



## **SFC COMMANDER'S GUIDE**

For all current and future unit commanders

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This manual is designed to assist new captains in building and maintaining local units. It is expressly intended as a reference and nothing more. Specific requirements are laid out in Starfleet Command's Articles of Federation (AFEDs) at <https://www.starfleet-command.com/documents>. Some are included here. Most of the content in this manual is intended as suggestions rather than directives. See the AFEDs for the specific requirements.

Like every entity, each unit is unique with its own personality, direction, and goals. As a commanding officer in this organization, you are allowed some leeway in the operation of your unit's structure if you remain aligned with the directives found in the AFEDs. New captains should read the entire manual and decide for themselves what applies to the type of unit they command or wish to command. The captain is meant to help guide their unit and listen to the needs of the entire unit; you should never bring personal problems to the meetings. Captains decide what is best for the unit while also serving to motivate.

The terms "Unit Commander", "Commanding Officer", "CO", and similar expressions all refer to the presiding officer of a local unit. The term "Captain" also generally refers to the unit commanding officer, no matter their actual rank.

## **STARFLEET COMMAND ONLINE RESOURCES**

The Starfleet Command website [www.starfleet-command.com](http://www.starfleet-command.com) is an excellent resource for all members but it is a must for all unit commanding officers. The main page of the website is the portal to resources that a CO cannot function without. It contains the AFEDs, blank SPAR reports, directions for filling out SPARs, documents and links to various departments that can answer many questions.

Starfleet Command Quadrant One has both a Facebook page [www.facebook.com/sfcq1](http://www.facebook.com/sfcq1) and a Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/SFCQ1](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SFCQ1).

## **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

Although Starfleet Command is set up as a paramilitary organization, it is primarily for chain-of-command. As commanding officer of a unit, your next contact would be your starbase commander. Always attempt to use your next closest contact in the chain of command whenever possible.

### **Chain of Command** (top to bottom)

1. Fleet Commander FC@SFCQ1.com
2. Deputy Fleet Commander DFC@SFCQ1.com
3. Command Staff Officers (found on the website)
4. Starbase Commander (found on the website)
5. Captain/Commanding Officer of the Unit
6. Members

While some local groups prefer a military setting, others resist it and prefer a less formal setting; therefore, each captain must determine which type of ship they will build in order to determine what type of commander they will become. Starfleet Command has many ship types, so it is easy to find an existing ship to model.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF A COMMANDING OFFICER**

Before assuming command of one of SFC's units, a commander must:

1. Hold an officer rank (have passed the Starfleet Academy's departmental exam and OCS exams)
2. Have passed the Command Basics exam
3. Be current on all SFC dues
4. Be at least 18 years of age
5. Have a valid email address

The members must pay the necessary renewal dues at the time prescribed (see AFEDs) to remain a member in good standing. Failure to pay the necessary renewal dues will result in the loss of whatever position and/or rank the member held.

## **TYPES OF UNITS**

Starfleet Command has many entities: outposts, research facilities, space stations, shipyards, or starships.

All ships will be designated by name and **Naval Construction Contract (NCC)** number as approved by the Fleet Commander. Any variation of ship name or NCC number must be submitted to the Deputy Fleet Commander for Fleet Commander approval.

Outposts, space stations, and other installations do not have NCC numbers but can be numbered. An example would be Planetary Outpost 00. Names and numbers for these units are also upon approval by the Fleet Commander.

A list of all current and inactive names/NCC pairs is maintained at SFC Headquarters.

## **UNIT SIZE**

Starfleet Command Q1 permits units to have less than five members; however, a unit must have at least five members to qualify for ship awards at SFCQ1's Annual Awards Meeting. Units of less than five members all compete for the Horizon award.

1-2 members would be a shuttle or planetary outpost.

1-4 members could be a runabout, planetary outpost or research facility.

5-14 members may be a small ship, space station or research facility.

15- 29 members constitute a medium ship, space station or research facility.

30-100 members would be a large ship, space station or research facility.

Each ship has a basic type (ex: heavy cruiser) and class (ex: Constitution) relative to its membership size (i.e., a ship with only one to five members cannot be a Galaxy-class cruiser).

## **UNIT ACTIVITIES**

For your unit to be successful, you must have FUN. What constitutes fun for one unit may be something totally different for another unit. For example, some units go to a lot of movies, while others prefer to go out to eat or meet at someone's house for "movie night". These activities are entirely based on the local units' interests and budget. Whatever you choose to do, Starfleet Command requires that you document your activities on the SPAR I report and hold regular meetings. This is just good practice because meetings keep everyone close, and years from now, you will be glad you documented all the good times.

SFC is designed to allow and encourage the free flow of ideas among the membership. Therefore, each individual unit is responsible for maintaining its level of activity. As a minimum, these activities should include regular member meetings; the publication of a newsletter, blog, or other types of social media communication; and fan-related activities to maintain members' interest.

Unit commanders are responsible for coordinating the activities of their units. All local activities and projects are sponsored by the local unit. All local activities and projects are approved by the unit commander. Local ship activities are your call and you run the show.

If you choose to publish a newsletter, copies must be sent to the Chief of Fleet Communications at [COC@SFCQ1.com](mailto:COC@SFCQ1.com); the Deputy Fleet Commander at [DFC@Sfcq1.com](mailto:DFC@Sfcq1.com); and your starbase commanding officer for inclusion on the website.

Regional activities are approved and coordinated by the starbase commander. The Starbase Commander oversees all regional activities, such as starbase picnics and meetings. Activities and projects that have a quadrant impact such as awards ceremonies and fleet-wide activities are approved by the Fleet Commander and coordinated by a member of the Admiralty Board.

## **MEETINGS**

Units can hold simple informal meetings to ask for a crew consensus or hold an open forum before making decisions that affect the unit. Other military units might follow Robert's Rules of Order, complete with a bell for the captain, and closed voting for all major decisions if they choose.

While in-person meetings should be held on a regular basis, online meetings can also be used to facilitate communication.

All starbase commanders and chapter members are encouraged to attend the formal SFCQ1 Awards Meeting held annually in November. While not required, it is the highlight of the year and the CinC, Fleet Commander, Deputy Fleet Commander, and as many of the SFCQ1 Admiralty Board members as possible attend. Informally, and not required per AFEDs, a mid-year meeting is held in late June/early July.

## **ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS**

First, websites publicize your ship and "mass communication method" refers to a listery, message board, or social media page so all your members can stay in touch and have input on decisions that require fast action.

Second, an older communication device is a message board. These are a little more complicated, but they offer added benefits. If you have a large unit, the levels of security for access to the message board can be made for members only. Members may be notified through email when new postings are added or when files are uploaded. Invisionfree (IF) and forumotion.com offer a good free message board. Both services offer calendars for inputting important events, dates, birthdays, and sending out reminders.

Once you create your unit's social media group, you can invite all your members to join. This is great for an open discussion because when anyone replies, everyone gets a copy.

If there is someone in your unit who is fairly computer literate or willing to learn, you can appoint them as unit's webmaster. They can create a free website using several free web hosting sites such as Wix.com. These sites come with free tutorials and templates. After your webmaster is proficient, and if you have the budget, you can purchase an ad-free domain with limitless options for a small monthly fee.

The AFEDs state that the main page of your website needs to include the official SFC banner with a link to the SFC website.

## **REPORTING**

Unit commanding officers must provide monthly Ship Periodic Activity Reports (SPARs) to their starbase commander (SBCO) by midnight on the 15th of every month. The starbase commanders make their reports via the SPAR II report to the Deputy Fleet Commander by midnight on the LAST day of each month. The SPAR forms, along with more details, reporting and the penalties of late/missing reports, can be found on the documents page of the SFCQ1 website in the Procedures & Documents Guide.

The implementing and reporting of the results of such activities and projects shall be through the chain of command. Individual units should make monthly SPAR reports to their starbase commander, who in turn must make monthly reports to the Office of the Deputy Fleet Commander. Commanding officers should also send items/articles of interest to the Chief of Fleet Communications (COC) for inclusion in the national newsletter.

Commanders who regularly fail to submit timely reports or exceed 90 days between reports may be subject to disciplinary. Guidelines and milestones for submitting reports are contained in the Procedure & Reporting Manual.

## **FINANCES**

Local unit treasuries run independently of the Starfleet Command treasury. All funds must be raised under the name of the local unit. Also, the money raised can only be used for the unit. No one can be paid to work for this organization or its units, but they may be reimbursed for items purchased and intended for furthering this fan organization's purpose(s). All reimbursement items should be approved by the commanding officer and treasurer before anything is purchased.

Neither SFC nor any unit within SFC will operate on a for-profit basis, nor may any member of SFC accept funds from any treasury within SFC as wages or salary.

1. All units are empowered to establish and operate their own individual treasuries.
2. All funds collected for said treasuries must be used for the purpose of providing additional membership materials, newsletters, or other expenses directly connected to the operation of the unit.
3. The unit commander or their designated representative will be responsible for the collection of and disbursement of said funds. Sources of income may include, but are not limited to, additional dues, donations, or funds raised through unit activities.
4. Fundraising activities by units within SFC must be conducted in such a manner that said activities do not give the appearance of being endorsed by SFC or CBS/Paramount Studios, unless such endorsement has been received, in writing, before the activity is conducted.
5. Members serving as unit commanding officers, or in positions of responsibility requiring handling of monetary funds, must be of legal age as prescribed by local law, US codes, and international agreements. In most jurisdictions, the legal age is 18. Any exceptions must have the approval of the Fleet Commander and parental consent in writing (notarized).

Local units can set up nonprofit checking accounts at a local bank. The requirements for such an account may vary from bank to bank. You will need to present your commissioning certificate and perhaps additional documentation (such as a copy of your ship's handbook or bylaws). Your checking account should have signers from two different families if possible.

## **FUNDRAISING**

When planning a fundraiser, always weigh the initial cost against the potential income. You must also decide if the initial cost will be reimbursed before the "profit" is given to charity. An example would be a bake sale where the crew buys the ingredients and bake goods to be sold. If a cake costs \$3.50 for the ingredients and sells for \$5, the actual profit is only \$1.50. If the club does decide to reimburse members for supplies, make sure all sales are approved before purchasing.

Sometimes you can find other groups having fundraisers who are willing to make it a joint effort with your group. If so, it should be advertised as such. Also, be careful. If you have too many fundraisers without fun events, your members will look at the unit as a job instead of a club. If they lose interest, you lose members.

## **CHARITIES**

The phrase "think globally and act locally" is good common sense to follow. One individual or small group cannot change the world, but they can make a difference. If enough like-minded individuals contribute to society, they can make a big difference. Starfleet Command is filled with small units that contribute in their own way to a variety of charities; therefore, their total contribution is substantial.

Charities you wish to help can be determined by two criteria. Ask yourself and your crew two questions: 1) "What organizations do we feel strongly about their cause?", and 2) "How can we help them?"

The first question may be obvious if you have a member who is either personally affected or has a family member with a life-changing condition. You may also have members who feel strongly about the homeless situation or teen pregnancy. Whatever your group chooses, make sure it is something they feel strongly about to get enough crew support to make a difference or eventually the charity will not benefit from your group due to lack of interest.

The second question usually goes one of two ways. Either you can support an organization through funds or through volunteers. Funds can come from personal donations or by organizing fundraisers. Volunteering can be done individually or as a group. When it is done as a group, it is more rewarding. Organizations also seem to appreciate it more.

Local units may conduct charity fundraisers. For these fundraisers, 100 percent of the profits must go to the specified charity. The ship may reimburse itself for any expenses.

### **PROMOTING YOUR MEMBERS**

Most people feel that rank should mean more than just a representation of time served. It should signify dedication, effort, and commitment to Starfleet Command and the unit. Some units work on a point system where points are earned for attending meetings, heading committees, attending events, fund raisers, conventions, or promoting the ship. Some ships give promotions solely at the discretion of the commanding officer while others take a vote from the local membership.

Promotions will not be granted until after Membership Services has approved and processed the **request** from the starbase commander/unit commander, and the documents have been completed.

SFCQ1 has some very basic promotion requirements. They are summarized below:

1. Promotions must be in accordance with the AFEDs.
2. No members will be granted a promotion until they have met the eight months' mark in rank criteria.
3. Promotions CANNOT be set up in advance.
4. Once a rank is attained, the member will retain that rank if they remain an active member in good standing. All non-flag ranks (fleet captain/brigadier colonel or below) within SFC are considered permanent in nature unless otherwise designated.
5. Only the Admiralty Board may approve promotions to the rank of fleet captain/brigadier colonel or higher.

Email your promotion requests to your starbase commander and include the Chief of Membership Services via the Promotion Request Form.

Do remember that ranks are supposed to be fun and are fictional. While higher-ranking members may oversee lower-ranking ones, senior members should not boss around or bully those with lower ranks.

### **CLASSIFICATION OF RANKS**

The unit commander is the command authority for the unit, regardless of rank. If an Admiralty Board member is also a local member of that unit, the board member is still subject to the command authority of the unit commander, regardless of the commanding officer's rank.

Starfleet Command has three classifications of rank:

- **Midshipman** - This is anyone under 10 years of age. At age 10, they are promoted to a non-commissioned crew member rank of recruit or private, depending on their departmental choice. They are allowed to take any of the STEP exams at the Academy. They are not allowed to become officers until age 16, when they can take the officer exams.
- **NCO or Non-Commissioned Officer** - Starfleet or Marine crew members do not go to the SFC Academy and take the exams. These crewmen, ages 10 and above, are a vital part to each unit but may NOT hold an officer's position. They are eligible for promotion as an enlisted officer or NCO member. Those positions include: (Starfleet/Marine) recruit/private; specialist/corporal; petty officer/sergeant; chief petty officer/staff sergeant, and so forth.
- **Commissioned Officers** - Starfleet personnel or a Marine (ages 16 or up) attend the SFC Academy and pass both the departmental and OCS exams for their areas. These members are allowed to hold

officer positions with ranks such as ensign/2nd LT; LTJG/ 1st LT; LT/Marine captain; commander/LT colonel, and so forth.

Fleet Marines have a different rank title for their enlisted crew members and officers but have no other differentiation in SFCQ1. Fleet Marines may command or be a first officer in any SFC chapter. To hold chief positions, they must also take that departmental exam.

Members who are at least 16 years old and wish to hold an officer rank must pass the SFC Academy's OCS core and one of eight departmental exams.

Officers who wish to change departments must first attend the SFC Academy and pass the exam for the department they wish to join. For example, if an engineer wishes to change to medical, they must first take the medical exam and pass it before being transferred to that department.

Enlisted crew members wishing to transfer to a different department only need to let Membership Services know of the change via a transfer request form. It will be noted on the database without further documentation.

The unit commanding officer is responsible for requesting promotions for the unit's crew members. The starbase commander is responsible for requesting promotion for the local unit commander.

### **TRANSFERS**

All SFCQ1 adult members wanting to transfer to a new unit have that right but must submit their request in writing to Membership Services via a transfer request form. Membership Services will, in turn, get permission from the new CO before processing the transfer. Members can only be assigned to one ship at a time. Transfer request forms can be found on the website ([www.Starfleet-Command.com](http://www.Starfleet-Command.com)).

### **ACADEMY**

Members must contact the Commandant at the Academy at [Academy@SFCQ1.com](mailto:Academy@SFCQ1.com) to register before requesting the exams. Members must have 30 days in membership before requesting exams but may register with SFC Academy at any time. All new members will be placed in a unit as a recruit or private except for those under 10 years of age. Members ages 10 to 16 years old may take departmental or provisional exams. These exams do not carry a rank promotion after passing but can be viewed by commanding officers as grounds for promotion in the enlisted ranks. Any member, 16 years or older, regardless of time in grade or time in service, may take the officer exams. Passing the departmental and OCS exams from the Academy will result in an immediate sanctioning for promotion to an officer's rank.

To command a unit, a commissioned officer should be 18 years of age or older and must pass the Academy's Command Basics exam.

### **NEW MEMBERS & RENEWALS**

New members who joined in the first half of the year will need to pay renewal dues the following January. New members who joined July 1 or later do not have to pay dues for the upcoming calendar year. All other members need to renew before January 31 of the year. COs who do not renew risk forfeiture of their command.

A yearly family/household membership is set up by the purchaser/head of household and is based on the size of the household. Those living at the same residence can be added as family/household members (pets excluded). The purchaser/head of house must renew annually. Any member who moves to a new residence must assume responsibility for their own membership dues.

Lifetime memberships are granted to a purchaser/member. For a slightly higher fee, anyone living at the same residence can be added under the same membership. If a member moves to a new residence, they lose the lifetime benefit and must be responsible for their own membership dues. Lifetime memberships cannot be bequeathed/inherited, exchanged, or given to another individual or group. Upon death, revocation or the



termination of membership of the purchaser/member, the lifetime membership becomes null and void, and all members listed on the plan become responsible for their own membership dues.

## **RECRUITMENT**

There are no tried-and-true recruitment techniques. You can contact fan message boards; search through Trek Space and Facebook for fans in your area; and set up a recruiting table at local conventions. These are just a few ideas to help you find like-minded people who may enjoy celebrating their love of sci-fi together. You MAY NOT recruit from other chapters with in SFC.

One of the greatest recruitment tools is to have fun and let others know how much fun you are having. Plan fun events and invite everyone plus guests to attend. Some examples are a potluck picnic, movie night at someone's house, an outing to a museum/planetarium, or a costume party. Millions of possibilities exist. Whatever the event, remember to always have a stack of enlistment papers with you. You can download them from the documents section of the SFC website and print out copies.

Advertising your unit is crucial to its growth. It is hard to recruit if no one knows about your unit. When planning any activities that could be related to the community, it is the perfect opportunity to advertise. Most newspapers have an announcement section for upcoming events, and they publish them for free. Local radio talk shows and newspapers are always on the lookout for human interest stories. Also, consider Trek Space and Facebook as sources. If you host an event/meeting at a restaurant, ask to be featured on their Facebook page with your information tagged. Look at Facebook and Meetup events to see if any align with your unit. Facebook and Meetup have many features to promote your chapter; look into it!

Designate one person on the unit as the chief archives officer. That person's role is to attend every activity/event and take pictures. The images can be posted online, and they will be invaluable for promoting the ship, building a website, or making a scrapbook that you can take to conventions.

Join the Facebook groups provided by Starfleet Command as well as setting up your own page to announce all your events and fundraisers. You may get other units that want to contribute to your efforts. If nothing else, it lets all of Starfleet Command know about your activities.

## **WHEN THINGS GO WRONG**

It may be an activity that didn't work as you planned, or something caused a personality conflict between members in your unit. Take a deep breath and defuse the situation with as much diplomacy as possible. Formal boards of inquiry and courts-martial should be used as a last resort. AFEDs covers Boards of Inquiry and court martials.

## **FINAL NOTE**

Remember, you are never alone, and no problem is totally unique. If a situation arises where you are unsure of what to do, you have a vast amount of experience at your fingertips. The entire Admiralty Board, along with your starbase commander, is ready to answer your questions. We love to communicate via email, text or phone. Odds are we have had the same question at one time or another. To recap the highlights of this document:

- For protocol, ask your starbase commander or the Deputy Fleet Commander.
- For a question about your membership, crew size or renewals, contact the Chief of Membership Services at [cms@sfcq1.com](mailto:cms@sfcq1.com).
- To publish in the Q1 newsletter, contact the Chief of Fleet Communications at [CoC@sfcq1.com](mailto:CoC@sfcq1.com) or [editor@SFCQ1.com](mailto:editor@SFCQ1.com).
- To register for the Academy or request an exam, contact the Commandant at SFC Academy at [Academy@sfcq1.com](mailto:Academy@sfcq1.com).

The list of admirals and starbase commanders along with all the official documents are located on the website at <https://www.starfleet-command.com>.