



# How to Get Involved in Emergency Services

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Information Abstracted from:

CAPR 60-1, 60-3, 60-4, and 173-3  
The National Emergency Services Curriculum Project  
General Emergency Services Task Guide

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This is an evolving document. If you have suggestions or corrections to anything, please e-mail the author at [fhsmith@scwg.cap.gov](mailto:fhsmith@scwg.cap.gov). Frequent revisions expected.

Welcome to CAP's Emergency Services Program! Becoming trained and involved in one of CAP's most important Missions for America is an exciting prospect. You can look forward to a future that includes lifesaving activities in Search and Rescue, Disaster Relief, Homeland Security and other missions.

## **Getting Started**

One of the first things you will notice is that CAP ES participants do a lot of training. We spend a lot of time and money to make sure that we're qualified, informed, and confident when we're called upon to execute a mission.

In order to participate in a CAP mission or exercise, you must first be qualified or a trainee in one or more ES specialties. You'll notice that a lot of these specialties have some resemblance to other jobs that are performed in CAP as a whole – such as operations, communications, logistics, finance, etc. The thing to remember is: in order to practice these specialties in the Emergency Services environment you have to gain a rating that's particular to the ES arena.

## **The First ES Qualification**

The first thing you need to do to get started in CAP Emergency Services is to complete the requirements for your **General Emergency Services (GES)** Qualification. There's a little book learning involved here, and you have to delve into the regulations that govern ES operations. The good news is that completion of this qualification will give you the basis for branching out into the various specialties that ES has to offer.

The steps to completing General ES are:

- Be a member in good standing with your permanent CAP ID card. You can't be involved in ES until you have received your permanent card.
- If you're a senior member, you must complete your Level I orientation and Cadet Protection courses. Consult with your unit's Professional Development Officer, Deputy Commander for Seniors, or Commander if necessary on how to get this done. **When you have completed this and your unit's command staff has properly reported it to CAP National Headquarters, this achievement will be posted to your electronic records.**
- If you're a cadet, you must complete Achievement I (The Curry Award). Your cadet officers and Deputy Commander for Cadets will help you get this accomplished. **When you have completed this, your unit commander or his designee will need to enter this achievement into your electronic emergency services records.**
- You must take the test for General Emergency Services, known as CAPT 116, Parts 1 and 2. This is a 50 question open book test that checks your knowledge of CAP regulations and practices, as well as your knowledge of the Incident Command System. **When you have completed the on-line test and passed it, the results will be noted to your on-line ES records automatically.**

## **Tasks, Trainee Status and Qualification**

Once you've completed General Emergency Services (congratulations!) you will be issued (or you can print from CAP e-services on the web) a CAP Form 101 which shows you as qualified in General ES. You'll then be ready to start training in the specialty or specialties of interest to you. Your unit ES officer can introduce you to ES specialties and give you guidance on how to progress through them.

In order to complete your training in a specialty, you have to complete certain **tasks**. In the section above, you saw the tasks required for GES. Tasks for other specialties are listed on the **Specialty Qualification Training Record (SQTR)** for that specialty. As you progress in your training and complete the tasks, your progress will be charted on your SQTR – either on paper or electronically. There are five sections to an SQTR, but not all specialties will use all five.

- **Prerequisites.** Just like it sounds, these are items that you must have completed prior to beginning your training in the specialty. One item that is a prerequisite for every specialty is the Unit Commander's (or course instructor's) endorsement.
- **Familiarization and Preparatory Training (F&P).** These are tasks that you must be taught or otherwise complete prior to participating in an exercise or a mission as a trainee in the specialty.
- **Advanced Training.** Tasks that you complete either during individual training, an exercise, or a mission. These do not necessarily have to be completed under an assigned mission with a mission number, but frequently are.
- **Exercise participation.** You must participate in two exercises or missions as a trainee before you can become qualified. These no longer have to be performed under separate mission numbers, but some common sense is required when attempting to use one mission number for both exercises.
- **Approval.** Once you have completed the items in the first four sections, you must obtain the approval of your unit commander and in most cases the approval of the appropriate wing staff. If your unit uses the MIMS computer system to track your tasks individually, then once you've done them all your specialty will be forwarded to your unit commander for approval. After that, it goes to the wing level.

## **Becoming Qualified in General Emergency Services**

So you already know what you need to accomplish to get your CAP Form 101 (sometimes called the "101 Card"). So what's on this CAP Test 116 and how do you take it? Well, the test is based on the following materials:

- CAPR 60-3, which is the regulation that covers Emergency Services. You can download and print (or just view) the most recent version of this regulation here: [http://level2.cap.gov/documents/u\\_082503073358.pdf](http://level2.cap.gov/documents/u_082503073358.pdf).
- CAPR 173-3, the CAP regulation regarding reimbursement for mission related expenses. If you put forth some money for a mission, it's good to know how and

under what circumstances you get it back! You can check out the regulation here: [http://level2.cap.gov/documents/u\\_082503080636.pdf](http://level2.cap.gov/documents/u_082503080636.pdf).

- Other GES reference material available for download from the CAP National Headquarters web site: <http://level2.cap.gov/index.cfm?nodeID=5785>.

In this document we'll cover some of the basics, and lead you through some of the things you need to know that aren't so obvious by reading the regulations. This isn't a catch-all for the test, so you definitely need to read through the material and have it handy when you're taking the test. The object is to learn something while taking the test. Oftentimes, units will conduct a General ES class for new members. Ask your unit for help if you need it.

Most of the information below is taken directly from the GES Curriculum and Task Guide. The regulations and material linked above provides much more detailed answers and you should refer to that for the full explanation.

*You are a new member on a mission, and are approached by a reporter, friend or relative the missing persons, or a curious bystander, who questions you about your team and the mission. What do you do?*

Simply put, you direct this person to the Information Officer for the mission. Be courteous and polite at all times; the words "No Comment" should never be used. Simply get them in touch with the Information Officer if there is one, or to the Incident Commander. If you can't find either of these people, find your immediate superior (in the mission) and let that person take over. The only people authorized to give out information regarding a mission or exercise are the Incident Commander and the Information Officer on the instructions of the Incident Commander.

*What are my risks from bloodborne pathogens on a CAP mission?*

When serving on a CAP mission you may have the unfortunate duty of being in a situation where you will need to be cautious of diseases that can be transmitted from blood. Examples of bloodborne pathogens include AIDS, and hepatitis. If you encounter such a situation, leave the handling of blood or other biologically contaminated objects to the professionals.

*What are the missions I would undertake in CAP?*

- Search and Rescue – including both air and ground taskings.
- Disaster Relief – air and ground work to mitigate and respond to disasters. Reconnaissance is a major part of CAP's role.
- Counterdrug missions. These require special clearances and are not part of emergency services.
- Transportation.

*Who are our customers? What agencies do we work with?*

- Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC). Our inland search and rescue taskings come from AFRCC.
- Air Force National Security Emergency Preparedness (AFNSEP). This is the agency that tasks us with nationally funded or assigned disaster relief missions.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – through AFNSEP typically.
- South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) – for state missions not supported by the federal government.
- United States Air Force (USAF) – other missions in support of the Air Force.
- Others are listed in the detailed material, but are not commonly used.

*What are some of the specialties available in CAP ES?*

- Aircrew.
  - Mission Scanner – the main visual searcher, the scanner's duties are extensive and change from mission to mission.
  - Mission Observer – the coordinator of information, radio operator, and visual searcher the observer is in many cases the commander of the mission aircrew.
  - Mission Pilot – the mission pilot is the commander of the aircraft (and sometimes the mission, depending on the aircrew) and is responsible strictly for flying the aircraft safely.
- Ground Teams – these teams do searching or other taskings on the ground and are often paired with aircraft when searching for specific targets.
  - Ground Team Leader – leads the team.
  - Ground Team Member – is an individual trained to safely and effectively perform searches or other taskings in almost any type of environment. There are different levels of Ground Team Member, and the higher you get, the more qualified you are to work in challenging conditions.
  - Urban Direction Finding Team Member – These individuals are trained to use direction finding techniques to locate and find emergency distress beacons. However, they are limited to urban and suburban areas whereas Ground Team Members are not.
- Mission Base Staff. Not all of these sections need be activated if they are not needed for a specific mission.
  - Incident Commander – the overall mission commander. There is only one IC at a time.
  - Agency Liason – this person handles communication and cooperation with other agencies.
  - Mission Safety Officer – oversees the mission and with the cooperation of every person involved in the mission ensures that we complete our taskings in a safe manner. SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY IN EVERYTHING WE DO.
  - Information Officer – handles the dissemination of information to the public.

- Operations Section Chief – responsible for all operations of a mission.
  - Air Operations Branch Director – tasks and manages air sorties.
  - Ground Branch Director – tasks and manages ground sorties.
- Planning Section Chief – keeps track of the big picture and plans for multiple operational periods including resource usage and requirements.
- Logistics Section Chief – handles all logistical support for the mission including food, facilities, etc.
  - Communications Unit Leader – responsible for all communications requirements and messaging, as well as communications equipment.
    - Mission Radio Operator – operates communication equipment and handles message traffic.
- Finance/Admin Section Chief – tracks costs and administration of the mission.
- Mission Chaplain – available for counseling as needed.
- Mission Staff Assistant – assists the mission base staff in conducting the mission.

### *What is a CAP Form 101T?*

The CAPF 101T is obsolete and has been replaced by the SQTR. You'll still hear or read references to both, and they're pretty much the same thing.

### *What do I do when I arrive at a mission? Is it really that important that I sign in?*

In a word, yes. The first thing you should do is get yourself and your equipment signed in. This provides you with CAP and other federal insurance coverage as a volunteer to the US Government. If you are participating in an Air Force Assigned or Air Force Approved mission, you will be covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act (liability protection) and the Federal Employee Compensation Act (medical or death benefits). If you don't sign in, you get no protections, you will not be authorized on the mission, and you may cost others their protections as well. You will also not receive any training credit. It's very important that you arrive at a mission with your 101 card, your SQTR card if you are a trainee, and your CAP ID card.

### *How do I get credit for tasks I completed?*

You must complete your tasks under the supervision of someone who is a qualified skills evaluator and also qualified in the specialty in which you are training. This person will note on your SQTR which tasks have been completed under his or her supervision.

### *How does a mission come about? Who gets the calls?*

1. In South Carolina Wing, the outside agency that tasks us will notify a wing level official. We have an alerting roster for the state, and someone on the roster will be called.
2. The alerting officer is usually a qualified incident commander and will either take command of the mission or pass it on to another qualified incident commander.

3. The incident commander will consult the individual unit's alerting roster and alert those units that are required to accomplish the mission. The IC may also alert specific wing resources, such as the Director of Communications.
4. The unit's alerting officer will task the personnel and resources necessary to respond to the IC's tasking.
5. The field teams (aircrew and ground teams) will be deployed, communications will be activated, and other mission base staff will report to mission base – all as necessary.
6. Many missions will require a minimum of personnel and resources. Disaster relief or large scale search and rescue operations typically require a mission base and a larger presence.

*How do I stay prepared?*

You should keep yourself and your mission kits ready to go in case you are called. Your specialty training will identify what you need to do to be ready. It's understood that we are all volunteers and unable to respond at all times, but you should stay ready and respond whenever at all possible.

*I read earlier about bloodborne pathogens. Am I going to come into contact with messy situations like this?*

It's possible. Search and rescue missions take top priority in CAP and along with that come some pretty unfortunate situations. The good news is that the overwhelming majority of SAR mission calls wind up being false alarms, but you have to treat every one as though there's a person or people in distress waiting for you to find them.

If you find yourself in a stressful situation, CAP has Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) personnel available to help you, as well as Mission Chaplains who can counsel you. Do not hesitate to ask for this help if you need it and it hasn't already been provided.

*What else might I be called upon to do?*

Just about anything. Especially in a disaster relief situation, CAP volunteers can be found doing everything from filling sandbags to overflying evacuation routes to knocking on doors to see if people need help.

*What are some of the risks involved? How can I help reduce them?*

First and foremost, keep safety on the brain. There's nothing that CAP does that requires you to compromise your own personal safety.

- On the flight line, turning propellers are always a risk. Stay away from the propeller of an aircraft, even if it's not currently turning. Approach an aircraft at an angle from the rear if you are uncertain.

- Don't participate if you are fatigued or not feeling well. That's the quickest way to mistakes that can compromise your safety or that of other participants.
- Be "expedient but safe." In SAR situations especially, you need to operate in an expedient manner. Don't rush and compromise your safety, just learn the tools of your trade and become comfortable with it so that you can move quickly and safely when you need to.
- Don't travel unsafely.
- Use good common sense.

*What is the Posse Comitatus Act and how does it affect my duties in CAP?*

Let's look at the word-for-word on this one.

The Posse Comitatus Act prohibits CAP, while on Air Force assigned missions (regardless of whether the mission is Air Force reimbursable), from engaging in law enforcement activities other than reconnaissance of property or transport of personnel and equipment. CAP members may not carry firearms, participate in detention or arrest of persons or seizure of property or conduct surveillance of persons or property.

Reconnaissance is distinguished from surveillance in that surveillance involves continuous observation while reconnaissance involves momentary observation, like the difference between a surveillance camera and a transitory snapshot. CAP can do reconnaissance. This is passive observation for general activity. An example is CAP's counterdrug mission where CAP aircraft perform a general search for marijuana over a large area. CAP cannot do surveillance. Surveillance is looking for a specific objective. An example would be conducting a search for an orange van that has fugitives in it. CAP units and members engaged in CAP activities may provide passive assistance to law enforcement officers and agencies only.

CAP members may not be deputized nor may they take an active part in arrest or detention activities and have no authority to restrict persons by means of force, actual or implied. You aren't a law enforcement agent, so don't try to act like one. If you are a law enforcement agent, you have to choose which hat you're going to wear before embarking on the mission. You can either act as a law enforcement agent, or a CAP Volunteer, but not both.

Crash/Disaster Site Surveillance: CAP units may upon proper request of local/controlling officials, provide site surveillance in crash and disaster situations in order to protect the scene or property. Such arrangements should be temporary in nature and should specify that CAP members have no power to arrest or detain anyone but only to report those who decline to obey requests not to enter the area to authorities. We are not in the confrontation game. If it comes to a situation of fight or flee over your piece of turf, flee and let law enforcement take care of any confrontation.

Distress Beacons: we find a lot of these. If a distress beacon is tracked to a locked vehicle, aircraft, or building, contact the incident commander. If entry is required, local law enforcement officials will preside over any entry.

**CAP members have NO special dispensations over an ordinary citizen in relation to law enforcement or private property issues.** This means you can't speed down the highway or trespass onto others' property. We take our regulations and state and federal laws very seriously. If you break them you put yourself, your fellow volunteers, and the CAP in jeopardy, and you will find yourself subject to the consequences.

*Regulations? Are there any others that I need to know about?*

You already know about CAPR 60-3 and 173-3. CAPR 60-1 covers flight operations, CAPR 60-4 contains emergency services forms (some will vary from state to state), and CAPR 60-5 covers critical incident stress management.

You can find copies of all the current regulations and forms (not just for ES) on-line. Go to [http://level2.cap.gov/visitors/member\\_services/publications](http://level2.cap.gov/visitors/member_services/publications) and you'll find what you need.

*If I put some of my own money into a mission or exercise, how do I get reimbursed?*

Your fuel and oil costs, as well as any commercial communications expenses (long-distance phone calls) are reimbursable from appropriated funds. CAPR 173-3 covers how to be reimbursed. Get familiar with the CAP Form 108, which is the form you will need to fill out and turn in along with the original receipt for your expenses. In a disaster relief mission, other expenses such as charts, overnight stays, and meals may be reimbursed as well. You would be notified in advance of such a situation.

*This is a little overwhelming. Where can I get more help?*

Ask your fellow volunteers. Talk to your unit ES officer, operations officer, deputy commander for seniors/cadets, or unit commander. Those people can always pass along questions to the wing level staff if need be. Those folks are all there to help you.

**Once you're familiar with the material, go on-line and take the test!** Remember, it's open book, so you can have reference materials around you if you need them. Most people do.

You can take the test by going to:

<https://tests.cap.af.mil/ops/tests/default.cfm?Message=Ok&grp=dos>

Be sure you select CAPT 116 Parts 1 and 2 (50 questions).

Good luck, and welcome to CAP Emergency Services!