



Cadets is a national program for youth aged 12 to 18. It is sponsored by the Canadian Forces and three civilian organizations: the Navy League, Army Cadet League and Air Cadet League.

Nationally there are 1100 corps and squadrons involving 58 000 youth. Cadets are supervised by members of the Canadian Forces, most of whom are among the 7500 members of the Canadian Forces Reserve Cadet Instructor Cadre (CIC). Its members are specially trained part-time members of the Canadian Forces who dedicate their spare time to the development of Canada's youth.

The aim of the Cadet Program is to develop in youth the attributes of good citizenship and leadership, promote physical fitness and stimulate the interest of youth in sea, land and air activities of the Canadian Forces.

Cadets are encouraged to become active, responsible members of their communities. The Cadet Program helps them develop self-confidence, self-esteem and teamwork. Other benefits may include high school credits, scholarships and training in public speaking.


Sea Cadets learn seamanship skills, including navigation and how to sail. Army Cadets focus on expeditions, trekking, orienteering and abseiling. For Air Cadets, the focus is on aviation including gliding and studies in aerospace.

There are no enrolment or registration fees, basic activities of the Cadet Program are covered. Uniforms are provided at no charge and cadets selected for cadet camps attend at no cost. Cadets are expected to assist their local sponsor by participating in fundraising activities on behalf of their civilian League Organization to cover the cost of activities not covered by the Canadian Forces.

During the training year, from September to June, cadets normally meet one evening per week and on some weekends. During the summer, selected cadets have the opportunity to attend one of the cadet camps across Canada, which can last between 2 and 6 weeks.

The Cadet Program is community-based. The program succeeds through strong community support and involvement. Cadets in turn make valuable contributions to their communities.

Through the Cadet Program, the Government of Canada is investing in today's youth and Canada's future.



Cadets is one of Canada's oldest youth program. The origins of the program can be traced back to 1862. By 1879, Army Cadets was formed, followed by Sea Cadets in 1895. Air Cadets was introduced in 1941. In 1975, girls were first allowed to join Cadets. Today, they represent thirty-four percent of all cadets in Canada.



Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and Air Cadets each have their own training program designed to offer challenging, safe and fun activities, while allowing cadets to benefit from increased self-confidence, self-esteem and teamwork.

Local training is offered during the school year and makes up the core of the training program. Summer training is offered to selected cadets based on merit and allows them to further their skills and knowledge. Weekly training forms the basis of local training. Cadets attend practical and theoretic lessons in various subjects such as leadership, first aid, drill, public speaking, biathlon and marksmanship. Sports is also an important part of their training. Weekend "field exercises" throughout the year allow cadets to reinforce their skills and knowledge in an outdoor setting while developing camaraderie and teamwork.

The training structure has progressive levels roughly equivalent to the number of years in the program. As cadets acquire skills and knowledge, they learn how to pass that knowledge on to younger cadets, thus creating a learning circle.

Other activities complement the core program, such as music, air rifle and firearms safety, marksmanship and biathlon. Instructors also have the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities that may be unique to their community. All training must be approved by the regional office.

Summer training is offered at 24 cadet summer camps, or cadet summer training centres as they are officially called. Courses are two, three or six weeks long. Normally, a cadet's first course is a basic course. Each year that cadets return to "camp", they participate in more advanced training.

Seniors cadets may be employed to teach junior courses, similar to the system at the local level. Senior cadets may also be selected to travel overseas as participants in one of our many international exchanges.

Elementally-specific activities make Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and Air Cadets unique. Sea Cadets take part in sailing and learn seamanship, marine navigation and naval customs. Army Cadets study orienteering and take part in canoeing and expeditions. Air Cadets learn about aircraft, meteorology and principles of flight.



A community wishing to have a cadet corps or squadron must show the ability to provide support before the Canadian Forces will consider forming one. While there is significant financial support from the Canadian Forces, community volunteers are essential to the success of this program.

The Navy League, Army Cadet League and Air Cadet League supervise sponsoring committees within the community and promote the program locally. The leagues also liaise with the Canadian Forces concerning the support required to carry out cadet training and activities.


Sponsoring committees are organizations of volunteers that coordinate community support for Cadets. Their exact make-up varies and may include the sponsors, parents, community members, service clubs, town councils and businesses. They are responsible for providing suitable accommodations for cadet training and activities, promoting the Cadet Program to the community, fundraising, and managing funds for activities that the Canadian Forces does not financially support.

At the community level, responsibility for the Cadet Program is shared between the cadet corps/squadron staff (military) and the sponsoring committee (civilian).

On the military side, members of the Cadet Instructors Cadre, make up cadet corps/squadron staff. These instructors are normally individuals recruited from the community and trained by the Canadian Forces. Other Canadian Forces members and civilian instructors may also be members of the local staff.

Many cadet corps and squadrons may have Regular or Reserve Force affiliated units. The affiliated units provide support towards the achievement of the cadet corps or squadron's goals.

The Commanders of six Regional Cadet Support Units (RCSU) located in the Atlantic, Eastern, Central, Prairie, Pacific and Northern Regions of the country are responsible for implementing the Cadet Program and for providing Canadian Forces support to local cadet corps/squadrons. The 13 cadet detachments, 24 cadet camps and the various gliding and sailing centres are sub-units of the Regional Cadet Support Units. The Director Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers is responsible for policy and budget on behalf of the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.



Responsibility is shared between the Canadian Forces and three civilian organizations: the Navy League, the Army Cadet League and the Air Cadet League. Each of these organizations has a multi-layered structure, with a national headquarters in Ottawa, provincial or regional offices, and a presence at the local unit or community level.



The Cadet Instructors Cadre is a sub-component of the Canadian Forces Reserve. It is the largest officer branch in the Canadian Forces with members from the sea, army and air elements. The primary duty of the Cadet Instructors Cadre is the safety, supervision, administration and training of cadets.

Like all reservists, members of the Cadet Instructors Cadre come from all walks of life. The majority of them serve the Canadian Forces on a part-time basis while pursuing a civilian career or furthering their education. On average, they receive 25 days of pay annually with most of them volunteering many extra days.

Many members of the Cadet Instructors Cadre are former cadets who wish to continue their involvement in the Cadet Program. Some are former Regular Force or Primary Reserve members. Others are interested parents or members of the local community who enrol to support the program.

Cadet Instructors Cadre training gives officers the skills and knowledge required to implement training and activities within local cadet units and during summer training. As commissioned officers of the Canadian Forces, they also receive training in military principles, history and organization; leadership; and harassment and racism prevention.

Recruiting for the Cadet Instructors Cadre is handled by Canadian Forces Recruiting Centres. Candidates must have a Grade 12 education or high school equivalency, be a Canadian citizen between the ages of 18 and 64, and meet Canadian Forces medical standards. Candidates must also undergo stringent screening that includes a background criminal check and testing to determine their suitability to work with youth.

A distinctive gold maple leaf badge identifies Cadet Instructors Cadre officers, with a superimposed anchor, crossed swords or eagle representing sea, land and air.

The thread which connects all members of the Cadet Instructors Cadre is their dedication to youth. Members of the Cadet Instructors Cadre are dynamic and competent adults who contribute their time and energy to help youth become leaders and esteemed members of their community.



Legend

- Sea Cadets
- Army Cadets
- Air Cadets

