

# Command Support Team

## BACKGROUND

The Command Support Team (CST) is generally comprised of the commanding officer, executive officer, command master chief/chief of the boat and their spouses, chaplain (if one is assigned), the ombudsman, and any other advocates designated by the commanding officer as a CST member.

## KEY MESSAGES

- It is important for the CST to have clearly defined roles for all members and that each member is appointed in writing.
- The commanding officer generally appoints a POC to manage the day-to-day needs of the Ombudsman Program.
- It is recommended that leadership spouses and others in advocacy roles attend OBT with the command ombudsman. This training will provide important guidelines and direction in assisting the ombudsman. In the event an ombudsman leaves suddenly, a trained member of the CST can temporarily fill the position.
- The involvement and support of the spouse of the commanding officer, executive officer, and command master chief/chief of the boat can be a valuable asset to the Ombudsman Program. The degree of involvement that any of these individuals will have may differ by command and by personal interest.

## STATEMENT

An effective CST has clearly-defined roles, maintains good communication, and reiterates these guidelines each time a new member is added to the team. Each member of the CST can help the ombudsman by virtue of their Navy experience. The various roles members of the CST may play in relationship to the ombudsman include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The command POC for the Ombudsman Program may handle routine needs such as securing an official command roster, reviewing, approving and arranging for funding and distribution of the ombudsman newsletter, and including information about the Ombudsman Program in the command's POD/POW/POM as well as in the command's welcome aboard information.
- If there is a command chaplain, the chaplain can support the ombudsman by being a referral source for counseling (if trained to do so), a source of information about referrals in the Navy system, and a source of advice as well as personal support for the ombudsman.
- CO, XO, and CMC/COB spouse roles may include being a sounding board for the ombudsman, attending local Ombudsman Assembly meetings, meeting regularly

Appointing an Ombudsman

(especially when the command is deployed) to maintain good communication, being an advocate for the command ombudsman, editing or contributing to the ombudsman newsletter, and representing her/his spouse's views, if known.

The ombudsman plays an important role on the Command Support Team. Her/his role may include:

- Providing valuable information regarding trends in types of calls received.
- Managing rumors.
- Providing information and referral to team members, if requested.
- Attending local Ombudsman Assembly meetings and sharing information about changes and additions to programs and services available to command families.
- Attending command activities such as retirements, promotion ceremonies, social events, etc.
- Ensuring family issues and concerns are a priority.

## **ACTION**

The commanding officer should work with the CST to determine how he/she will best support the needs of the command's Sailors and families. What the ombudsman needs from team members and how they can best divide up responsibilities should be established.

## **RESOURCES**

- OPNAVINST 1750.1G CH-1, Navy Family Ombudsman Program Instruction.
- Fleet and Family Support Program Web site: [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil).
- For more helpful information about the volunteer roles of CO, XO, and CMC/ COB spouses, Naval Services FamilyLine publishes guides. Go to <http://www.nsfamilyline.org/> for further information.
- Command Spouse Leadership Courses are held in conjunction with Command Leadership Courses. Go to <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/cppd/cls/> for further information.

## **CHECKLIST**

- Designate a POC for the Ombudsman Program.
- Determine CST roles and members, and appoint in writing.
- Establish a meeting schedule.