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★ AIR FORCE ★



THE ENLISTED FORCE STRUCTURE

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CHAPTER 1

THE ENLISTED PROFESSION OF ARMS

This guide defines our enlisted force and identifies the purpose, standards, and expectations for enlisted Airmen. The foundation of our enlisted force is deeply rooted in a rich heritage, a commitment to duty, and dedication to upholding the highest standards. All Airmen must embody the warrior ethos as described in the Airman's Creed. Our mission requires disciplined, physically fit, and mentally strong Airmen who remain ready to face any challenge or adversary.

PROFESSION OF ARMS

As members of the Profession of Arms, we are warriors called to defend our Nation against all threats. The central focus of the Profession of Arms is war fighting: our Airmen must have the confidence, skill, and commitment necessary to protect the security of the United States. We must maintain the public's trust by adhering to high ethical standards, demonstrating competence, and reinforcing that we are responsible stewards of our Nation's defense. All Airmen must understand their primary purpose is encapsulated in our Air Force mission: To fly, fight and win – airpower, anytime, anywhere. When we execute our shared purpose, we fulfill the obligation we swear to when we enlist.



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The Oath of Enlistment

"I [*state your full name*], do solemnly swear (*or affirm*) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God (*optional*)."

OUR CORE VALUES

Our Core Values, **Integrity First**, **Service Before Self**, and **Excellence in All We Do**, are the cornerstone of our service. This instruction outlines the requirements, responsibilities, and professional obligations of all enlisted personnel, ensuring we remain mission-ready and adaptable to the evolving operational environment. Furthermore, this document, paired with our Air Force Doctrine, defines us as Airmen first and specialists second.

QuickQuote

Victory Favors the Prepared

"Our profession demands more than skill. It requires discipline, trust, and love for your fellow Wingmen."



CMSAF David A. Flosi

20th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

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AIRMAN'S CREED

The Airman's Creed is our promise to our country and fellow Airmen. Every Airman will know, understand, and embody the promise we make in our Airman's Creed. It sets the tone of our personal and professional lives while serving in the Air Force. We embrace our Air Force family with our brothers and sisters in arms by connecting to the past, serving in the present, and preparing for the future.

Airman's Creed

I am an American Airman.
I am a warrior.
I have answered my Nation's call.

I am an American Airman.
My mission is to fly, fight, and win.
I am faithful to a proud heritage,
a tradition of honor,
and a legacy of valor.

I am an American Airman.
Guardian of freedom and justice,
my Nation's sword and shield,
its sentry and avenger.
I defend my country with my life.

I am an American Airman.
Wingman, leader, warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind,
I will never falter,
And I will not fail.

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PROFESSIONAL COURAGE

Air Force members are required to demonstrate moral and physical courage by standing up for what is right, even when facing uncertainty or unpopularity, holding their teams accountable, and making tough decisions. You must candidly and professionally express your best military advice and judgment to subordinates, peers, and superiors.

THE ENLISTED AIRMAN: WINGMAN, LEADER, WARRIOR

All members of the United States Air Force (USAF) are referred to as "Airman," regardless of corps (officer, enlisted, civilian). As enlisted Airmen, we have a different scope of responsibility and expertise unique from the officer and civilian corps. The enlisted Airman enables daily operations, ensuring missions are effectively executed. Our responsibilities often center around hands-on work and leadership in our respective organizations.



Wingman

As a Wingman, we uphold the Air Force's legacy of trust and camaraderie, ensuring no Airman stands alone in the face of adversity. This concept permeates Air Force culture in aviation and non-aviation circles and reminds each of us to constantly place the welfare of our Wingmen above our own. "Supporting your Wingman" implies selflessness, trust, and a shared understanding of intent. From a service perspective, whether it is direct fires, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, logistics, or the joint fight, we are our Nation's Wingmen.

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Leader

As a Leader, we embody the Air Force Core Values by assuming responsibility. Leaders:

- ★ Make tactical, operational, or strategic decisions and ensure the effective execution of assigned missions.
- ★ Guide the growth of Airmen by offering mentorship, coaching, and support, developing resilience while preparing them to operate in dynamic roles. We execute leadership roles in peacetime and in contested military operations.
- ★ Are expected to have extensive knowledge of the application of airpower, to be skilled at assessing and mitigating risks, and to maintain a focus on safety. They are adaptable in complex and high-pressure environments and set the example of Air Force Core Values.
- ★ Provide constructive feedback up and down the chain of command.



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Leadership begins with being an effective follower. All Airmen must support and actively execute a leader's guidance, orders, and direction. We bring technical expertise, accountability, and a strong commitment to the mission and the organization.

Effective followers:

- ★ Embody qualities such as cooperation, trust, and loyalty.
- ★ Excel in active listening and communication to fully align with the leader's objectives.
- ★ Are professional and proactive contributors to team goals.
- ★ Are ready to step into leadership roles as needed.
- ★ Provide valuable feedback and collaborate effectively with their peers.
- ★ Confidently make difficult decisions for the benefit of the mission.

Airmen must continue both professional and personal development. Our Air Force leaders provide a common frame of reference among Air Force members to help each of us become better, more effective advocates of air and space power.

QuickClick

Airmen can find more information on leadership at:

Department of Defense (DoD) and Air Force Libraries:
https://daf.dodmwrlibraries.org

Air Force Senior Leadership Libraries:
https://daf.dodmwrlibraries.org/daf-leadership-book-club

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Warrior

Being a warrior means we stand ready to defend our Nation with unwavering commitment, discipline, and courage.

- ★ We are entrusted with both the Nation's most advanced weapons systems and its sons and daughters. Our role is vital in ensuring mission success in every domain.
- ★ We are entrusted to ensure national security, safeguard all classified information, and be mindful of those who would do us harm.

Regardless of Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), we apply our followership, expertise, and leadership to mission command principles and execute with precision. Our responsibilities often place us in high-pressure situations where split-second decisions can mean the difference between life and death. These responsibilities demand that each Airman develops a warrior ethos mindset that demonstrates their confidence and commitment to work as a team, accomplish the mission, and always be ready to fight and win our Nation's wars.



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READINESS

Each of us must actively develop readiness skills to ensure we are prepared to execute when called upon. We must support the mission, both in garrison and while deployed. Regardless of your current assignment, you will be called to perform Airmanship duty not specific to your specialty.

Technical Readiness

Airmen must continuously develop through training, education, and hands-on experience. This applies to both the overall mission and our specialty. From establishing a forward operating location to contributing to mission success and defending the base, each of us has mission supporting requirements.

We must know our Air Force instructions, handbooks, standard operating procedures, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and be informed on current policies. Airmen must share what they know with their formations to increase professional competence.

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Everyone is responsible for ensuring operational security to preserve high levels of technical readiness.



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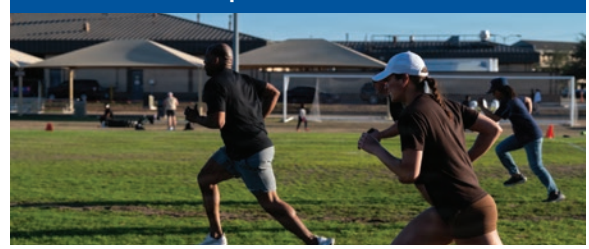
Physical Readiness

As warfighters, we must ensure we are physically fit for any environment in accordance with Department of the Air Force Manual (DAFMAN) 36-2905, Department of the Air Force Physical Fitness Program. This includes adherence to:

- ★ An exercise regimen.
- ★ Maintaining a healthy, nutritious, and balanced diet to optimize energy.
- ★ Balancing strength and recovery to maximize individual capabilities.

QuickClick

For more on DAFMAN 36-2905, go to:
www.afpc.af.mil/Portals/70/documents/FITNESS/dafman%2036-2905.pdf



Additionally, each of us is responsible for our Individual Medical Readiness (IMR). IMR includes completing the following:

- ★ Annual Physical Health Assessment
- ★ Annual dental exams
- ★ Required lab work
- ★ Staying up to date with immunizations

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Mental Readiness

Each of us must develop resiliency skills that will allow us to recover quickly from setbacks and adapt to change during high-stress situations. This readiness skillset is different for each of us and will require enduring efforts to strengthen our resilience.

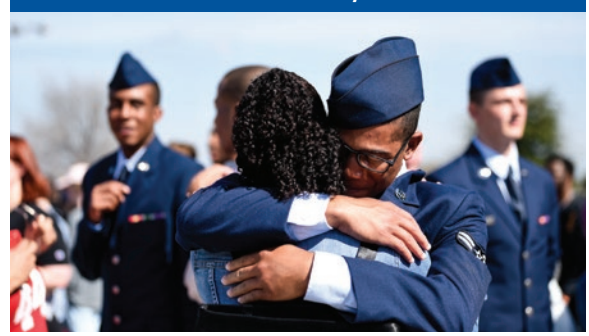
Family Readiness

All Airmen, not just those with dependents, must ensure our family is ready regardless of the situation (natural disaster, military conflicts, etc.). Educating family on the mission and the Profession of Arms ensures we can respond quickly and skillfully to any scenario.

Being familiar with resources such as Military OneSource, Military and Family Readiness Center (M&FRC), and Key Support Liaisons at your assigned installation will help facilitate readiness as a warfighter and prepare those who support you in your military career.

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Military OneSource offers 24/7 assistance, information, and resources to Service members and their families. Visit: **www.militaryonesource.mil**



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Personal Financial Readiness

For military members, financial stability has proven to be a strong protective factor against the following:

- ★ Distress
- ★ Distraction
- ★ Relationship turmoil
- ★ Impact to security clearances
- ★ Susceptibility to negative influence from outside actors

Financial readiness is part of mission readiness and requires each of us, and our immediate family members, to take deliberate action to understand and effectively manage finances, ensuring personal finances are always in order.

QuickNote

Financial readiness education is available to each of us through various means, including financial readiness education counselors at M&FRCs and at all levels of Professional Military Education (PME).



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CHAPTER 2

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

FORCE STRUCTURE

The enlisted force is structured into three tiers.

1	2	3
Junior Enlisted Tier	**Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) Tier**	**Senior Noncommissioned Officer (SNCO) Tier**
Airman Basic (E-1)	Staff Sergeant (E-5)	Master Sergeant (E-7)
Airman (E-2)	Technical Sergeant (E-6)	Senior Master Sergeant (E-8)
Airman First Class (E-3)		Chief Master Sergeant (E-9)
Senior Airman (E-4)		

LEADERSHIP LEVELS

Each tier corresponds to increasing levels of leadership and responsibility. Additionally, each leadership level drives mission over functions and builds a positive Air Force culture. Most enlisted Airmen operate at the tactical and operational levels.



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Tactical

Development at the tactical expertise level includes a general understanding of team leadership and an appreciation for organizational leadership.

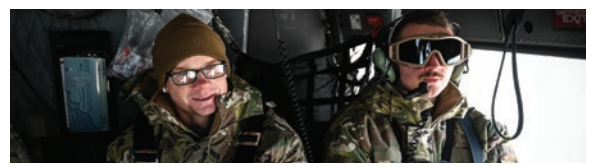
At this level, Airmen must:

- ★ Master core duty skills.
- ★ Gain experience in applying those skills.
- ★ Begin acquiring knowledge and experience essential for effective ethical leadership.

Airmen learn to become mission-focused specialists and technical experts in core skill sets, while assimilating into the Air Force culture and adopting our Core Values. The tactical level is a time for honing followership abilities, motivating subordinates, and influencing peers to accomplish the mission while developing a warrior ethos and exercising communication skills as effectively as possible.

Operational

Development at the operational leadership level includes developing a broader understanding of U.S. Air Force (USAF) doctrine, capabilities, and the integration of airpower in operational execution. It is a time to ascend to a higher leadership capacity while applying an understanding of organizational and team dynamics. Airmen also foster and collaborate relationships through building teams and coalitions, especially within large organizations, and negotiating with others, often external to the organization.



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Strategic

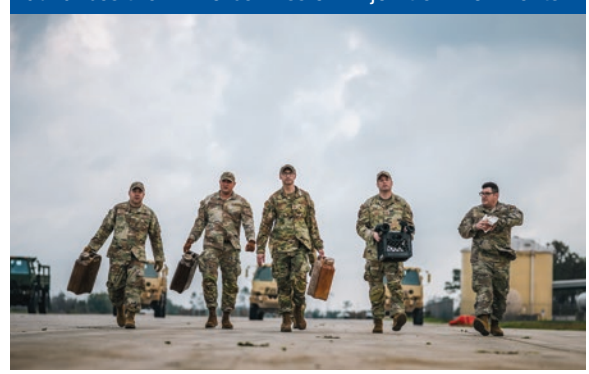
Development at the strategic level includes:

- ★ Combining advanced personnel and people/team enterprise competencies.
- ★ Applying broad airpower expertise, while leading and directing exceptionally complex and multi-tiered organizations.

It is a time to develop a deep understanding of how Airmen achieve synergistic results and desired effects with their operational capabilities. Airmen employ military capabilities, understand the operational and strategic arts, and have a thorough understanding of unit, USAF, joint, and coalition capabilities. Development at the strategic level includes an enterprise perspective with a thorough understanding of the structure and relationships needed to accomplish strategic objectives.

QuickNote

The strategic level focuses on airmindedness and advances the Air Force mission in joint environments.



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RANK AND AUTHORITY

Within enlisted grades, NCOs take responsibility over all Junior Enlisted and other NCOs according to rank. To determine seniority within the same grade, use the following (in this order):

- ★ Date of rank
- ★ Total active Federal military service date
- ★ Pay date
- ★ Date of birth

In valid circumstances, commanders may place NCOs who are lower in rank in charge of other NCOs of the same grade.

QuickExample

A Technical Sergeant, with a date of rank of 1 Apr 08, is placed in charge of a fellow Technical Sergeant, with a date of rank of 1 Apr 07.

When placed in charge, these NCOs have authority to issue lawful orders appropriate for mission accomplishment. The Air Force will typically follow the normal chain of command (e.g., Junior Enlisted to NCO and NCO to SNCO). At certain times, there will be opportunities for others to be placed in the position of authority.



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Following orders and regulations is a cornerstone of military discipline and effectiveness. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and Air Force policies give NCOs and SNCOs authority to issue lawful orders and hold Airmen accountable. Authorities are also derived from commissioned officers who hold inherent command authority and delegate to NCOs.

Airmen, regardless of rank, can have specific authorities based on occupational requirements.

QuickExample

An Airman securing the entry control point of a restricted area executes authorities delegated by the installation commander. Another example is the authority earned by a 7-level maintenance NCO who signs off the safety of flight requirements of a multimillion-dollar aircraft before it is presented to the pilot.



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AIRMAN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Airman Leadership Qualities (ALQs) are derived from foundational competencies and measure specific performances and behaviors. Foundational competencies are a combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that manifest in an observable and measurable pattern of behavior. Every member of the Air Force must align with the following ALQs.

Executing the Mission

Effectively uses knowledge, initiative, and adaptability to produce timely, high quality/quantity results to positively impact the mission.

- ★ **Job proficiency.** Demonstrates knowledge and professional skill in assigned duties, achieving positive results and impact in support of the mission.
- ★ **Initiative.** Assesses and takes independent or direct action to complete a task that positively influences the mission or organization.
- ★ **Adaptability.** Adjusts to changing conditions, to include plans, information, processes, requirements, and obstacles in accomplishing the mission.

QuickClick

For more information, read AFI 36-2406, Officer and Enlisted Evaluations Systems:
https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf

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Leading People

Cultivates cohesive teams and inspires others through clear communication, mentorship, and example.

- ★ **Teamwork.** Collaborates effectively with others to achieve common goals or to complete a task or mission.
- ★ **Emotional Intelligence.** Understands and manages emotions, both their own and others'.
- ★ **Communication.** Articulates information in a clear and timely manner, both verbally and non-verbally, through active listening and messaging tailored to the audience.

Managing Resources

Efficiently uses time, equipment, and funds to support the mission. Prioritizes needs, reduces waste, and ensures resources are available to meet objectives.

- ★ **Stewardship.** Demonstrates responsible management of assigned resources, which may include time, equipment, people, funds, and/or facilities.
- ★ **Accountability.** Takes responsibility for the actions and behaviors of self and/or team; demonstrates reliability and transparency.

Improving the Unit

Demonstrates critical thinking and fosters innovation to find creative solutions and improve mission execution.

- ★ **Decision-making.** Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions under one's control that weigh constraints, risks, and benefits.
- ★ **Innovation.** Thinks creatively about different ways to solve problems, implements improvements, and demonstrates calculated risk-taking.

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GENERAL POSITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

When properly applied, duty titles facilitate a quick understanding of an Airman's role and level of responsibility. The following duty titles are common throughout the enlisted force but may vary based on organizational structure. In each of these positions, Airmen are responsible for executing the mission, leading people, improving the unit, and managing resources at a level commensurate to their position.

Supervisor

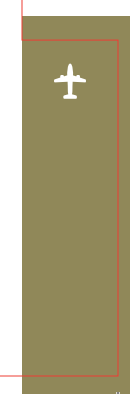
Used for Junior Enlisted members and NCOs who have graduated from Airman Leadership School (ALS) and are assigned as first-line supervisors. Junior Enlisted will not have the duty title "Supervisor" unless they are at least a Senior Airman and supervise the work of others and meet the above Professional Military Education (PME) requirement. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring those under their charge are meeting all responsibilities and continuing to develop.

Noncommissioned Officer in Charge

Used for NCOs responsible for a work center or element that typically has subordinate supervisors. Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) is also used for those whose primary duty is management of a unit-wide program or function, even if they do not directly rate on personnel.

Section Chief

Used for SNCOs, and occasionally NCOs, responsible for a section with at least two subordinate work centers or elements.



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Flight Chief

Used for SNCOs, and occasionally NCOs, who are the enlisted leaders of a flight.

Manager

Used for NCOs and SNCOs who are program, project, or policy managers at higher headquarters and A-staff levels. Managers may or may not have personnel working for them and may be the enlisted leader of the branch, division, or directorate.

Superintendent

Used for SNCOs in charge of functional responsibilities. Only SNCOs will hold the duty title of Superintendent.

Senior Enlisted Leader

Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL) is a duty title reserved for SNCOs designated by the commander/director as the senior enlisted members for a specified organizational echelon.

SELs provide leadership and management experience regarding organization, equipment, training, and mobilization of the unit to effectively meet home station and expeditionary mission requirements. SELs should be well-versed in the assigned mission, adept at advocating for resources, and adaptable to evolving mission requirements.

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Chief

Used for Chief Master Sergeants who are program, project, or policy managers at Numbered Air Force (NAF), Major Command (MAJCOM), Direct Reporting Unit (DRU), Field Operating Agency, Joint Staff, or Air Staff. Chiefs may or may not have personnel working for them and may be the enlisted leader of the branch, division, or directorate.

Career Field Manager

Enlisted Career Field Managers (CFMs) are typically Chief Master Sergeants, located at Headquarters Air Force, responsible for organizing one or more enlisted career fields. Responsibilities include:

- ★ Establishing career field entry requirements.
- ★ Developing/managing training plan requirements.
- ★ Evaluating training effectiveness.
- ★ Monitoring career field manning health.
- ★ Encompassing Air Force level expectations of all Airmen into the Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP).
- ★ Providing input on programs and policies.

Additionally, through Enlisted Development Teams, CFMs ensure the most qualified NCOs and SNCOs are vectored into key leadership and development positions utilizing talent management practices.

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Command Chief Master Sergeant

Used for Chief Master Sergeants who serve as the most senior enlisted leader at key levels of command, such as a wing, DRU, NAF, Center, or MAJCOM. While the Command Chief Master Sergeant (CCM) serves all Airmen, they are primarily responsible for the readiness, welfare, morale, proper utilization, quality of life, and professional development of the enlisted members in their unit.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF) is both a distinctive rank and a duty position designating the highest-ranking enlisted Airman in the USAF. The CMSAF serves as the senior enlisted advisor to the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF). The CMSAF provides strategic direction to the enlisted force, with duties primarily focused on the readiness, welfare, morale, proper utilization, quality of life, and professional development of enlisted Airmen. The position represents all enlisted Airmen before Congress, government leaders, and the American public. The CMSAF travels extensively to engage with Airmen and their families, discussing issues of concern and serving as a direct link between the enlisted force and senior leadership.

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DEVELOPMENTAL DUTIES

Throughout our career in the Air Force, seeking developmental duty roles is essential for personal and professional growth. These positions offer unique opportunities to develop leadership skills, gain broader perspectives, and make a lasting impact on fellow Airmen and the mission. By stepping into these roles, Airmen shape the future of the force. Ultimately, developmental assignments allow Airmen to give back to the service in meaningful ways while preparing themselves for greater responsibilities ahead.

First Sergeant

First Sergeants are responsible for all readiness, health, morale, welfare, and quality of life issues within their organizations. At home station and in expeditionary environments, their primary responsibility is to build and maintain a mission-ready force to execute mission requirements.



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Recruiter

The Air Force recruiter is responsible for sourcing quality civilians into the Air Force. They represent the Air Force in communities throughout the world and must exhibit the highest levels of integrity, professionalism, military bearing, respect for authority, and exceptional dress and personal appearance.

Recruiters are responsible for:

- ★ Interviewing, screening, testing, and evaluating applicants from civilian sources.
- ★ Assisting and participating in special events (e.g., state and municipal ceremonies, exhibits, fairs, parades, centennials, and sporting events).
- ★ Performing other duties as required to achieve recruiting goals.

Military Training Instructor

Military Training Instructors (MTIs) conduct and oversee basic military training for new Airmen and Officer Training School cadets, instilling discipline and core military skills. They must consistently demonstrate the highest levels of professional behavior, military bearing, dress, and personal appearance. MTIs plan, organize, and evaluate training programs, manage resources, maintain accountability, and counsel trainees on performance and standards. They instruct drill and classroom lessons, enforce standards, and provide training to develop mission-ready, resilient Airmen.

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Military Training Leader

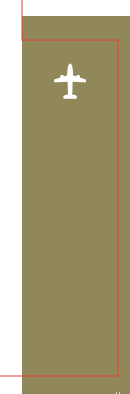
Military Training Leaders (MTLs) serve as first-line supervisors for non-prior service Airmen during initial technical training, ensuring they uphold military standards, discipline, and fitness. MTLs:

- ★ Mentor and counsel students.
- ★ Monitor living conditions.
- ★ Enforce accountability through inspections, records, and reports.
- ★ Provide guidance on military customs, personal conduct, and professional development while fostering resilience and readiness.

Their mission is to prepare Airmen to successfully transition from basic training into technical training and the broader Air Force way of life.

Academy Military Training

Academy Military Training (AMT) NCOs serve as primary enlisted advisors to squadron commanders on cadet academics, discipline, training, and professional development. They mentor and counsel cadets while enforcing standards of conduct, military training, and the UCMJ, ensuring readiness across academics, athletics, and military programs. AMTs manage professional development, oversee dormitories and facilities, and coordinate administrative and ceremonial events that shape cadet culture and mission success. Their role is essential in developing resilient leaders of character prepared for service in the Air and Space Forces.



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Officer Accessions Instructor

An Officer Accessions Instructor educates through classroom instruction, mentors, and guides aspiring Air and Space Force officers. Responsibilities include teaching effective leadership techniques, combatives, and field training. Instructors bring specialized knowledge, technical proficiency, and extensive experience in specific areas, and offer insight into the enlisted corps.

Professional Military Education Instructor

A Professional Military Education (PME) Instructor delivers curriculum for Airmen, NCOs, and SNCOs through varied modalities. Leads, mentors, and expands the knowledge and perspectives of Air Force, sister-service, and international students through facilitation of PME programs. Integrates leadership development, coaching, strategic discussions, research, lectures, wargames, and physical training to enhance lethality and readiness. Prepares Airmen to lead effectively in joint, combined, and interagency environments, and master leadership skills commensurate with rank.



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Development Advisor

Development Advisors (DAs) serve at the base level, advising commanders and supervisors on force development and force management. DAs execute key programs such as the First Term Enlisted Course, Informed Decision Seminar, and Foundations Courses from the Enlisted Airmanship Continuum. They also facilitate professional development seminars, provide career counseling and guidance on developmental opportunities, and assist Airmen in navigating the Air Force career systems.

DAs serve as a central point of contact for career resources, empowering Airmen through their professional growth.

Military & Family Readiness Center NCO

Military & Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) NCOs serve as the primary enlisted advisors on programs that ensure Service members, Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, and families are prepared for deployments, reintegration, and emergencies. They develop and implement readiness response plans, provide counseling and education on family resilience, and coordinate support during contingency operations and natural disasters. Readiness NCOs manage Emergency Family Assistance Centers, collaborate with community agencies, and ensure military families receive the resources and advocacy they need. Their work directly strengthens mission readiness by supporting the well-being and resilience of the Total Force and their families.

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Airmen Dormitory Leader

Airmen Dormitory Leaders (ADLs) are responsible for daily Unaccompanied Housing operations to include mentoring residents and assisting them in their adjustment to military life while ensuring residents comply with directives and military living standards. They enforce good order and discipline while exercising general supervision over residents. They are responsible for managing facilities and campus areas, budgeting and program execution, and maintaining supplies, furnishings, equipment, etc., necessary for providing quality facilities.



QuickQuote

"When I think of the enlisted force, I see dedication, determination, loyalty, and valor."

CMSAF Paul W. Airey, 1st Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

*Prisoner of War in World War II



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CHAPTER 3

JUNIOR ENLISTED TIER

GENERAL JUNIOR ENLISTED RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Junior Enlisted member, you:

- ★ Live your life according to the Air Force Core Values.
- ★ Adhere to evolving Air Force requirements throughout your career, exemplifying followership while growing to become a highly effective leader.
- ★ Uphold military customs, courtesies, and standards.
- ★ Strive to be an effective follower and teammate.
- ★ Maintain high levels of each facet of readiness.
- ★ Develop the ability to contribute beyond your core specialty.
- ★ Seek to understand and work within leadership's intent.
- ★ Demonstrate respect, commitment, and initiative when following orders.
- ★ Execute all duties, instructions, and lawful orders in a timely and efficient manner.
- ★ Treat all Service members with dignity and respect.
- ★ Demonstrate and apply all competencies within the Airman Leadership Qualities (ALQs).
- ★ Demonstrate professional courage.
  - Refuse to compromise on safety and ethics.
  - Own your mistakes.
  - Have the courage to speak up when something is not right.

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- ★ Comprehend what Airmanship is and own your place in the Profession of Arms.
- ★ Successfully progress through the Enlisted Airmanship Continuum of 100 (Basic Military Training), 200 (Technical Training), First Term Enlisted Course, 300 (Junior Enlisted Foundational Course), and 400 (Airman Leadership School).

RANK-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

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To learn more about Enlisted Airmanship Continuum Courses, go to: **www.airuniversity.af.edu/Barnes/Foundations**

Airman Basic

- ★ Adapt to the military profession by acquiring knowledge of Air Force standards, customs, and courtesies, as well as striving to learn mission-focused requirements and occupational knowledge, under close supervision.

Airman

- ★ Adapt to the military lifestyle by learning and demonstrating military standards, customs, courtesies, and traditions.
- ★ Work to become mission-ready and technically proficient in assigned duties.

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Airman First Class

- ★ Increase mission-ready skills while continuing technical proficiency in assigned duties.
- ★ Work toward attaining their 5-skill level.
- ★ Follow lawful orders with attention to detail and professionalism.

Senior Airman

- ★ Develop supervisory and leadership skills and provide mentorship and training to Junior Enlisted Airmen.
- ★ Accountable for enforcing standards and developing team cohesion.
- ★ Develop and apply basic leadership and problem-solving skills in operational settings.
- ★ Complete Airman Leadership School (ALS) before assuming the grade of Staff Sergeant. Senior Airmen who have completed ALS and are qualified in accordance with the Air Force Job Qualification Standard (AFJQS) may be entrusted to supervise others with commander approval.



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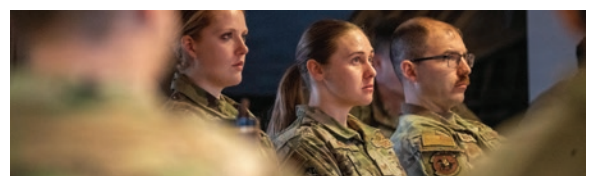
CHAPTER 4

NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER TIER

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Noncommissioned Officer (NCO), you:

- ★ Grow from being a follower to being a leader in the Profession of Arms and set the example for others to follow.
- ★ Attain and maintain a skill level commensurate with your rank.
- ★ Balance technical mastery with leadership development.
- ★ Know and understand your commander's goals and priorities and how you and your subordinates fit into that construct.
- ★ Create an environment free of behaviors that hinder performance.
- ★ Empower all members to achieve their full potential and maximize their contributions.
- ★ Appropriately recognize and award individuals whose conduct, bearing, and performance clearly exceed established standards.
- ★ Stay professionally engaged with subordinates consistently both on and off duty.



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GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES CONT'D

- ★ Understand a subordinate's environment by visiting on-base living spaces and installation support facilities (dining facilities, chapel centers, recreation centers, dormitories, etc.).
- ★ Understand all the resources your specific base has available to support your Airmen and be able to appropriately refer them for assistance.
- ★ Commit to continuous personal and professional growth.
- ★ Develop operational expertise to prepare for the increased responsibilities and expectations of an SNCO.
- ★ Successfully progress through the Enlisted Airmanship Continuum of 500 (NCO Foundation Course) and 600 (NCO Academy).

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RANK-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Sergeant

- ★ Directly supervise Airmen, ensuring mission accomplishment and unit cohesion.
- ★ Provide structured feedback and mentorship to subordinates.
- ★ Enforce compliance with military standards, discipline, training, and operational effectiveness.

Technical Sergeant

In addition to maintaining Staff Sergeant responsibilities, you must:

- ★ Understand, execute, and drive mission-focused requirements and be technical experts.
- ★ Train and develop junior enlisted personnel for increased responsibility.
- ★ Be key enforcers of discipline and readiness requirements.



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NCO Charge

NCOs are the backbone of the United States Air Force (USAF) and bear the profound responsibility for the structural integrity of the enterprise. The NCO ranks of Staff Sergeant and Technical Sergeant mark a transition of leadership in duties and responsibilities.

In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of Junior Enlisted Airmen, as an NCO you are charged with the following duties:

- ★ Increasing your knowledge, skills, and abilities to be ready for whatever is required of you.
- ★ Becoming an expert in your profession and displaying a willingness and flexibility to do what the mission demands.
- ★ Leading by example to promote physical and mental readiness within your teams.
- ★ Exercising our warrior ethos and preparing your Airmen to fight whenever duty calls.
- ★ Taking an active role in the lives and careers of those you are privileged to lead.
- ★ Seeking to integrate and utilize the talents of your team, ensuring unity of purpose and action in defense of our Nation.
- ★ Serving as a blueprint of leadership by exemplifying self-discipline, proactively seeking opportunities for growth and advancing your Airmen's capabilities.
- ★ Aggressively executing the intent and priorities of your chain of command, while developing company grade officers to build expertise and leadership fundamentals.

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- ★ Seeking guidance when needed and offering solutions to problems within your purview.
- ★ Embracing our Core Values and strictly adhering to Air Force expectations and standards, ensuring that your actions and those of your team are in full compliance to best foster an environment of trust, mutual respect, shared understanding, and unit cohesion.
- ★ Striving for excellence, demonstrating the highest standards of character, competence, professionalism, and discipline. In all aspects of your duty, continually assess to improve your own performance and that of your team.

Your role as an NCO is pivotal in equipping and readying our fighting formations. In accepting these responsibilities, you pledge your dedication to the USAF and its enduring mission for our Nation to **Fly, Fight, and Win – Airpower anytime, anywhere!**

NCO AUTHORITIES

You are expected to be confident as you exercise sound judgment, enforce standards, and lead with professionalism. You must understand that your leadership is both a privilege and a duty earned through competence, integrity, and commitment to the Profession of Arms. You are entrusted with the responsibility to lead, train, and develop Airmen while ensuring mission success.

Your authority is derived from the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), specifically, Article 7, Article 91, Article 92, Title 10 U.S. Code, Sections 101, 502, 1171, 12302, 12103, 8914, and Air Force policies. As an NCO, you are accountable to execute these authorities.

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CHAPTER 5

SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER TIER

GENERAL SNCO RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to meeting all Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) responsibilities, Senior Noncommissioned Officers (SNCOs) must:

- ★ Live the Air Force Core Values with unwavering integrity. Every interaction, every decision, and every word you speak shapes the Air Force of tomorrow.
- ★ Set the tone for your Airmen. Do not underestimate your impact. You are the standard-bearer, the mentor, the leader who translates words into action. Your teams look to you, not just for guidance, but for how to be committed to the Air Force.
- ★ Foster *esprit de corps* within your unit. Build connections with the community.
- ★ Guide our Air Force while preserving the rich legacy of our past.
- ★ Ensure adherence to standards, always holding yourself and your Airmen accountable.
- ★ Maintain an elevated level of readiness in all facets and ensure your teams do the same.
- ★ Be a critical component of mission success.
- ★ Understand the dynamic mission sets of the unit, including organization, training, and equipping the team.
- ★ Shape and drive your teams through the complex mission requirements.
- ★ Enforce and promote a culture of adaptable teams.

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- ★ Earn your team's trust and ensure they are empowered to address problems and develop solutions.
- ★ Create an environment that allows for risk-based decisions and for your team to learn from failures and mistakes.
- ★ Anticipate challenges and risks, while adapting the team's approach to achieving mission objectives, even in the face of complexity and uncertainty.
- ★ Serve as a key advisor to commanders, providing perspective, shaping policies, and informing decisions driving mission success.
- ★ Embody professional courage.
- ★ Set the ethical standard for your unit.
- ★ Encourage feedback at all levels.
- ★ Possess the moral courage to professionally challenge decisions, even up the chain of command, when necessary to protect both people and the mission.
- ★ Translate the Commander's intent into purpose, desired end state, and what must be accomplished.
- ★ Effectively lead your teams, regardless of their specialty, executing the principles of mission command to ensure mission accomplishment in garrison and in contested, degraded, or operationally limited environments.
- ★ Foster an environment where every team member understands their vital role in achieving operational mission success.
- ★ Collaborate seamlessly in joint environments, empowering Airmen, peers, and leaders by utilizing mutual trust and mentorship.

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GENERAL SNCO RESPONSIBILITIES CONT'D

- ★ Champion continuous personal and professional growth.
- ★ Seek knowledge through appropriate books, courses, seminars, and continuous education.
- ★ Develop a deep understanding of Air Force doctrine, NSS, NDS, NMS, the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Air Force policies, and mission command.
- ★ Cultivate your strategic acumen and foster its growth in your Airmen, peers, and leaders.
  - Strategic acumen is more than just understanding the mission; it is seeing the bigger picture and making smart, informed decisions, leading to long-term success. This means anticipating challenges, accepting prudent risk, and adapting the team's approach to achieve mission objectives, even in the face of complexity and uncertainty.
- ★ Encourage cross-training, developmental assignments, and opportunities that broaden perspectives and cultivate well-rounded Airmen.
- ★ Successfully progress through the Airmanship Continuum of 700 (SNCO Foundational Course), 800 (AFSNCOA), and 900 (Chief Leadership Course).
- ★ Champion the culture your commander envisions through your actions, guidance, and coaching.
- ★ Provide mentorship and support to junior officers as they learn how to lead teams and prepare them for greater responsibilities.

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RANK-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Master Sergeant

- ★ Must transition from tactical leadership to operational-level responsibilities.
- ★ Oversee mission execution and professional development within the unit.
- ★ Serve as advisors to leadership and provide expert military advice.

Senior Master Sergeant

- ★ Must provide guidance on enlisted force development and command decisions.
- ★ Lead larger teams and enforce Air Force policies with strategic oversight.
- ★ Serve as mentors to CGOs, SNCOs, NCOs, and Junior Enlisted, preparing them for leadership roles.



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Chief Master Sergeant

- ★ Must be the Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL) and advisor to commanders, lead and manage teams, and bridge strategic plans with tactical execution.
- ★ Shape Air Force culture by displaying and enforcing high standards of professionalism and discipline.
- ★ Advocate for enlisted force development, policy implementation, and personal and mission readiness.
- ★ Analyze and evaluate complex environments, enabling an informed perspective on strategic and enterprise-level focused issues.

SNCO Charge

As an SNCO, you are entrusted with the highest levels of leadership, responsibility, and expertise. In addition to the responsibilities of Junior Enlisted and NCO Tiers, you are charged with:

- ★ Integrating the talents, skills, and abilities of your subordinates with other teams to accomplish our mission with excellence while maintaining flexibility in execution.
  - Be the bridge that connects our force, ensuring unity in purpose and action.
- ★ Effectively communicating across the chain of command.
  - Translate orders into actionable tasks and advocate for your Airmen and their families.

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- ★ **The development of self, others, ideas, and organizations.**
  - Capitalize on joint, interagency, interorganizational, and multinational development opportunities, building partnership capacity in defense of our Nation.
- ★ **Demonstrating the principles of self-discipline and independent action through continued education, training, and career-broadening.**
  - In all facets, highlight a willingness to do what the mission demands.
- ★ **Fulfilling a unique and critical role in officer development at the squadron, group, wing, and higher headquarter levels.**
  - Utilize your extensive experience and expertise in supporting and advising officers to successfully lead Airmen of all ranks and backgrounds.
- ★ **Honoring our heritage while also serving as a leader for the next generation.**
  - Embrace our Core Values while modeling a comprehensive knowledge of Air Force foundational competencies.
- ★ **Cultivating a professional climate and culture within your teams, enforcing high standards and combined focus on mission execution. Clarify leadership orders and expectations, and swiftly correct behaviors that detract from good order and discipline.**

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TERMS OF ADDRESS BY RANK

Rank	Grade	Terms of Address	Abbr.
Airman Basic	E-1	• Airman Basic • Airman	AB
Airman 	E-2	• Airman	Amn
Airman First Class 	E-3	• Airman First Class • Airman	A1C
Senior Airman 	E-4	• Senior Airman • Airman	SrA
Staff Sergeant 	E-5	• Staff Sergeant • Sergeant	SSgt
Technical Sergeant 	E-6	• Technical Sergeant • Tech Sergeant • Sergeant	TSgt

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Master Sergeant 	E-7	• First Sergeant • Sergeant	MSgt
Senior Master Sergeant 	E-8	• First Sergeant • Senior • Sergeant	SMSgt
Chief Master Sergeant 	E-9	• Command Chief Master Sergeant • Chief • First Sergeant	CMSgt
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force 		• Chief	CMSAF

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CONCLUSION

Our Airmen are the strength behind the world's most lethal Air Force.
Their readiness, innovation, leadership, and commitment to growing themselves and others ensure we remain unmatched. This guide sets the standard and provides the foundation our enlisted force needs to deliver on mission requirements.

We are a team of highly trained, specialized experts in the Profession of Arms.
To maximize our collective strength, we enforce clear, shared expectations, providing opportunities for development and professional growth at all ranks.

Wherever we serve and whatever mission we are assigned, our enlisted Airmen are indispensable to delivering Airpower – Anytime, Anywhere.

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Airmen power the world's greatest Air Force, which is fueled by their innovation, leadership, followership, mentorship, training, and development. This guide provides the standards and foundation for the enlisted force to meet mission requirements.

- ★ Why we serve
- ★ Who we are
- ★ Our mission
- ★ What we do
- ★ How we do it

This guide is based on the United States Air Force publication *The Enlisted Force Structure* (September 2025).

Our enlisted Airmen are indispensable to delivering Airpower – Anytime, Anywhere.

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