

The Chain of Command

Target Audience: One Air Force

PURPOSE

To remind all personnel the importance of using the Chain of Command. By using the Chain of Command you can resolve problems and seek answers at the lowest possible level.

DESCRIPTION

The chain of command is the system used to ensure that each individual receives instructions for a particular task from only one supervisor. It is an authority and accountability chain from the highest office or position within the chain to the lowest element. The chain of command assists commanders at all levels to achieve their primary function of accomplishing the organization or unit's assigned mission while caring for personnel and property in their charge. A chain of command provides proper avenues of communication. It allows for members to give and receive information. When used properly, it is both simple and effective. All orders and instructions should be issued through the chain of command. A person or unit can only have one immediate commander who issues orders and provides instructions.

EMPLOY

- Before discussing the purpose and description have the group either silently or allowed answer the following questions.
 - Why do you think we have a Chain of Command?
 - Do you know your Chain of Command?
 - Think of examples where the Chain of Command wasn't used?

 - Conduct an exercise using the "telephone game" steps that highlights the importance of the Chain of Command and if broken how communication fails. This exercise represents 7 people which could be 7 levels in the organizational chain. If instructions aren't understood or 1 person skips a person to get instructions the accuracy of the instructions could be degraded. If this happened in an Air Force unit, the mission could be impacted and the effectiveness of the unit could be damaged. For further information regarding the telephone game refer to the following link <http://icebreakerideas.com/telephone-game/>
 - Get a minimum of 7 people and form them into a line and have them sound off their respective numbers to conduct the exercise
 - The facilitator will provide a story to the first person in the line.
 - That person will subsequently communicate (whisper) the details of story to the 2nd person in line. The 3rd person will communicate the story to the 4th and so on.
 - When all members in line received the story, the facilitator will ask the last member to share the details of their story out loud so everyone can hear how much it changed.

 - After playing the game, lead the following discussion
 - Why do you think the story was so different?
 - How could you have improved the communication so the story would have stayed the same?
 - Use the improvements you discussed and play the game again.
 - Did you understand how effective communication improves the Chain of Command?
-