

# VIRGINIA DEFENSE FORCE PAMPHLET 350-7-1

## Non-Commissioned Officer Leadership Development

(Self Study Training Course)

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# **VIRGINIA DEFENSE FORCE**

## **NCO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE**

### **Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer**

No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as the backbone of the Virginia Defense Force.

I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Virginia Defense Force and the Commonwealth of Virginia, regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind – accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role.

All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers, and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate constantly with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and discipline.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve, seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, or my moral courage.

I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget, that we are Professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, Leaders!

# INTRODUCTION

Objectives: This **Non**commissioned **O**fficer **L**eadership **D**evelopment Course (NCOLD) provides potential Noncommissioned Officers basic knowledge needed to be successful as a new NCO. Leadership of volunteers is a tough job requiring a high standard of knowledge and professionalism. As a new NCO, you would be a key part of the success of your unit, your leaders, and your subordinates. This course is a starting point in learning your new role.

Course Procedures: This is an extension study course – you complete it at your own speed on your own time. Read the material in this book then take the written test. Your trainer will grade your test and identify the questions you miss, so you can correct the test to 100%. Scored tests are then posted in your Company level MPRJ.

Who May Take This Course: Any VDF member may take this course. We suggest all being considered for promotion to Corporal and all direct appointees as Corporal complete NCOLD. Company officers may find it useful to take NCOLD to broaden their understanding of the roles of Noncommissioned Officers as leaders, trainers, and technical experts.

Source: This course was developed from FM 600-20 (March 1980), TC 22-6 (November 1990) and FM 7-22.7 (December 2002), all titled The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide. The text was modified to apply to VDF situations and organization. However, this text has been closely modeled after the contents of these documents, and much of the original language has been retained.

The Types of Officers: As a Virginia Defense Force NCO, you hold a key position as an officer of the VDF. You will work with three types of VDF officers. Each has a vital role in our ability to perform our mission. The talents and skills of all officers mesh to create an efficient organization. No one type is better or more important than another – without each we could not function. Mutual respect and reliance gets the job done.

1. COMMISSIONED OFFICERS: The ranks of Major General, Brigadier General, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, 1<sup>ST</sup> Lieutenant and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant hold commissions as officers signed by the Governor. Commissioned officers are responsible for overall management, direction, and long range planning of the activities of their units.
2. WARRANT OFFICERS: Chief Warrant Officers (CW-5, CW-4, CW-3 and CW-2) and Warrant Officers (WO-1) hold warrants as officers signed by the Governor. Warrant Officers are technical experts responsible for management of key staff functions or equipment systems. Warrant Officers may command special purpose units and task organized operational elements.
3. NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS: The ranks of Command Sergeant Major, Sergeant Major, First Sergeant, Master Sergeant, Sergeant First Class, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant and Corporal hold appointments signed by the appropriate VDF Commander as Noncommissioned Officers. NCO's are small unit leaders, responsible for leading unit elements in mission tasks, maintaining discipline and standards, individual training, and for a high degree of personal mission expertise. NCO leadership, knowledge, ability, judgment, and integrity are what make a unit outstanding.

## I HISTORY

As professional armies developed in the years 1500 – 1800, practical leaders evolved whose job it was to control formations on the battlefield. When close range fire or the push of the bayonet were the way battles were won, these leaders kept the soldiers in orderly lines and columns. Sergeants and Corporals were experienced soldiers, steady under fire, who could keep the Company in the right order. As companies lined up on the battlefield in regiments and battalions, Sergeant Majors became responsible for ordering portions of the line of battle – this position dropped the “Sergeant” from the title becoming today’s Major. The Sergeant Major General, today’s Major General, managed the formation of entire Armies. From the first, Sergeants were responsible for maintaining unit discipline and completing the mission.

In the 1700s armies became more complex. Larger, permanent forces operating year round needed more and more leaders and specialists to make the complex organization work. Organizations larger than Companies needed senior Sergeants to maintain discipline – First Sergeants and Sergeants Major (as NCOs) appeared. Sergeants were needed for technical or administrative tasks – Ordnance Sergeants, Quartermaster Sergeants, Staff Sergeants and Technical Sergeants. In the late 1800-early1900s there were a wide variety of different NCO types in the US Army. In each case, NCOs freed officers to deal with larger management issues of making new weapons, new doctrine, and new ways of fighting work.

In the 1950s through 1970s, the NCO came of age as a manager and leader in the US Army. Permanent NCO ranks, professional NCO education, and the system of insignia as we know it today evolved. Finally, in the 1980s the Army defined the modern role of the NCO. This history has given the VDF a sound basis for our NCOs as community and Unit leaders.

## II LEADERSHIP

NCOs stripes mean you have been chosen by your Commander to be a leader. Your position as a leader sets you apart from other enlisted soldiers. Every soldier must know and do his or her job, but not every soldier can be a leader. As a Corporal or Sergeant, you are a leader.

Noncommissioned Officers are our first line leadership. You supervise other regular VDF members who are junior to you in rank and you may lead temporary volunteers. The challenge is to always set the example and strive to earn the trust and confidence of your subordinates and your Warrant and Commissioned officers. Respect and confidence are not issued in the package your rank insignia came in. You have to earn them by showing superior ability in mission skills and by obvious, genuine concern for the well being of your subordinates. You have to take care of your people and still get the job done.

NCOs train soldiers to do mission skills to high standards of excellence. In emergency work, life and death of both the people who need your help and your own soldiers depend on your ability to flawlessly carry out difficult, complex, technical tasks. The day of showing up, as an untrained and ignorant but willing soldier is long past. Modern emergency work requires long hard training.

NCOs train small units of the VDF – platoons and companies to work together as teams. As an NCO, unit teamwork is your responsibility. You must understand that every soldier's performance is vital, and that in teams every soldier depends on every other soldier and on properly maintained and operating equipment. You build teamwork and unit proficiency to get ready for the day when your unit will have to respond to an emergency.

There are few natural leaders. Leadership is learned by training, practice, and experience. To help you, military manuals may be available in your unit, and a variety of leadership books can be found in any good library or bookstore. Read several. Watch other leaders in your Company, especially those who are successful. Learn from them by asking questions. Learn from yourself by carefully and honestly analyzing your successes and failures.

To become a better leader, you must:

1. Know Your Job. To be a good NCO you must know your job exceptionally well.
2. Know Yourself. As an NCO your job requires you to get things done with your soldiers under the most difficult of conditions: the uncertainty, confusion, stress, and fear of an emergency. In those challenging circumstances three things are essential to success:
  - a. COURAGE - yours and that of your soldiers;
  - b. TEAMWORK - how well you have trained your team, and
  - c. LEADERSHIP -how well you lead and how well your soldiers follow.

Teamwork and leadership come from good training. Courage is different. Military people think of courage in battle – emergency services work requires just as much courage. Don't expect your soldiers' courage to make up for poor training or bad leadership.

3. Know Your Soldiers. As an NCO you must know your soldiers, how they will react under the stress and uncertainty of actual operations. To do this you must know how well trained they are and how they perform as team members. A key part of your leadership responsibility is showing real concern for the well being of your soldiers and for their personal and professional development. This lets you build a solid team of confident well-trained individuals whose dedication to getting the job done comes first.
4. Be Honest. Tell it like is – not like you think someone wants to hear it. The VDF wants and must have the truth. If something is wrong, say so – be straightforward, objective, and factual. If you make a mistake, admit it – keep your integrity. Make a habit to tell the truth – your personal credibility depends on it and in an emergency others lives depend on it.

### III AUTHORITY

Authority is the right to direct soldiers to do specific things. It may be as simple as issuing an order: "Privates Jones and Walker start filling sandbags; Corporal Wilson lay out the vinyl sheeting for the levee." It may be directing your soldiers to "follow me and do as I do." You tell your soldiers to do something. Combine this with good leadership by telling them to follow your example.

In the Virginia Defense Force there are two basic types of authority.

1. Command Authority: When you hold a position requiring you to direct or control others you have command authority. It is part of the job of any officer. It applies only to the soldiers, facilities, and equipment that make up the unit or team you are in charge of. For example, as a Platoon Sergeant, the soldiers in your Platoon have to obey your orders. However, you do not have command authority over another platoon's personnel.
2. General Military Authority: All members of the VDF have general military authority. This is the authority to act in the absence of a unit leader or other designated authority. For example, if you see VDF personnel violating the law, regulations, or general orders, you have both the general military authority and the legal obligation to correct the situation. This applies even if none of the personnel are assigned to your unit. For example, you have authority and the duty to enforce uniform regulations.

Command and general military authority come from solid sources. The first of these is Defense Force regulations, policies, and command guidance. The regulations establish how the VDF functions. We have relatively few of these documents and each NCO should be familiar with them and their most important provisions.

The second source is the Military Laws of Virginia (Title 44 Code of Virginia) and the current edition of the Manual for Courts-Martial. Unlike auxiliary organizations such as Civil Air Patrol and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Defense Force members are under military discipline as defined in the Commonwealth's laws for training and for active duty. The Military Laws define the legal authority of NCOs and specify penalties, including fines and incarceration, for violations of the law.

The third source of authority is the chain of command and the NCO support channel. Orders and policies passed through the chain of command or the NCO support channel automatically provide the authority to get the job done. Of course, this broad authority carries with it the responsibility to use mature, sound judgment.

## **IV - THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND THE NCO SUPPORT CHANNEL**

There is one chain of command in the VDF. It is paralleled and reinforced by the NCO Support Channel. Both are channels of communication that pass information up and down the unit. Neither is one way, nor are the two completely separate. The NCO Support Channel must operate to help the chain of command function well.

There are also staff and technical channels of communication. Staff members at Division, Brigade, and Battalion headquarters exchange information and work problems directly between themselves to help their units functioning effectively. If you are in a staff position, using these informal channels helps you keep up to date on current policies so you can advise your commander effectively.

The NCO Support Channel begins with the Command Sergeant Major (CSM), extends through first sergeants and platoon sergeants and ends with section chiefs, squad leaders and team leaders. The channel passes information, issues orders and gets routine, but important jobs done. It is used to carry out policies and procedures and to enforce standards of performance, training, appearance, and conduct. NCOs in the support channel advise commanders on soldier proficiency, training and unit readiness. This lets the commander plan, make decisions, and program future training and operations.

Normally commanders will consult with their Senior NCO before putting orders into the chain of command. CSMs and First Sergeants must know what instructions are being given in order to supervise the support channel. Regardless of where information or tasks begin, the counterpart in the chain of command and the NCO support channel must be kept informed. Authority for the support channel stems from the chain of command. NCOs in the support channel work for and are under the command of their respective commanders.

## **V - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a NCO you have duties and responsibilities.

DUTY is something you must do because of the job you hold. There are many duties, and they depend on your assignment. To learn your duties talk to your senior NCOs and commander, read unit procedures and VDF regulations, and attend training courses.

RESPONSIBILITY is being accountable for what you do. Any duty you have because of your position in the unit means a responsibility to do that duty. Military leaders are also responsible for what the unit does or fails to do. NCOs are responsible for doing their individual duties, and for seeing their unit does its mission well. As leaders you must ensure your soldiers are ready to do their jobs.

The amount of responsibility delegated to you depends on your mission, your position, and your willingness to accept responsibility on your own initiative. Although as an NCO you are accountable for your personal conduct and that of your soldiers, each soldier also has his own responsibilities. Each soldier is accountable for his or her actions – accountable to fellow soldiers, to leaders, and to the VDF. You must ensure your soldiers understand their responsibilities as team members and as representatives of VDF, the Governor, and the Commonwealth.

Training is the NCOs principal duty and responsibility. No one should have more to do with training soldiers than NCOs. The VDF provides training materials, courses, and field training exercises; these are aids to help the NCO do the job. Good training is the cement that bonds units into outstanding emergency teams.

Make certain your soldiers understand and complete appropriate training. Ask senior NCOs how best to train and certify the soldiers in your unit's METL tasks. Make your training as interesting and challenging as possible. Your soldiers joined the VDF to learn and to make a contribution to Virginia – don't waste their time with poorly planned and badly delivered training.

## **VI - NON-COMMISSIONED AND COMMISSIONED OFFICERS**

An important part of your job as an NCO is how you relate to warrant and commissioned officers. As we said at the start of this text, all officers are on the leadership team. There are similarities between the role of NCOs and Commissioned Officers. This may be especially true in the VDF where units may be small, and everyone, regardless of rank, must pitch in to do every type of work for the job to get done.

Commissioned Officers hold a commission from the Governor of Virginia authorizing them to act as the Governor's representative in certain military matters. This does not mean they can do anything they like. Like NCOs, Commissioned Officers are governed by the Military Laws of Virginia, by policies set by the Adjutant General, by VDF regulations and policies, and by military custom.

Commissioned Officers carry out the orders of the Governor, as Commander-in-Chief, and the Adjutant General, as Commander of the Militia of the Commonwealth, as they are handed down through the chain of command. In carrying out orders, Commissioned Officers depend on advice and assistance from NCOs.

Both Commissioned Officers and NCOs have the same goal – to accomplish their unit's mission. Because they have similar responsibilities, many of the responsibilities overlap and are shared. While responsibilities may be shared, the tasks necessary to accomplish them are not. Officers are generally responsible for:

1. Command
2. Mission accomplishment, unit mission readiness, and unit performance
3. Establishing and interpreting policy, unit procedures, guidelines and standards
4. Managing unit personnel and resources
5. Planning, providing resources, conducting, and evaluating unit level training
6. Delegating authority
7. Making proper use of the chain of command
8. Developing and training subordinate officers and NCOs
9. Establishing and maintaining the professional standards of the officer corps
10. Supporting the NCOs

## NCOs are generally responsible for:

1. Individual training of soldiers in METL tasks and in basic skills
2. Teaching soldiers the mission of the unit
3. Training soldiers to work together as a team
4. Training soldiers to use equipment needed for their job.
5. Training soldiers to survive under disaster conditions
6. Teaching soldiers the history and traditions of the VDF, military courtesy, personal hygiene, appearance standards, drill and ceremonies
7. Personal and professional development of soldiers
8. Recommending soldiers attend schools and career development courses
9. Assign subordinates responsibility for appropriate tasks – train them to take on more difficult tasks – train them to replace you.
10. Develop a sense of responsibility by holding them responsible for their actions.
11. Ensure publications are available for soldiers' use
12. Counsel soldiers on strengths and weaknesses
13. Recommend promotions and awards through the chain of command or the support channel as appropriate
14. Accountability for the platoon or smaller team.
15. Know each soldier you lead during duty hours
16. Know where each soldier lives and how to contact him
17. If a soldier is sick or absent from duty, know why and check on him
18. Use the team to accomplish the mission
19. Know the readiness status of the equipment you need to do the job.
20. Military appearance and physical conditioning
21. Make corrections on the spot when you see something wrong
22. Although VDF has no physical fitness standards, encourage fitness at a level appropriate to your soldiers and your unit's mission
23. Ensure personnel are matched to tasks within their physical capabilities.
24. Train your soldiers in the proper wear and care of their uniforms and equipment.
25. Physical and mental well being of the soldier and his or her family
26. Know your soldiers' family situations
27. Be prepared to use VDF or community resources to help those soldiers who may need assistance
28. Watch out for alcohol and drug users and abusers among your soldiers-take appropriate action
29. Supervision, control, motivation, and discipline of subordinates. Counsel your soldiers and maintain counseling records
30. Support actions of your subordinate NCOs
31. Teach your soldiers about the Military Law of Virginia
32. Recommend commendations
33. Recommend elimination action if necessary – weeding out nonproductive soldiers encourages the good ones to stay.
34. Keep your soldiers informed
35. Communication between the individual soldier and the organization
36. Use and insist your soldiers use the chain of command and the NCO support channel
37. Listen and act on suggestions and complaints

38. Support and explain reasons for current policies
39. Develop a feeling of loyalty and pride in the unit
40. Do not complain to or in the presence of your soldiers
41. Planning and conducting day to day operations within prescribed policies
42. Provide input to the schedule for skill training
43. Conduct team training
44. Supervise daily events by the training schedule
45. Let every soldier know the schedule well in advance
46. Handle situations not covered by instructions
47. Ensure NCO support channel supports the chain of command
48. Maintaining established standards of performance
49. Explain clearly what you want from your soldiers
50. Conduct special training to correct weaknesses
51. Train soldiers to standard
52. Provide up-to-date information
53. Set an example of a professional NCO in action
54. Maintaining serviceability, accountability, and readiness of equipment, vehicles, and clothing
55. Inspect soldiers' equipment often
56. Inspect unit equipment often
57. Learn how to use and maintain any unit equipment first
58. To train on new equipment
59. Enforce maintenance and supply procedures
60. Provide equipment status reports to the chain of command
61. Ensure equipment is properly secured and stowed
62. Appearance and condition of unit facilities
63. Inspect areas often
64. Conduct fire safety inspections and drills
65. Set and enforce cleanliness standards
66. Never leave unit facilities in anything less than Inspection order
67. Advise on, support, and carry out policy established by the chain of command
68. Maintain established standards
69. Keep officers and senior NCOs informed
70. Seek guidance from the chain of command as needed
71. Provide advice to the chain of command when needed
72. Support priorities established by the commander
73. Keep the NCO support channel supporting the chain of command

## **VII - QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLISTS**

The following are personal self-checklists. Keep them as a reference for your own performance.

### **NCO ATTITUDES:**

The attitudes necessary to be an effective NCO are the same regardless of rank. Check to see if you have, and show others that you have, these attitudes.

- Enforce standards
- Set the example
- Accomplish the mission
- Take care of your soldiers
- Be dedicated and selfless
- Obey lawful orders
- Be honest and courageous
- Maintain physical and mental toughness
- Show competence and self-confidence
- Act fairly and equitably with subordinates
- Accept responsibility for self and subordinates
- Be loyal to the Nation and Virginia and the Constitution
- Be loyal to superiors and subordinates
- Show initiative and self-motivation

### **NCO SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE:**

#### **COMMUNICATIONS -**

- Receive, understand, and interpret information
- Know the five paragraph verbal order and warning order formats
- Issue clear, concise orders to teams
- Do performance counseling
- Provide input on personnel actions on subordinates
- Participate in after action reviews

#### **SUPERVISION -**

- Know duties, responsibilities, and authority of an NCO
- Uniform standards of appearance
- Know unit standing operating procedures
- Control and account for subordinates
- Lead and evaluate individual training
- Understand unit monthly and yearly training schedules
- Lead team in task performance
- Enforce safety practices
- Create an environment with equal opportunity and free of sexual harassment

#### **TEACHING AND COUNSELING**

- Teach individuals skills for METL tasks

#### **FOR THE COMMANDER:**

**DISTRIBUTION: A**