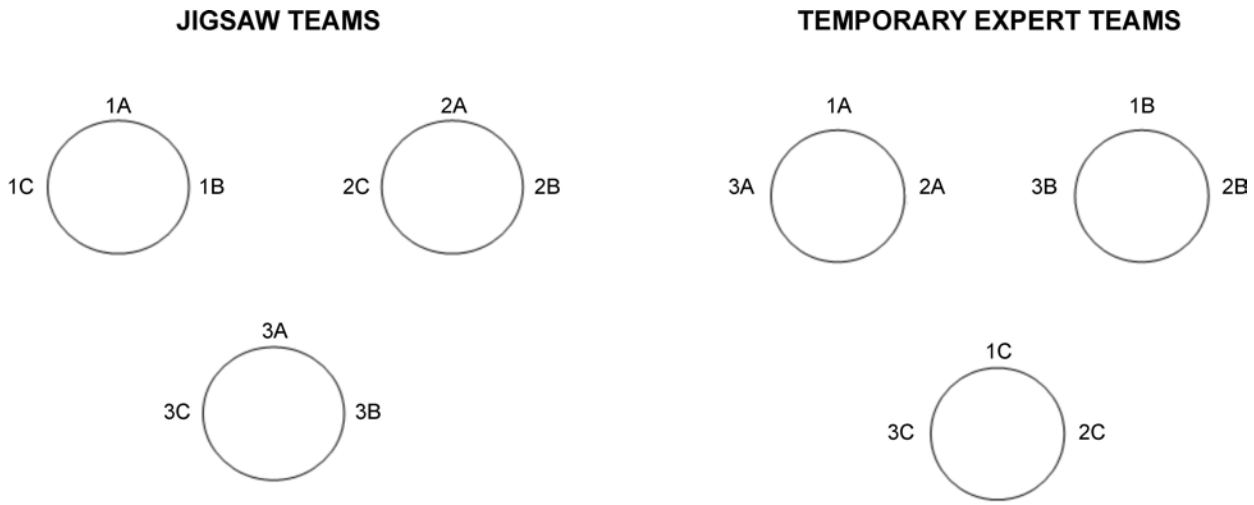
There are high expectations and responsibilities placed on each cadet in the jigsaw structure, therefore sufficient time should be taken to explain the process and requirements before beginning the activity as some cadets may find it to be complex.



For the purpose of this activity, there will be two sets of teams formed (as described in the activity instructions):

- jigsaw teams, and
- temporary expert teams.

Refer to Figure 1 for a visual representation of the format for these teams using six cadets per jigsaw team.



Director Cadets 3, 2008, Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence

Figure 1 Format of Jigsaw Activity Groups

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ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to have the cadets list and discuss the competencies of an OL.

RESOURCES

- Scenario (located at Annex A),
- Competencies of an OL information cards (located at Annexes B to D),
- Expert activity sheets (located at Annex E),
- Competencies of an OL handout (located at Annex F),
- Pen/pencil, and
- Notebook.

ACTIVITY LAYOUT

Arrange the classroom for group work.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS



To facilitate this activity there should be three groups, with at least three cadets in each group. In situations where there are more than three cadets, assign two cadets the same information card. In situations where there are less than nine cadets in the class, divide the cadets into two groups and have each group discuss three of the six competencies. Then have each group present their material. Timings will remain the same.

1. Explain the following to the cadets:

   a. they will be participating in a jigsaw activity about the competencies of an OL, in which each member of their team will be responsible for 2–3 different competencies;

   b. they will be divided into jigsaw teams of three cadets, and each cadet will be given a competencies of an OL information card and scenario to review and a worksheet to guide them through the activity;

   c. after reviewing the scenario and their competencies of an OL information card, cadets will then form temporary expert teams by regrouping with the cadets from the other jigsaw teams who have the same competencies of an OL information card they do;

   d. temporary expert teams will work together to complete their expert activity sheets and develop a strategy to present the information to their jigsaw teams; and

   e. they will return to their jigsaw teams and take turns presenting information about their competencies and will note key points while other members are presenting.

2. Distribute the scenario to each cadet.

3. Divide the cadets into equal jigsaw teams of three, creating a maximum of three teams. Groups should be as heterogeneous as possible in terms of ability.

4. Appoint one cadet in each team to be the leader.

5. Distribute the competencies of an OL information cards to each group.

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6. Each group member will select one of the three information cards (A to C); each card includes information on two or three competencies.

7. Provide cadets five minutes to read through the scenario and their information cards.

8. Have cadets form temporary expert teams by regrouping with the cadets from the other jigsaw teams who have the same information card they do.

9. Distribute expert activity sheets to each expert team.

10. Provide cadets 15 minutes to discuss and complete their activity sheets and develop a strategy to present the information back in their jigsaw team.



It is not uncommon in jigsaw activity for a confident cadet to dominate the conversation or try to control the group; ensure all cadets are contributing.

11. Circulate among the groups and assist the cadets as necessary, offering suggestions and advice for improvement.

12. Have cadets return to their jigsaw teams.

13. Provide cadets 20 minutes to present information gathered in their expert team to the members of their jigsaw team, under the direction of the group leader.

14. Debrief the cadets.

15. Distribute competencies of an OL handout.

SAFETY

N/A.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 2

The cadets' participation in the in-class activity will serve as the confirmation of this TP.

END OF LESSON CONFIRMATION

The cadets' participation in the in-class activity will serve as the confirmation of this lesson.

CONCLUSION

HOMEWORK/READING/PRACTICE

Distribute homework assignment located at Annex G. Cadets will be required to complete and hand in the assignment for the next training session.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

N/A.

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CLOSING STATEMENT

OLs are a critical aspect of the army cadet adventure training program. The presence of knowledgeable, conscientious OLs during cadet activities will influence the safety and success of the activity. The competencies of an OL are the skills and ideals which can be learned but must be practiced in order to master.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES/REMARKS

N/A.

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