

CMEA MEMBER SERVICES PROTOCOL

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INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the vision of creating a CMEA which embraces the *CME Family* concept, that is, forming an egalitarian group which is cohesive and in which the members work together to help one another and share the benefits of true fellowship, the Member Services Division was conceived.

The Member Services protocol, which follows, was developed to respond to the objectives described in Article 2.5 of the CMEA Constitution, which reads:

“To facilitate the well-being of all Association members, and to respond promptly and with effect to assist the welfare of members and their families as needed.”

This protocol will serve as a guide to all members and, in particular, to the Member Services Representatives throughout the Association, when the need arises to assist fellow members of the CMEA Family. As our experience in this area grows, the recommended procedures will be amended and expanded with a view to improving our effectiveness and widening our scope.

The following areas of services are included:

- Employment opportunities and second career assistance network
- Assistance to sick and injured
- Assistance to medical casualties after release
- Assistance to family members
- Acknowledgement of service (on retirement)
- Acknowledgement of family bereavement and assistance to surviving members

The approach to be taken by Member Services Representatives in providing assistance should be *to facilitate* the provision of the necessary assistance and services, rather than to perform them directly. As will become evident in this protocol, there are many services already available through a large number of well-established agencies. There is no need to “reinvent the wheel”! This protocol will therefore serve a twofold purpose, namely, to outline the approach which Member Services Representatives should take in assessing the needs and providing assistance, and to list the agencies which might provide the necessary services.

Note: A list of assistance agencies and their areas of assistance is included at the end of this Protocol.

In carrying out their role as facilitators, Member Services Representatives will recognize that there is no substitute for human kindness and understanding, and that they will therefore have to call upon their reserve of these qualities during the performance of their tasks.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In broad terms, the organizational structure of the Member Services Division of the CMEA will follow that of the CMEA itself. At the National level, the Divisional Vice-President, Member Services (DVP MS) is responsible for developing the protocol and, in conjunction with the National Executive Committee, for setting Member Services policy.

At the Regional level, the Member Services Representatives (MS Reps) will act as a link between the DVP MS and the Chapter MS Reps and provide guidance appropriate to the prevailing conditions in the particular region.

The MS Reps at the Chapters level are the key players who will provide the hands-on assistance. Larger Chapters will likely require a team of representatives made up of members from the various operational sectors of the CME. This cross-sectional representation will enable MS Reps to assess the needs on a more personal level and to provide more appropriate and personalized assistance. In most cases, the local Chapters will be able to act autonomously in providing these services. When the needs exceed the local Chapter's scope, they will, of course, be able to escalate their cry for help to the Regional and National levels.

The Areas of Services and the details concerning the types and extent of services available through the MS Reps should be made known periodically at the regular Chapter meetings. It should be made clear that members are to feel free to call upon their local MS Rep for assistance as soon as the need arises.

The prime role of the MS Reps is to make known to the member in need of assistance, the type of assistance which is available and to facilitate the provision of existing services. Where appropriate assistance is not already available, the MS Rep is to assess the situation and set about to obtain the help needed. MS Reps will have the support and guidance of the Chapter Executive Committee and the Chapter membership at large.

The promulgation of all pertinent information with respect to existing services provided by the various DND and other Government agencies will be the responsibility of the DVP MS through the good services of the Divisional Vice-President, Communications and Information Systems (DVP CIS). Details of services provided by these assistance agencies, support centres and DND benevolent funds and programs, together with their addresses and phone numbers, are currently posted on various web sites. The CMEA web site will list these information sources and provide links to them.

AREAS OF ASSISTANCE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SECOND CAREER ASSISTANCE NETWORK

This area of service would apply to CMEA members who are planning their retirement or release or are seeking a new employment opportunity.

A national level CMEA member will be responsible to the DVP MS for coordinating the notification of Employment Opportunities. Assisted by a network of volunteers, the OPI will monitor the various sectors of potential employment opportunities and advise, by e-mail, members who have requested notification of such opportunities as they arise. A separate communication list of such members will be maintained. In addition, the CMEA web site will provide links to some of the excellent resources such as the PEP web site, which links to the SCAN web site plus many others. See www.dnd.ca/hr/pep/engraph/home_e.asp. Job seekers can access this site, and it allows them to post resumes, and other services. Another very powerful resource is the government web site www.jobs.gc.ca.

Consideration will be given to operating a separate EMPLOYMENT SOUGHT page to assist individuals who are seeking employment and wish the posting of their CV. Confidentiality and privacy concerns dictate that progress be cautious in this area. At the Chapter level, an individual should be designated to be a point of interest and expertise on employment matters.

The "Second Career Assistance Network" (SCAN) should provide the main guidance as to where members seeking jobs can go for help in determining the route which they might follow, given their experience, competence, likes and dislikes, and so forth. For those not entitled to benefit from SCAN, the Branch OPI can provide locally obtained material based on SCAN material.

Request for Help

Members seeking assistance in these areas should be referred to the Chapter MS Rep or another special OPI, if locally designated. The MS Rep will refer a member to a representative in another geographical area, upon request of a member.

CMEA members will have direct access to information on employment opportunities posted on the CMEA web site. Guidance on the posting of CVs may be the subject of later development.

Assessment of the Situation

The MS Rep should be able to quickly determine if the SCAN program can provide resolution in response to the member's request for assistance. If not, reference to the CMEA web site and local sources may be the limit to help that can be reasonably provided. Extraordinary situations will generally involve the need for broader and more in-depth CMEA support. In these cases, an overall CMEA coordinator would likely be designated.

Where the situation involves re-settlement, the MS Rep in the member's current Chapter can provide the best assistance by introducing the member to the CMEA MS Rep in the prospective Chapter.

Action Plan Implementation

The MS Rep should direct the member to SCAN resources, to the greatest extent practicable. Where this is not possible, the MS Rep should ensure that the member is aware of existing sources for information on local employment opportunities and advise the member of the EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES feature on the CMEA web site. Where assistance is required for other than the local area, the MS Rep should introduce the member to his counterpart in the area(s) of interest.

Follow-up

Once initial advice has been given on the sources of additional information and contacts, it should normally suffice to leave the initiative and responsibility with the member. Exceptions are out of the routine where there is a need for significant and longer-term intervention and assistance.

Comportment

Care must be taken to ensure that assistance in this area does not conflict with, and is seen to not be in conflict with, the CF needs to retain its qualified personnel.

AREAS OF ASSISTANCE: ASSISTANCE TO SICK AND INJURED

This area of service applies to members who are sick or injured and who require assistance beyond that which is available to them at the given time.

Request for Help

CMEA members should feel free to contact their Chapter MS Rep as soon as a need arises.

Assessment of the Situation

The MS Rep should obtain as much information as possible and appropriate during this first contact, and arrange for a timely meeting with the sick or injured member.

The MS Rep should immediately develop a situation plan, and do a review of assistance requirements beyond, and in keeping with, those already being provided by the attending physician and other health services. After determining possible sources of additional aid, the MS Rep should meet with the member in need and/or the member's family, as arranged.

After obtaining sufficient information to get a good grasp of the situation, the MS Rep should proceed to offer immediate help and encouragement, to the extent possible.

Action Plan Implementation

The MS Rep should advise the member in need, and the member's family, of any existing agencies which can provide additional assistance under the given circumstances and, if required, offer to facilitate the contacts with these agencies. One good source of such information would be www.vac-acc.gc.ca "Care of Injured Personnel and their Families".

The MS Rep should initiate the agreed course of action at the earliest, and keep the member in need and the member's family informed of developments.

Follow-up

Once the foreseen assistance measures are in place, the MS Rep should monitor the recovery progress of the member in need from a discreet distance, and extend the offer of any continuing assistance that may be required.

Comportment

During this entire process, the MS Rep should display the empathy, understanding and camaraderie befitting a fellow member, bearing in mind that genuine moral support is key to a quick recovery.

Note: If the illness or injury brings with it a lengthy convalescence or the necessity to change employment or to relocate, some of the actions suggested under the heading of "Assistance to Medical Casualties after Release" may apply.

AREAS OF SERVICE: ASSISTANCE TO MEDICAL CASUALTIES AFTER RELEASE

This area of service would apply to members of the Canadian Forces who have been injured and medically released, and who require assistance beyond that which is currently available to them. It also applies to other CMEA members who are in a similar situation.

Request for Help

CMEA members should feel free to contact their Chapter MS Rep as soon as the need arises.

Assessment of the Situation

The MS Rep should obtain as much information as possible and appropriate during this first contact, and arrange for a timely meeting with the member in need.

The MS Rep should immediately develop a situation plan, do a preliminary review of assistance requirements and possible sources of aid, and meet with the member in need and/or the member's family, as arranged.

After gathering sufficient information to get a good grasp of the situation and the member's needs, the MS Rep should offer immediate help and encouragement, to the extent possible.

Action Plan Implementation

The MS Rep should advise the member in need, and the member's family, of any existing agencies which can provide assistance under the given circumstances and, if required, offer to facilitate the contacts with these agencies.

If the CMEA can offer assistance beyond that which is available through the applicable agencies, e.g. to assist resettlement in a new community by familiarizing the member with the local facilities such as shopping, recreation, social associations, etc. or to extend the scope of employment opportunities, the MS Rep should facilitate accessibility to these services.

Follow-up

Once the foreseen assistance measures are in place, the MS Rep should monitor the rehabilitation progress of the member in need from a discreet distance, and obtain assurance that appropriate medical care and treatment is maintained. Periodic contact should then be maintained to assure that any required continuing assistance is being provided.

Comportment

During this entire process, the MS Rep should display the empathy, understanding and camaraderie befitting a fellow member, bearing in mind that genuine moral support is key to a quick recovery.

AREAS OF SERVICE: ASSISTANCE TO FAMILY MEMBERS

This area of service would apply to the families of CMEA members who are absent on duty or temporarily incapacitated due to illness.

Request for Help

CMEA members should feel free to contact their Chapter MS Rep as soon as the need arises.

Assessment of the Situation

The MS Rep should obtain the most pertinent information required to make a preliminary assessment of the situation, and arrange for a timely meeting with the family member in need.

The MS Rep should, based on the preliminary assessment of assistance requirements, consider possible sources of aid, and meet with the family member, as arranged. After gathering sufficient information to get a good grasp of the situation and the family member's needs, the MS Rep should offer immediate help and encouragement, to the extent possible.

Note: There are in existence, a number of handbooks and guides which could be of great help to the MS Rep in determining the type of supplementary assistance which might be offered. One such publication is a handbook used by the Canadian Contingent Stabilization Force in Bosnia. It is an excellent example of what already exists. It would be prudent for the MS Rep to contact the member's commander or supervisor as "standard operating procedure" to ensure that the Association's efforts are coordinated and optimized by tying into the existing networks. MS Reps should be aware that these publications are exhaustive and can provide quick guidance and professional aid without the need to reinvent the wheel.

Action Plan Implementation

The MS Rep should inform the family member of the appropriate agencies which can provide assistance under the given circumstances and, if required, offer to facilitate the contacts with these agencies.

The MS Rep should recommend CMEA action if the CMEA can offer interim assistance or assistance beyond that which is available through the applicable agencies, e.g. advancing cash for urgent transportation of the family member in the case of an emergency occurring while the CMEA member is absent on duty; providing emergency aid in a case of dire need such as accident, fire damage, etc.

The MS Rep may be in a position to respond in person to correct some minor deficiency, e.g. replace a blown fuse or clear a plugged drain for the wife of some member who is ill or away on duty.

Follow-up

Once the foreseen assistance measures are in place, the MS Rep should remain in contact with the family member until the difficulty has been resolved.

Comportment

During this entire process, the MS Rep should go about the task as cheerfully as the situation allows and display the empathy, understanding and camaraderie befitting a fellow member.

AREAS OF SERVICE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICE (UPON RETIREMENT)

The role of the CMEA regarding retirements would be to verify that the various existing CME Branch retirement recognition activities are underway.

Existing policy calls for the CME Adjutant to be kept abreast of all CME retirements.

The Canadian Military Engineer Branch Interim Personnel Recognition Policy #01/00 outlines the Retirement Recognition policy and its intent.

An appropriate communications link between the CME Adjutant and the CMEA will have to be established so that the details of the retirement can be transmitted to the local Chapter MS Rep.

While it appears that the CME Branch has the matter of Retirement Acknowledgement well in hand, it has been known that in some instances, things have fallen between the cracks. It may be a case of so many sub-organizations, messes, social clubs etc. being involved, and everyone thinking that the others are taking care of things. The Chapter MS Rep will have to confirm, from time to time, that the lines of communication with the CME Adjutant are intact in this regard.

There is also the matter of CMEA recognition. For starters, it might be wise to pattern the retirement acknowledgement after that which the MEAC has been affording thus far, making sure however, that the CMEA effort is coordinated with that of the MEAC and that there is no duplication. It would probably be a good thing to review the proposed CMEA Retirement Acknowledgement protocol with the CME Branch Advisor.

On the matter of Retirement Acknowledgement, the CMEA should coordinate with the CME Branch and ensure that the CMEA is represented at the retirement function.

The local messes have their particular customs, as do the bases and units. The CMEA local Chapter MS Rep could keep tabs on the Retirement Acknowledgement activities planned for the retiring member to confirm that nothing has fallen through the cracks, and to urge local CMEA members participate in these activities.

AREAS OF SERVICE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FAMILY BEREAVEMENT

Since the state of bereavement is such a very personal and extremely emotional one, great care and sensitivity must be exercised in these situations. The bereaved family members are already overwhelmed by their condition and certainly don't need more overwhelming, even though it may be well intentioned. This is one area where the CMEA MS Rep will have to be well informed of the arrangements already in place, and will have to make sure that there is no duplication of effort on the part of the CMEA. It is very important that this protocol be developed in conjunction with existing DND and CME Branch policies. In developing this protocol, it would be particularly wise to also draw from existing guidelines, such as the Veterans Affairs publication "When Death Occurs" and the CCSF handbook, which also contains pertinent information. A list of reference material should be compiled to assist in the preparation and training of the MS Rep for the performance of these tasks.

The following is a preliminary list of points of consideration for the development of this protocol:

- Have a system in place to ensure prompt CMEA notification of a member's demise.
- Obtain details of funeral arrangements: time, place, particular family wishes.
- A CMEA member who knows the deceased and his family well should contact the bereaved family to determine their wishes as to funeral arrangements, public attendance at the ceremony, etc.
- A CMEA bereavement card (an official CMEA card especially designed for these occasions) should be sent to the bereaved family, duly inscribed with a note prepared by a member or members who knew the deceased person well.
- Timely promulgation, among the CMEA members, of the news of the event, of the particular wishes of the bereaved family, and of the time and location of the funeral services.
- Obtain assurance that the immediate needs of the bereaved family are met, and offer any assistance required.
- Provide solace to the family, by a personal expression of sympathy by all of the CMEA members who knew the deceased member.
- Offer to facilitate initiation of right and proper settlement of the estate
- Flowers or other contributions would not be necessary, unless specifically requested by the bereaved family.

CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBER SERVICES PROTOCOL

The guidelines for MS Rep action in the Areas of Service outlined on the pages above are a first cut at procedures to follow. Effective guidelines for MS Rep assistance can best be developed by learning from experience. It is therefore proposed that to test them, these suggested guidelines be followed by the MS Reps when performing their tasks. During the course of responding to the requests for assistance, weaknesses in these trial guidelines will become evident, and suggested improvements will spring to mind. Constructive feedback as to improvements will enable the Association to refine these guidelines and procedures, and render them more practical and effective. **The DVP Member Services invites the Chapters to send in, at any time, their comments and recommendations for the improvement of these guidelines.**

In this connection, some thought might be given to developing “how to” procedures for some of the key elements of the Member Services assistance processes.

Some examples are:

- Establishing shortcuts to identifying the specific needs of persons requesting assistance.
- Devising a method of cataloguing the services and forms of assistance offered by the various agencies.
- Keeping a log of members’ needs encountered in order to be able to more easily identify similar needs in the future.
- Maintaining a register of cases, outlining the situation and the course of action followed. Record the progress and the outcome.
- Establishing a roster of local Chapter members who are prepared to render assistance in facilitating the provision of assistance from the various existing agencies and to provide moral support when things get rough.

ASSISTANCE AGENCIES AND CONTACT LISTINGS

CMEA Chapters - Local Phone Numbers (to be provided), assistance available in all areas and subject matters

• **Employment Opportunities and Second Career Assistance Network**

<http://www.jobs.gc.ca/> (Federal Gov't jobs)

http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/engraph/careers_e.asp (menu of job search links)

http://www.pep.forces.gc.ca/engraph/programs/scan/scan_e.asp (actual 2nd Career Assistance Network)

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/pep/engraph/resume_form_e.asp (a place to post your CV on the web)

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/pep/engraph/job_bank_e.asp (various job postings)

http://www.pep.forces.gc.ca/engraph/home_e.asp (access to various links related above)

• **Assistance to Sick and Injured**

1 (800) 883-6094 toll free Number to Access DND HR support programs at “the Centre”, a jointly supported VAC-DND site.

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/thecentre/engraph/home_e.asp (the official DND site for the assistance to injured....)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/> (home page of veterans affairs web site)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=services/pensions> (info on veteran pensions available)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=services/healthcare> (info on veterans health care programs available)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=services/residentcare> (info on veterans home care available)

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/gol/engraph/home_e.asp (Quality of Life Office home page)

http://www.dnd.ca/health/engraph/services_e.asp?Lev1=1 (Quality of Life Office info on care for the injured)

• **Assistance to Medical Casualties after Release**

1 (800) 883-6094 toll free Number to Access DND HR support programs

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/thecentre/engraph/home_e.asp (the official DND site for the assistance to injured after release, linked to Veterans Affairs)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/> (home page of veterans affairs web site)

• Assistance to CMEA Members and Family

1-800-866-4546 (Mission hotline for deployed members families to access help)

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/families/engraph/home_e.asp (home page for family support, includes links to health, education, and community support)

<http://www.cfpsa.com/en/psp/dmfs/about.asp> (Home page of the Director of Military Family Resource centres, with all links. See following link.)

<http://www.cfpsa.com/en/psp/dmfs/mfrccontact/index.asp> (contact info for directory of all local numbers for Military Family Resource Centres)

• Acknowledgement of Service (On Retirement)

As per policy directive (CME Branch Interim policy #01/00)
Contact Person, CME Adjutant 1-613-945-7704

• Acknowledgement of Family Bereavement and Assistance to Surviving Members

1-800-883-6094 (Contact number at DND for anyone inquiring about death policy, benefits etc...)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=contact> (a comprehensive National contact list of all Veteran's Affairs contact numbers, numbers listed by geographic Region)

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=bereavement/death> (instructions for survivors, or one who can put themselves in a survivors shoes)

http://www.dnd.ca/hr/centre/engraph/ddbenefits_e.asp (comprehensive DND web site linking to all aspects of Departmental policy and obligations concerning the death of a member)